Good Grinding for Wise Dining
Choosing Foods

Lesson 10: Seasonality of Fruits and Veggies
“Fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason”

Action: Ask someone in the audience to assist you. Give the tally sheet to this person and have them count the number of participants in the audience. Record the number of participants on the tally sheet. At the end of the lesson, you will ask the participants 3 questions and your assistant will record the number of people agreeing with the statement on the tally sheet.


Read the following: Today, we’re going to talk about selecting and buying fresh fruits and veggies that are in season. We see many fruits and veggies throughout the year, but flavor, nutrients, quantity, and prices are best when fruits and veggies are in season. Fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason.

Action: Have participants repeat the following:

“Fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason.”

Action: Ask the following question:

How can we tell when fruits and veggies are in season?

*Gently encourage people to participate. Thank participants for sharing. Examples if no one answers:
- Observe fruit trees and vegetable gardens.
- Check grocery ads and stores to see what fruits and vegetables are on sale.
Read the following: We can tell when fruits and veggies are in season when the trees have fruits, and veggies are growing. Check weekly grocery ads to see which fruits and veggies are on sale. This can be another sign of fruits and veggies that are in season.

Although, fruits and veggies may be in season, sometimes they are not as plentiful because of bad weather, bugs, or other circumstances. What can we do if this happens? We can choose another form of that food. For example, if we are looking for fresh mangoes, but find that they are expensive, not in season, or not available, we might want to buy frozen or dried mangoes instead. Or, if fresh pineapples are expensive or not in season, we can buy canned, frozen, dried pineapple, or 100% pineapple juice as an alternative.

Similar strategies can be used for veggies. Tomatoes are in their peak season from May to September, but when prices are too expensive or they are not in season, we can switch to canned tomatoes.

Read the following: Here are some tips for choosing our fruits and veggies. When we are looking for fresh fruits and veggies, some important clues are their appearance and firmness. Select produce that does not have bruises, punctures, mold, or signs of decay. Sometimes smelling the fruit or veggie can help us choose them. For example, smelling fruits that are sweet, such as cantaloupe, mango, and pineapple may help us to pick sweet fruit. If we’re still not sure, we can ask the grocer, or the vendor at a local farmers market for help in choosing our produce.

Read the following: The longer that we store or keep fresh fruits and veggies, the more vitamins they lose, so we want to buy only as much as we can eat within one week. Fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason.
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Action: Have participants repeat the following:

Everyone repeat with me, “fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason.”

Read the following:

As wise shoppers, we want to check for the freshness of our foods by looking at dates. “Pull” and “sell-by” dates tell us about the last date that the product should be sold by the grocery store. The “use-by” date tells us how long we can keep the product at home at its best quality. Look for items with its packaging intact, without any holes, tears, dents, bulging cans, or rust. Let’s check our dates so our foods will be great.

If we have any doubt about the safety of our foods we should throw it out. For example, if we are unsure if our food is spoiled we should throw it out. Or if our canned goods are way past its expiration date we should throw it out. When in doubt, throw it out.

Action: Have participants repeat the following:

Everyone repeat with me, “when in doubt, throw it out.”

“When in doubt, throw it out.”

Read the following:

To keep our fruits and veggies safe we should rinse them under running water before we cut or eat them. Even though we don’t eat the skins of cantaloupes and some other fruits with thick skins, we still should rinse our fruits with water. These fruits could also be rubbed or scrubbed with a clean brush and rinsed under running water. Doing this will prevent the cut pieces of food from being contaminated by bacteria that may be on the outer skin.

Veggies that grow under the ground, like carrots and sweet potatoes, or on the ground, like pumpkin or squash, should be scrubbed with a brush. Scrubbing with a brush will loosen the dirt from the outer skin, it can then be rinsed under running tap water.
Action: Have participants repeat the following: “Fruits and veggies are best in season and priced within reason.”

Action: Ask the following question: What are some ways we can use fruits or veggies that are in season? *Gently encourage people to participate. Thank participants for sharing.

* Optional: Read the following: After this lesson, I will demonstrate how to prepare a salsa recipe. Salsa may be used as a dressing or dip.

Read the following: Fresh veggies are great for salads. Dark, leafy greens such as spinach or dark green lettuce are a great start for our salad. Add navy beans, cooked chicken or drained water-packed tuna to make a hearty salad. To make the salad more exciting add colorful fruits and veggies such as tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, onions, mushrooms, and bell peppers.

How many of us have a hard time with eating raw veggies? To make raw veggies easier to chew, cut them into small bite-size pieces, grate them, stem, or partially cook them.

Read the following: Microwaving, stir-frying, and steaming are great cooking methods. Use herbs or seasonings to add flavor. It’s a good idea to keep some frozen or canned fruits and veggies on hand as well, because they are convenient, easy to use, and provides a quick clean up.

Read the following: Here are more ideas for preparing fruits and veggies. Slice sweet potato to make oven fries and toss it with olive oil, seasoning or herbs, a dash of salt; and then bake it. How about stir-frying zucchini, onions, bell peppers, and mushrooms with olive oil, and serving over brown rice?
How about adding veggies in season to your main dish. For example, add zucchini, cabbage, or bell peppers to your soup, casserole, or stew.

Have any of us had fruit as a dessert? Let’s try our favorite yogurt or frozen yogurt with a variety of fruits that can be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.

**Action:**

**Ask the following question:**

What kinds of beverages should we drink with our meals and snacks?

*Gently encourage people to participate. Thank participants for sharing.*

**Read the following:**

Nothing seems to satisfy our thirst like a cool glass of water. Did you know that every day we lose 2-3 quarts of water through our sweat, urination, and evaporation from our skin and lungs? So, it's important for us to drink water throughout the day. Water is quick and easy to prepare, and it doesn't make a mess. We just turn on the faucet and enjoy a refreshing beverage at any time. Water is healthy, refreshing, and easy on my wallet!

**Action:**

**Have participants repeat the following:**

Everyone repeat with me, “water is healthy and easy on my wallet!”

“Water is healthy and easy on my wallet!”

**Read the following:**

Now, I am going to read three statements. Please raise your hand if you agree with the statement. The first statement is: I plan to eat fruits and veggies that are in season.

**Action:**

Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

**Action:**

**Read the following:**

How many of you agree with this next statement: I plan to throw food out if I am unsure it's safe to eat. Please raise your hand if you agree.
Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following:
The last statement is: Water is healthy and easy on my wallet. How many people agree with this last statement?

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: That’s the end of this talk. Thank you for listening. Please check with your doctor or health care professional before making dietary changes.

*Optional: Salsa Demonstration (see Recipe Index Pg 221)
Canned whole tomatoes or stewed tomatoes may be used instead of fresh tomatoes.

Read the following: Today we will make salsa using tomatoes, round onion, Chinese parsley, chili pepper, and lemon or lime juice. Before preparing the salsa recipe, I will wash my hands with soap and water.

Action: Wash hands with soap and water before beginning. Follow recipe directions:
- Finely CHOP tomatoes, onions, and Chinese parsley.
- MINCE chili pepper.
- In a medium bowl, COMBINE tomatoes, onion, chili pepper, lemon or lime juice, and Chinese parsley.
- COVER and REFRIGERATE until ready to SERVE.

Read the following: See how quick and easy that was? Come and taste this delicious salsa. We can enjoy it with tortilla or pita chips, or as a topping on salad.

Action: Pass out food.