

Cook Outside the Box!



Let us introduce you to unique food items to try. Commonly found in the produce section of your local grocery store, these items offer lots of nutrients, not to mention, great taste! Read our tips on adding variety to your meal plans and then try the recipes!

Switch it up with something new

Tired of the same old meals? Try adding new ingredients to your plate to keep it interesting. Maintaining variety in your meals will keep mealtime alluring, enjoyable and palatable. Variety is the spice of life!

Plantain, fig, sunchoke, fiddleheads, do these sound like foreign words to you? Cooking with new ingredients can be easy and exciting! Eating a variety of foods can help achieve a well-balanced, healthy, and interesting diet while providing adequate nutrition to help fight disease.

Here are some tips to help you add variety to your meals:

- Keep your eyes open – Next time you are at the grocery store, look for something new and exciting. Many of us have a regular routine of going to the grocery store and picking out the same products. Make a goal each week to pick out something new. It doesn't have to be exotic like dragon fruit, but can be something simple that is new to you. Perhaps you have never tried parsnips!
- Google it - Upon bringing it home, a quick Google search is bound to give you lots of information about this product including many different recipes and health benefits.
- Make it a family affair – Hesitant to try this new product? Make it a fun and enjoyable family affair by getting everyone in your family involved in the selection and preparation of the new food!
- Go seasonal – Many rare exotic fruits or vegetables are only available when they are in season. Look for items that are in season to maximize the nutritional value and the flavour.

Plantain chip nachos – a new spin on an old favourite!

Combine:

- * 2 bags of plantain chips - (Inka chip is a good brand)
- * 2/3 lb (300g) ground beef
- * Tex Mex spices to taste (chili, cumin, oregano)
- * Sea salt and pepper to taste
- * Onion/pepper/tomato/hot sauce
- * Cheese - optional

Cook ground beef, add Tex Mex spices, onion and pepper and sauté until soft. On a baking sheet, lay out the plantain chips and add all of your toppings. Broil for 3-7 minutes. Top with cilantro and serve with salsa and guacamole. Enjoy!

For more plantain nacho ideas visit: www.amandanaturally.com

Quick Cook Tip

Looking for a new starch to add to your diet? Try plantains. Very similar in appearance to a banana, plantains are a mildly sweet, starchy tropical fruit that should be cooked first. Plantains can easily be sautéed in your favorite healthy fat, or baked into crispy chips.

Featured Recipes

Oatmeal Fig Bars

Although often dried, figs have many health benefits including being a high source of potassium, which helps to control blood pressure, and are a good source of fibre, which may have a positive effect on weight loss. When well wrapped, dried figs will last several months in a cool dark place or stored in the refrigerator.

1 cup (250 mL) chopped dried figs, stems removed	1½ (375mL) rolled oats	½ cup (125mL) butter, melted
½ cup (125mL) water	1 cup (250mL) flour	1 egg white
1 tbsp (15mL) lemon juice	¼ cup (65mL) packed brown sugar	Cooking spray
1 tsp (5mL) lemon zest	½ tsp (2mL) baking soda	
	¼ tsp (1mL) salt	

1. In a small sauce pan bring to a boil figs, water, lemon juice and lemon zest. Simmer until mixture starts to thicken (about 3 minutes). Let cool.
2. Put fig and water mixture in a food processor or blender and process until smooth. Set aside.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Spray an 8-inch baking pan with cooking spray and set aside.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together oats, flour sugar, baking soda and salt.
5. Add butter and egg white to oat mixture and stir until combined.
6. Press half of the oat mixture into the baking pan. Next, carefully spread with fig mixture. Lastly, drop pieces of remaining oat mixture over the fig mixture and then gently pat down.
7. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire rack.

Recipe adapted from <http://alidaskitchen.com> Nutrition information unavailable

Jicama Slaw

Jicama, pronounced hee-cama, is a round, bulbous root vegetable with origins in the Mexican peninsula. It is part of the legume family and is very similar in texture to a turnip with a taste closer to an apple.

3 tbsp (45mL) lime juice	1 tsp (5mL) pepper	½ cup (125mL) thinly sliced red onion
½ tsp (2mL) red chili flakes	1½ (375mL) cups peeled, julienned jicama	1 cup (250mL) julienned English cucumber
½ tsp (2mL) chili powder	1 cup (250mL) peeled, julienned carrots	½ cup (125mL) julienned red bell pepper
6 tbsp (90mL) rice wine vinegar	1 cup (250mL) shredded Napa cabbage	1 tbsp (15mL) cilantro, chopped
1 tsp (5mL) sugar		
6 tbsp (90mL) extra-virgin olive oil		
1 tsp (5mL) salt		

1. In a small mixing bowl add lime juice, chili flakes, rice wine vinegar, sugar, and extra-virgin olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and whisk to combine.
2. Combine the jicama, carrots, cabbage and onion, cucumber, red pepper and cilantro in large bowl and toss.
3. Add dressing to vegetables and let sit for 15 minutes, stirring 2 or 3 times. Serve.

Source: Guy Fieri - <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/guy-fieri/jicama-slaw-recipe.html?oc=linkback>

Nutrition: Calories 253, Total Fat 21g, Saturated 3g, Protein 2g, Carbohydrates 14g, Sugar 6g.