

MELLOW YELLOW



THE RUNDOWN

You've seen the Skittles commercials telling you to "taste the rainbow." We heed you to take that advice... but in regards to fresh fruits and veggies, not brightly colored candies! Eating a rainbow of fruits and veggies is a great way to ensure you're getting everything your body needs to work effectively and efficiently; the colors in fresh produce signify the phytochemicals that lie within. The phytochemicals in yellow foods are particularly useful for improving immune function, decreasing the risk of certain cancers, and promoting healthy eyes and skin.

Q & A

WHAT ARE PHYTOCHEMICALS?

Naturally occurring chemical compounds found in fruits, veggies, whole grains, and legumes. They offer a number of benefits to your body and are generally good for improved immune function, healthy skin, good vision, and cancer prevention.

NUTRITION NOTES

Cooking your yellow fruits and veggies has its upsides and downsides. If it's Vitamin C you're after, keep it raw; heat isn't good for Vitamin C retention. But cooking WILL boost levels of other phytochemicals, like beta-carotene. How you cook your food matters, too. Overcooking is not your friend and will wipe almost all the nutritional content out of the food. Microwaving or steaming will do more for preserving vitamins, minerals, and nutrients than roasting or frying.

INTEGRATION STATION

Is your curiosity about yellow foods piqued? Try the following fabulous fruits and veggies (plus a grain) to maximize your yellow food intake.

FLAX SEEDS have a nutty flavor and more omega-3s than you can shake a stick at. These should be ground to maximize your body's ability to process all the omega-3s and soluble fiber within; they can be purchased pre-ground or ground at home.

YELLOW PEPPERS are linked to an improved immune system and reduced risk for certain cancers. They're packed with carotenoids, which have been proven to protect against heart disease. These high-fiber, low-calorie snacks are great with a high-protein dip like hummus; they can be eaten any way you'd eat their green or red cousins.

PINEAPPLE is probably better known for its sweet-and-tangy flavor than its nutritional benefits... but trust us, it's a keeper. This exotic fruit contains bromelain, an anti-inflammatory enzyme that also aids in digestion. It's loaded with Vitamins B & C and potassium and works beautifully in many raw preparations. For added depth of flavor, toss slices on the grill for a minute or two.

STAR FRUIT is aptly named; its bright yellow color and distinctive shape set it apart. It's a deliciously sweet-and-sour fruit that's packed with fiber and Vitamin C; you'll also find tons of quercetin to fight inflammation.

Try substituting it for citrus fruits in recipes or simply slice and snack. Perfect as an adorable edible garnish, too! **Note:** Star Fruit contains quite a bit of oxalic acid. If your kidneys aren't in ideal shape, it's best to avoid Star Fruit; the oxalic acid can build up in your kidneys and cause "Star Fruit Intoxication." If your kidneys are healthy, they won't be a problem.

CORN is actually a grain, not a fruit or vegetable. This summer BBQ staple is a nutritional powerhouse; it's high in phytochemicals lutein and zeaxanthin, both of which are known to promote healthy vision. Corn also has tons of fiber... it's always a great time to throw a cob on the grill!

LEMON is one of those "little goes a long way" fruits. As a citrus fruit it's absolutely packed with Vitamin C; it also delivers the cholesterol-lowering phytonutrient limonin. Great with seafood, chicken, or veggies; adds brightness and zing to almost any dish under the sun.

RECIPE

BLACK BEAN & CORN ENCHILADAS

INGREDIENTS

- 12 medium corn tortillas
- 4-6 oz grated cheese of your choosing
- Enchilada Sauce (recipe follows)
- 3 Tbsp cooking oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1/2 green pepper, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 can black beans (14-16 oz), drained and rinsed
- 2 ears fresh corn, stripped of kernels (or 1 bag frozen kernels)
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- Cilantro to taste (optional)

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Set a large skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. Once oil is hot, add onions and pepper and sauté. When onions and peppers are translucent and sweet-smelling, lower the heat and add garlic; stir for one minute.

Add beans, corn, and spices; stir until spices are fragrant. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add cilantro if desired.

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. In a 9x13 baking pan (glass or ceramic work best), spread a thin layer of enchilada sauce.

Heat a dry skillet over low heat and "soften" the 12 tortillas by placing each side on the hot skillet for a few seconds until pliable. Fill your tortillas one-by-one with the filling you've created and roll them each into a cigar shape. Place all 12 in the pan; they'll be touching each other slightly. Ladle a generous layer of sauce on top of the enchiladas and cover the sauce with cheese.

Put the pan in the oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and the enchiladas are baked through and piping hot. You can broil the dish for 30-60 seconds once it's done if you want a browned, crispy top.

EASY ENCHILADA SAUCE

- 1 onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- Canned chilies or chili powder to taste (more pepper = more heat)
- 1 28 oz can tomatoes
- 2 tsp cumin

- 1 tsp coriander
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 3 tbsp cooking oil

Combine all ingredients except oil in a food processor or blender. Pulse until pureed. Heat the oil in a large pan over medium-high heat until hot; lower the heat slightly, pour in the sauce, and cook over medium heat for about ten minutes. Stir gently every now and again; season to taste.