

## 10 Fall Foods to Add to Your Diet

In today's world, it's quite easy to forget about the seasons when we eat. While seasonal eating is making a modest resurgence, modern food processing and global distribution of food makes many foods available all year long. The term "season" refers to the specific time of year when a food is available at its peak ripeness, in terms of harvest and flavor. Seasonal also means that these items may be found at their most reasonable cost and are the freshest in the market.

Autumn provides the perfect backdrop for warm soups, stews, casseroles, pies, fruit crumbles and crisps. When the leaves change color and the air turns chilly, remember to choose fresh, organic seasonal produce to maximize health benefits and taste! Here are a few of autumn's best offerings to include in your diet:

**Apples** - In the Northern Hemisphere apples are in season from late summer to early winter. In addition to being eaten raw, apples are a wonderful addition to a variety of recipes from salads to baked goods. Be sure to choose organic whenever possible as apples are among the "Dirty Dozen" foods on which pesticide residues have been most frequently found. For more information on pesticides and foods [www.EWG.org](http://www.EWG.org)

**Figs** - The skin of fresh figs can vary from purple to pink or light brown, but the flesh inside is always a juicy crimson color. Unlike many fruits, figs contain protein and are also rich in calcium and iron. Choose those with firm, smooth skins. Figs are great in salads and served stuffed too. Fresh figs stuffed with goat cheese and chopped almonds can be eaten daily as a healthy protein rich snack.

**Dates** – Dates are an often overlooked nutrition powerhouse! They are rich in many minerals such as calcium, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorous, copper and potassium. They also contain fiber, amino acids, and even a small amount of essential fat. Dates are most popular for their high quality soluble and insoluble fibers. A high fiber diet may decrease risks of heart disease, diabetes, cancers, GI disorders, weight loss and gain, blood sugar regulation and improved sleep patterns. Dates are a wonderful addition to salads, grains and are extremely portable as an on-the-go snack.

**Carrots** - The best carrots are found during the fall and winter when their flavors are more robust. The antioxidant compounds found in carrots help to protect against many diseases and promote healthy vision. When stored, carrots should stay far from apples, pears, potatoes and other fruits and vegetables that may produce ethylene gas. When the produce comes in contact with carrots its flavor may become bitter. You can puree or dice carrots into warm soups, grate them into sauces, or juice them into marinades or beverages.

**Pomegranate** - Pomegranates are rich sources of antioxidants, flavonoids, amino acids, vitamins B and C, and iron and are known for their anti-aging qualities. They may also help promote healthy cholesterol levels and support a healthy cardiovascular and immune system. Pomegranates are currently being studied for their menopause relieving symptoms, effects on slowing cancer growth and their ability to boost memory and mood. So try sprinkling pomegranate seeds on salads and cereals or adding pomegranate juice to smoothies.

**Jerusalem artichoke** - The Jerusalem artichoke arrives around November, as a pile of muddy, knobby tubers. Their consistency is very much like a potato and can be mashed into any potato recipe. Their raw form has a sweet nutty flavor, and is great in salads or slaws. Jerusalem artichokes have 650 mg potassium per 1 cup serving, which makes them a wonderful recovery food after your fall athletic activities. Turkey Trot anyone??

**Onions** - Autumn and winter are the traditional onion seasons. Onions have become a staple in any kitchen because they add flavor to virtually every recipe you can create. Onions are a very good source of vitamin C, chromium and fiber. They are also a good source of manganese, molybdenum, vitamin B6, folate, potassium, phosphorus and copper. Caramelizing onions brings out their natural sweetness, and soaking them in ice cold water before serving them raw helps cut down on the "bite" of eating them raw.

**Pears** - Pears are a good source of vitamin C and copper. Both of these nutrients fall into the antioxidant family which help protect cells from free radical damage. Although not well-documented in research, pears are often recommended by many practitioners as a hypoallergenic fruit because they are less likely to produce a negative response in sensitive individuals.

**Kale** - Kale contains up to 45 different flavonoids and has shown risk reduction benefits in many cancers including bladder, breast, colon, ovary, and prostate. The flavonoid kaempferol is one of its top powerhouse antioxidants followed by quercetin. Bake up kale into chips or sauté it into your favorite soups and side dishes. You can also add raw leaves to salads or smoothies.

**Pumpkin and Butternut squash** - Pumpkin and butternut squash are both high in carotenoids. Carotenoids give them their fabulous orange/yellow color and are excellent at neutralizing free radicals and promoting eye health. Their seeds are very high in protein, with one ounce of seeds providing about seven grams of protein which is equivalent to one egg. So be sure to sprinkle these seeds on your favorite pumpkin/butternut creations.



## **A closer look at Winter Squash:**

Winter squash is a relative of both the melon and cucumber, and comes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Varieties include butternut squash, acorn squash, hubbard squash, buttercup squash, and kabocha.

Winter squashes are distinctive in both their appearance and flavor, but all varieties have a mildly sweet flavor and contain carotenoid phytonutrients. These plant nutrients not only give them their vibrant yellow-orange color, but also provide many of their health promoting benefits too!

Winter squash is packed with “pro-vitamin A” compounds and antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agents too. It is also one of the most concentrated plant sources of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) - an omega 3 essential fatty acid that is very good for heart health and reducing cardiovascular disease risk. As well as being high in plant nutrients, winter squash is low in calories too.

**So be creative and experiment with a variety of winter squash!**

# Curried Butternut Squash & Apple Soup



## Ingredients:

- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cups peeled, seeded, and cubed butternut squash (about 1 pound)
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 cups apple cider
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Sea salt and fresh ground black pepper (to taste)

## Method:

In a medium sized pot sauté shallots and garlic with oil over medium - low heat until soft. Add the squash, stock, apple cider, coconut milk and seasonings and cook until squash is soft enough to blend. Puree the soup with an immersion blender until smooth. Adjust seasonings to taste, and serve. Serves four.

**\*\*if using a traditional blender - allow the soup to cool for about 10 to 15 minutes before pureeing\*\***



## Hunter's Wild Rice

### Ingredients:

3 ½ cups vege stock  
¼ c. sherry  
2 Tbsp. soy sauce (substitute Tamari sauce for gluten free)  
1 tsp. chili sauce  
1 Tbsp. grated orange zest  
Salt to taste

\*\*\*\*\*

1 ½ Tbsp. Butter  
½ c. minced onion  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
1 ½ c. rice (wild/brown mix)

\*\*\*\*\*

2/3 c. currants

\*\*\*\*\*

½ c. chopped fresh cilantro  
¾ c. toasted pecan halves

\*\*\*\*\*

### Directions

Combine stock, sherry, soy sauce, chili sauce, orange zest and salt in medium bowl; set-aside.

Melt butter in saucepan and sauté onion and garlic. Add rice and sauté a few minutes

Add currants and stock mixture to rice. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until rice is tender, about 30-45 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed.

Stir in cilantro and pecans just before serving.



## Autumn Apple Salad

*"A sweet, tart, crunchy side dish that is especially nice in the fall."*

### Ingredients

- 4 tart green apples, cored and chopped
- 1/4 cup blanched slivered almonds, toasted
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped dried cherries
- 1 (8 ounce) containers vanilla yogurt

### Directions

In a medium bowl, stir together the apples, almonds, cranberries, cherries and yogurt until evenly coated.

Serves 4