

# Pick a Better Snack

Eat Fruits and Veggies

## Apples

Apples come in all shades of red, green and yellow. Apple varieties range in size from a little bigger than a cherry to as large as a grapefruit. The peel is good to eat and has many nutrients. Apples have five seed pockets. Do not eat the seeds.

### History

The apple can be traced back to the Romans and Egyptians who introduced them to Britain. The pilgrims planted the first apple trees in North America in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Americans eat about 120 apples a piece each year.

### Varieties

There are about 2,500 varieties grown in the United States. Golden Delicious, Red Delicious, Fuji and Granny Smith are available year round. Choose apples which are firm with no soft spots. Wash under clean, running water before eating.

### Uses

Apples can be eaten raw or cooked. They are great to eat as a quick snack. Chop and add to fruit salads. Bake in cakes, pies and cookies. Other popular ways to enjoy are as applesauce or 100% juice.

### Local Connection

Many apples are grown in Iowa. Apples are the most popular fruit in the United States. Thirty-six states grow apples commercially with the following as top producers: Washington, New York, Michigan, California, Pennsylvania and Virginia.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source of fiber

★ Good source of vitamin C

Apples are fruit that grow on trees.

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## Apricot

A relative of the peach, the apricot is smaller and has a smooth, oval pit that falls out easily when the fruit is halved. The skin and flesh are a golden orange color.

### History

Apricots originated in China over 4,000 years ago. Spanish explorers introduced apricots to the New World and they were planted at missions all over California. The first major production of apricots in America was in 1792 south of San Francisco, California.

### Varieties

There are many varieties of apricots raised in the United States. Some of the most common varieties are Patterson, Blenheim, Tiltons and Castlebrites.

### Uses

Apricots are great to eat raw or dried, and are also terrific cooked. The nutrients are more concentrated in dried than fresh apricots. Dried apricots also have a higher sugar content, which makes them more likely to stick to your teeth.

### Local Connection

Some apricots are grown in Iowa. In the United States, 95% of apricots grow in the San Joaquin Valley and other parts of northern California. Apricot season is from late May through June.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source of vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin A

Apricots are fruit that grow on trees.

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## Artichoke

Artichokes should be firm, compact, heavy for their size and have an even green color. Artichokes are actually a flower bud. If allowed to flower, blossoms measure up to seven inches in diameter and are a violet-blue color.



### History

The artichoke was known to both the Greeks and the Romans. Wealthy Romans enjoyed artichokes prepared in honey and vinegar, seasoned with cumin. It was not until the early 20th century that artichokes were grown in the United States.



### Varieties

There are more than 140 artichoke varieties. The most popular varieties in the United States are: Green Globe, Desert Globe, Big Heart and Imperial Star. Artichokes can range in size from small artichokes—2 or 3 ounces each—to jumbo artichokes that can weigh as much as 20 ounces each.



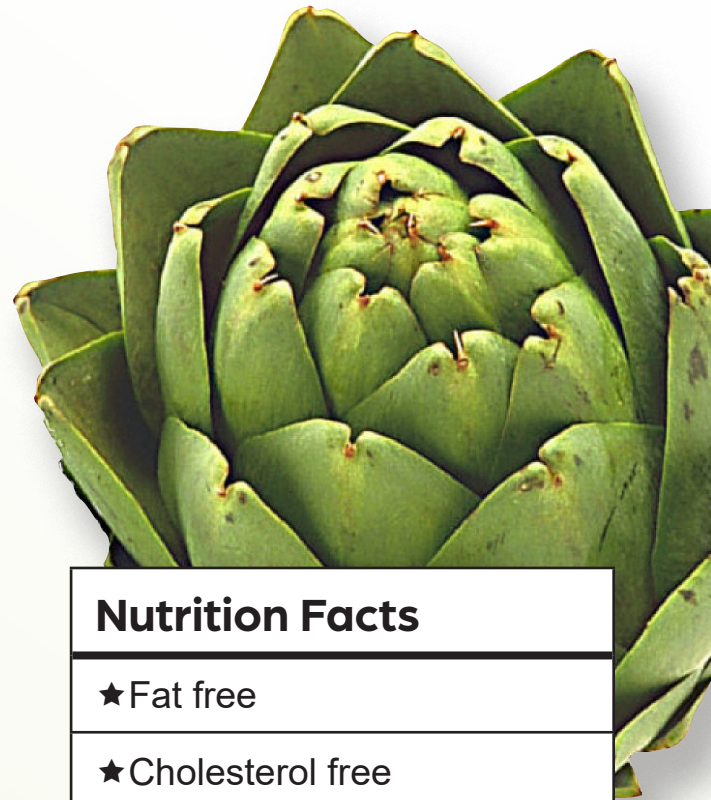
### Uses

Artichokes can be boiled, steamed, microwaved or sautéed. They can be eaten whole or added to other dishes. Small artichokes are good for pickling, stews and casseroles; medium size are good for salads; and large size are good for stuffing.



### Local Connection

Some artichokes are grown in Iowa. Nearly all artichokes commercially grown in the United States are grown in California. Castroville, California claims to be the “Artichoke Capital of the World.”



### Nutrition Facts

★Fat free

★Cholesterol free

★High in fiber

★High in vitamin K

★High in magnesium

★High in folate

★High in vitamin C

★Good source of potassium

Artichokes are vegetables that grow as flower buds on plants.



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## Asparagus

Choose green stalks with dark green to purplish tips that are closed and compact. Thinner stalks are more tender than thicker stalks.

### History

Many Greeks and Romans not only enjoyed the taste of asparagus but also believed the myth it possessed medicinal properties (from healing toothaches to preventing bee stings). Asparagus gained popularity in France and England in the 16th Century and was then introduced to North America.

### Varieties

Asparagus can be found in green, white and purple varieties. Green asparagus is the most common in the United States, while white asparagus is more popular in Europe. White asparagus is grown under the soil.

### Uses

Asparagus is good steamed, stir-fried or cooked in the microwave. It can be used in salads, pasta dishes, or eaten cold with your favorite dip.

### Local Connection

Asparagus grows in Iowa in the spring. In the United States, most asparagus is grown in California, Washington, Michigan and New Jersey.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source in fiber

★ Good source of vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin K

★ Good source of vitamin A

★ Good source of folate

Asparagus are vegetables that grow as plant stalks (stems).



# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies

### Avocado

Avocado skin ranges in color from yellowish green to dark purplish black depending on the variety. Most have a yellow to a pale green flesh. The skin and large seed need to be removed before eating.

### History

Avocados were first cultivated in South America with later migration to Mexico. It was believed a Mayan princess ate the first avocado and it held mystical and magical power. European sailors traveling to the New World used avocados as their form of “butter.”

### Varieties

There are several varieties of avocados, each with a unique flavor and texture. The most common varieties found in the United States are: Fuerte, Gwen, Hass, Pinkerton, Reed, and Zutano. Most avocados are pear shaped.

### Uses

Avocados can be used to make guacamole, added to salads, put on sandwiches, used as butter on your toast, or in place of sour cream.

### Local Connection

Avocados are not grown in Iowa. One tree can produce up to 400 avocados a year. California is currently the largest producer of avocados in the United States. Avocados are available year-round in stores.



#### Nutrition Facts

- ★Cholesterol free
- ★Good source of vitamin C
- ★High in vitamin A
- ★High in vitamin K
- ★High in vitamin E
- ★High in potassium
- ★High in vitamin fiber

Avocados are fruit that grow on trees.

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## Banana

Bananas are a long, thick-skinned fruit. They have a peel which comes off easily. Bananas ripen after they have been picked. They are ripe when the skin is yellow and speckled with brown spots. Avoid bananas with brown spots that seem very soft.

### History

Bananas originally came from the Malaysian area in Southeast Asia. Grown in many tropical regions, bananas are the fourth most important food crop (after rice, wheat and corn).

### Varieties

There are many types of bananas. Cavendish is the familiar yellow type of banana found in most grocery stores. While plantains are from the same plant family, they are not a type of banana. They look very similar to bananas but are starchy and usually eaten cooked.

### Uses

Bananas are delicious eaten after peeling off the skin. Enjoy a banana for lunch or as a snack. Eat sliced bananas in cereal, yogurt or on a peanut butter sandwich. Banana bread and muffins are very popular.

### Local Connection

Bananas are not grown in Iowa. Bananas are the most popular fruit in the world. They are inexpensive and available year-round.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ High in potassium

★ High in vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin B6

★ Good source of magnesium

Bananas are fruit that grow in hanging clusters on plants that resemble trees, but are not actually trees.

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## Bell Pepper

Bell peppers come in a variety of colors, sizes and shapes. Their skin should be firm and the stem should be fresh and green. Take out the seeds on the inside before eating.

### History

Peppers were originally grown in Central and South America. Peppers can be grouped into two broad categories—sweet peppers (which are mild) and chili peppers (which are hot). Bell peppers are the most common sweet pepper.

### Varieties

Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder. Mini peppers, also known as sweet peppers, are a variety of bell peppers.

### Uses

Peppers are good to eat raw or with vegetable dip. Use a variety of colored peppers in your salads. Add peppers to your pasta, Chinese or Mexican dishes.

### Local Connection

Many bell peppers are grown in Iowa. California and Florida grow about 78% of the bell peppers grown in the United States.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source of potassium

★ Very high in vitamin C

★ High in vitamin A

Bell peppers are vegetables that grow on plants.



# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies

### Broccoli

Choose bunches with tight florets that are dark green, purplish or bluish green. Stalks should be very firm. Along with the florets, the stalk is edible and nutritious.

### History

Broccoli has been around for more than 2,000 years and was first grown in Italy. The name broccoli comes from the Latin word brachium, which means “branch” or “arm.” Americans have grown broccoli for over 200 years.

### Varieties

There are many varieties of broccoli. In the United States, the most common type of broccoli is the Italian Green Sprouting variety.

### Uses

Steam broccoli or eat it raw with your favorite dip. Add broccoli to salads, soups, stews, casseroles and stir-fries.

### Local Connection

Broccoli is grown in Iowa. Broccoli is a member of the Brassica family, a group of vegetables known for their health benefits. Broccoli is available fresh or frozen year-round.



#### Nutrition Facts

★Fat free

★Cholesterol free

★High in vitamin C

★High in vitamin K

★Good source of folate

★Good source of fiber

Broccoli are vegetables that grow as florets (clusters of flower buds) on stalks (stems).

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## Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts look like little heads of cabbage. They are similar in taste to cabbage but are slightly milder in flavor and denser in texture.



### History

Brussels sprouts were named after the capital of Belgium where it is thought they were first grown. They are one of the few vegetables that originated in northern Europe. French settlers in Louisiana introduced Brussels sprouts to America.



### Varieties

There are a many types of Brussel sprouts. Some varieties include Churchill, Diablo, Catskill, Jade Cross and Dagan.



### Uses

Brussels sprouts can be steamed, boiled or microwaved. They make a tasty addition to soups, stews and casseroles.



### Local Connection

Many Brussels sprouts are grown in Iowa. Most Brussels sprouts are grown in California. They are available all year long, but their peak growing season is fall to early spring. Brussel sprouts are a member of the Brassica family, a group of vegetables known for their health benefits.



### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Good source of fiber

★ High in vitamin C

★ High in vitamin K

★ Good source of folate

Brussels sprouts are vegetables that grow as small leafy heads on plant stems.

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## Cabbage

Cabbage heads are solid, glossy and light green in color. The stem end should look healthy, trimmed and not dry or split.



### History

Cabbage originated nearly 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean region. Cabbage was introduced to America in 1541 by French explorer Jacques Cartier, who planted it in Canada.



### Varieties

There are at least 100 types of cabbage grown in the world. The most common varieties in the United States are Green, Red and Savoy. Chinese varieties are also available. The two most common Chinese varieties are Bok Choy and Napa.



### Uses

Cabbage is delicious in salads or as coleslaw. It can be steamed, boiled, microwaved or stir-fried. It can also be added to pasta, soups or stews. Sauerkraut is made from cabbage.



### Local Connection

Cabbage grows in Iowa and is in season June through October. Cabbage is a member of the Brassica family, a group of vegetables known for their health benefits.



### Nutrition Facts

★Fat free

★Cholesterol free

★High in vitamin K

★Good source of fiber

★Good source of potassium

★High in vitamin C

Cabbage are vegetables that grow as leafy heads.



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## Cantaloupe

In the United States, cantaloupe is commonly called muskmelon.

Cantaloupe are also known as muskmelon. They are a round melon with a light-brown skin, called the rind, and orange flesh. The rind is not eaten. The center has seeds that need to be scooped out before eating.

### History

Many melons originated in the Middle East. Ancient Egyptians and Romans enjoyed cantaloupe. Melon seeds were transported to North America by Christopher Columbus, and eventually Spanish explorers grew them in California.

### Varieties

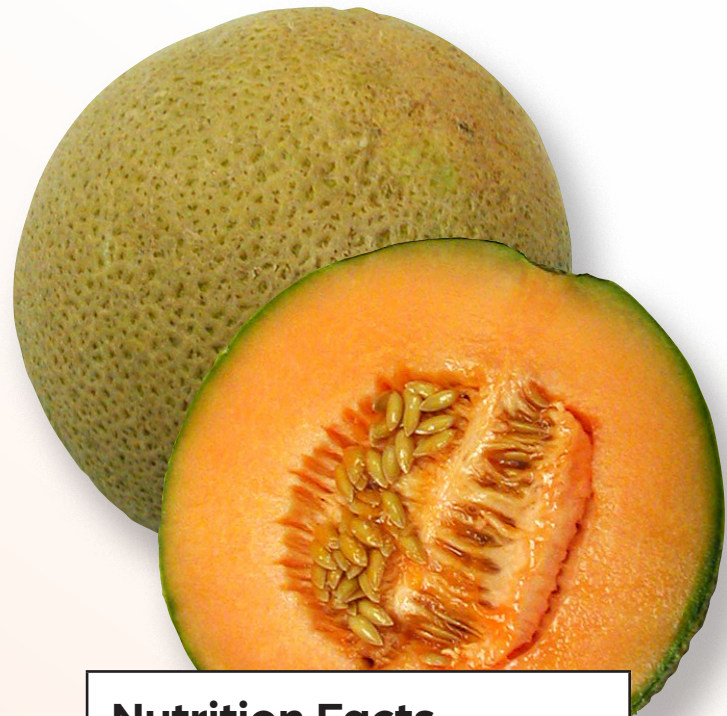
In the United States, the most popular variety is the North American cantaloupe. There are less common varieties which have red or yellow flesh. European cantaloupe has pale green skin.

### Uses

Cantaloupe is delicious raw. It is usually sliced or cut into chunks. Add cantaloupe to fruit salads, fruit soups or salsa. Serve as a dessert with some ice cream and chocolate sauce.

### Local Connection

Cantaloupe is a fruit grown in Iowa and is in season August through October. Other melons grown in Iowa include honeydew and watermelon. Melons are in the same gourd family as squash and cucumbers.



#### Nutrition Facts

★Fat free

★Cholesterol free

★High in vitamin C

★Good source of potassium

★High in vitamin A

Cabbage are vegetables that grow as leafy heads.

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Eat Fruits and Veggies



## Carrots

Choose carrots with a bright orange color and firm skin. Rinse under cool running water and remove the tops before eating.



### History

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan. In Roman times, carrots were purple or white.



### Varieties

The variety of carrots usually found in supermarkets is 7 to 9 inches long and  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. Baby carrots were once longer carrots that have been peeled, trimmed and packaged. There are many other varieties of carrots with colors including white, yellow, red and purple.



### Uses

Raw carrots make a perfect snack. They can also be cooked (steamed, roasted or microwaved). Add carrots to salads, soups and stews, or shred and bake them into cakes or breads.



### Local Connection

Carrots are grown in Iowa and are in season June through September. Over half of the carrots grown in the United States are grown in California. Carrots are available year-round fresh, frozen or canned.



### Nutrition Facts

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source of fiber

★ High in vitamin A

Carrots are vegetables that grow in the ground as taproots (main roots of a plant).



# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies

### **Cauliflower**

In its early stages, cauliflower looks like broccoli, which is its closest relative. While broccoli opens outward to sprout bunches of green florets, cauliflower forms a compact head of undeveloped white flower buds.

### **History**

The carrot originated about 5,000 years ago in Middle Asia around Afghanistan. In Roman times, carrots were purple or white.

### **Varieties**

There are many varieties of cauliflower, including white (the most common), orange, green and purple.

### **Uses**

Cauliflower can be eaten raw or cooked. Steam or microwave, instead of boiling, to better preserve its vitamin content.

### **Local Connection**

Cauliflower is grown in Iowa and is season June through July. Cauliflower grows best in cooler weather. Cauliflower is a member of the Brassica family, a group of vegetables known for their health benefits. Cauliflower is available year-round.



#### **Nutrition Facts**

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ High in vitamin C

★ Good source of folate

★ Good source of vitamin K

★ Good source of vitamin B6

★ Good source of fiber

Cauliflower are vegetables that grow as flowers on plants.



# Pick a Better Snack

Eat Fruits and Veggies

## Cranberry

Cranberries are usually bright red, round and smooth. They can be eaten raw, dried, juiced, or cooked into a recipe, sauce or jam.

### History

Cranberries originated in North America and are commonly grown throughout the United States and Canada.

### Varieties

There are over 100 different varieties of cranberries. The most common variety is the American Cranberry, *Vaccinium Macrocarpon Ait.*

### Uses

Cranberries are regularly made into sauces, jams, and juices, in addition to being eaten dried. Cranberries are rarely eaten raw because of their very sour taste. Cranberries are a Thanksgiving staple and are often eaten alongside turkey.

### Local Connection

Wisconsin is the largest grower of cranberries in the United States. Cranberries are harvested in the fall, but are available dried, frozen or canned year-round.



#### Nutrition Facts

★ Good source of vitamin C

★ High in phytonutrients

★ Good source of fiber (not the juice)

★ Cholesterol free

★ Fat free

Cranberries are fruits grown on dwarf bushes and vines in acidic bogs and marshes.

# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies

### **Edamame**

Look for fresh edamame that is firm and free of blemishes. Edamame is commonly sold frozen, canned or dry roasted in the United States.

### **History**

Edamame is a commonly used in Asian dishes. The first reference to edamame was in Japan in 1275 A.D.

### **Varieties**

There are a lot of different varieties of edamame available, but the most widely available in the United States is 'Envy'.

### **Uses**

Edamame pods can be steamed, boiled or microwaved. Serve with a little bit of salt to enhance the flavor. Edamame is available shelled, in the pod, fresh or frozen.

### **Local Connection**

Edamame are immature soybeans and are sometimes called green soybeans. Edamame can grow in Iowa, but most edamame that we eat is grown in Asia.



#### **Nutrition Facts**

★Cholesterol free

★Good source of vitamin C

★High in folate

★Good source of fiber

★Good source of iron

★Good source of magnesium

★Good source of protein

Edamame is the seed of the plant. We eat them as vegetables, typically.

# Pick a Better Snack

Eat Fruits and Veggies

## Garbanzo Beans

Garbanzo beans can be bought canned, dried or frozen. Canned garbanzo beans are already cooked. Dried beans must be cooked before eating, following the directions on the package.



### History

Also known as Chickpeas, garbanzo beans are native to the Mediterranean area. There is evidence that garbanzo beans were first grown 7,500 years ago in the Middle East.

### Varieties

There are two main types of garbanzo beans: desi, and kabuli. Kabuli are most commonly found in North America.

### Uses

Cooked garbanzo beans can be eaten in stews or eaten cold in salads. Garbanzo beans are commonly made into a popular dip called hummus. Garbanzo beans can also be ground and fried as falafel. They are also eaten roasted as a snack.

### Local Connection

India is the world's largest producer of garbanzo beans. In the USA, garbanzo beans are mostly grown in Washington and Idaho. Chickpeas are the seeds of the plant. They grow in pods on vines. Each pod has about one to three chickpeas inside.

#### Nutrition Facts

★High in protein
★Good source of fiber
★High in folate
★High in fiber
★Good source of magnesium
★Cholesterol free
★High in iron



# Pick a Better Snack

Eat Fruits and Veggies



## Grapes

Grapes come in many colors; black, blue, blue-black, golden, red, green and purple. When buying grapes, look for firm, plump well-colored clusters that are securely attached to their green stems.



### History

Grapes are one of the oldest fruits to be grown. Grapes can be traced back as far as biblical times. Spanish explorers introduced grapes to America about 300 years ago. Most grapes eaten in the United States are grown in California.



### Varieties

Grapes come in more than 50 varieties. The two main types are American and European, which are available as seeded or seedless. Common varieties include Thompson, Flame, Ruby, Perlette and Tokay.



### Uses

Some of the most popular ways in which grapes are used are eaten fresh, dried into raisins, or made into jam, jelly or 100% juice.



### Local Connection

Some grapes are grown in Iowa. Grapes are about 80% water, making them a delicious low-calorie snack or dessert. Raisins are dried grapes and contain only about 15% water. For this reason, nutrients and calories are more concentrated in raisins.



### Nutrition Facts

★ Good source of fiber

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ Good source of vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin K

★ Good source of potassium

Grapes are fruit that grow in clusters on vines.

# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies



# Grapefruit

The outer peel is usually glossy yellow — sometimes blushed with pink. The fruit within is segmented, ranging in color from white to ruby red (usually 11 to 14 segments). Do not eat the peel or seeds.



## History

A relatively new fruit, grapefruit originated in the West Indies in the early 1700's. Grapefruit was first introduced to Florida in the 1820's.



## Varieties

There are three major varieties of grapefruit:

- white
- pink/red
- star ruby/rio red

All grapefruits have a similar tangy-sweet flavor and are very juicy. The pink and red varieties contain more vitamins than the white grapefruit varieties. Some grapefruits have seeds and some are seedless.



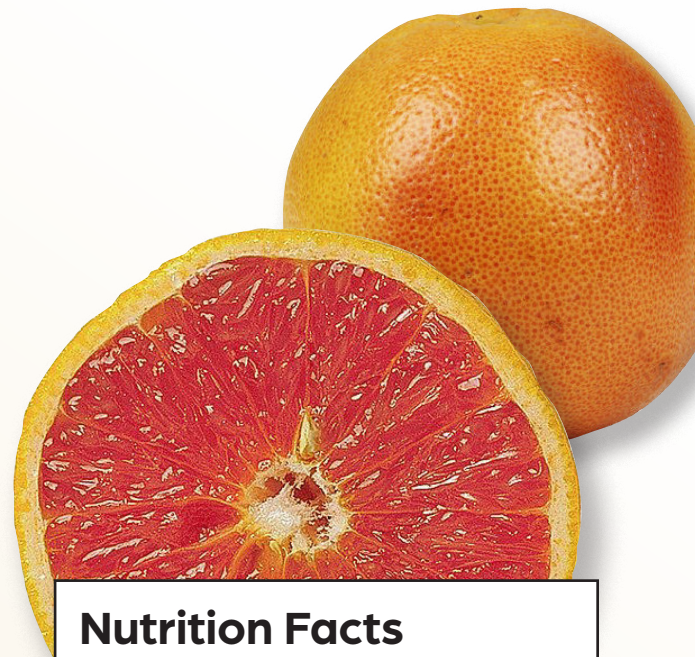
## Uses

Grapefruit can be eaten raw or cooked. Eat raw for breakfast or add segments to a salad. It can also be grilled or broiled. Drink grapefruit juice plain or enjoy in a smoothie.



## Local Connection

Grapefruits are not grown in Iowa. Grapefruits are a member of the citrus family. In the United States, about 80% of grapefruits are grown in Florida. Texas, California and Arizona also grow grapefruit.



## Nutrition Facts

★ Sodium free

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ High in vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin C

★ Good source of vitamin A

★ Good source of fiber

★ Good source of potassium

Grapefruits are fruit that grow in clusters (like grapes) on trees.



# Pick a Better Snack

## Eat Fruits and Veggies

### **Greens**

Greens should have fresh, green leaves. Before cleaning, remove any wilted or yellow leaves. Wash under clean, running water.

### **History**

Greens date back to ancient times. Many greens descended from wild cabbage which originated in the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor.

### **Varieties**

There are many varieties of greens. Greens are part of the vegetables known as leafy greens. The most common greens found in grocery stores include collard, kale, Swiss chard and mustard greens.

### **Uses**

Greens can be served raw in salads. They are often cooked (boiled, steamed or microwaved). Add to stir-fries, soups or stews.

### **Local Connection**

Many greens are grown in Iowa, including collard greens, mustard greens, kale, Swiss chard, turnip greens and beet greens. In the United States, cooking greens is a Southern tradition. Most greens are available year-round.



#### **Nutrition Facts**

★ Fat free

★ Cholesterol free

★ High in vitamin A

★ High in vitamin C

★ High in vitamin K

★ Good source of fiber

Greens are vegetables that grow as plant leaves.



# Pick a Better Snack

Eat Fruits and Veggies

## Jicama

Jicama has thick, brown skin with a similar texture to a potato. The inside is white, crunchy and juicy, like apples. Jicama can be eaten raw or cooked. The skin is not edible and must be peeled before eating.

## History

Jicamas, also known as Mexican Yams, originated in Central and South America and has since spread throughout Asia.

## Varieties

There are several different kinds of jicama based on the region where it was grown. Differences are found in the shape, size, skin texture and color and the growing conditions.

## Uses

Jicamas are usually eaten raw with some seasonings, such as lime, salsa and chili powder. They can be cooked into soups and stir-fried dishes as well. It is often put in fresh fruit salads!

## Local Connection

Jicama is grown throughout the southern United States in the “sun belt.” Most jicamas sold in the United States are imported from Mexico.



### Nutrition Facts

★High in vitamin C

★High in fiber

★Cholesterol free

★Good source of potassium

★Fat free

Jicama grows underground and is known as a root vegetable.