

Fixing Funky Foods

Robin Eubank

Barber County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Introduction

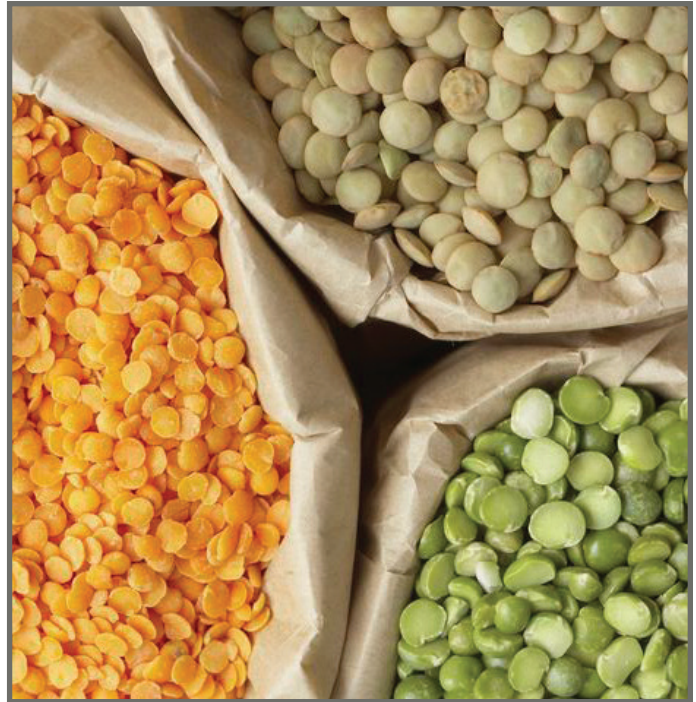
Each year more than 20,000 new foods arrive on grocery store and convenience store shelves, according to the USDA Economic Research Service. Of these foods, one quarter are candies, gum, and snack foods. Beverages make up another 20 percent. That leaves more than 10,000 new foods or varieties of existing foods added to market. Next time you are in the grocery store, take a few minutes to look around at all the new foods on the shelves.

In addition to the newly developed foods, many grocery stores have added a variety of fruits, vegetables, and ancient whole grains that have been enjoyed globally for thousands of years. This is even true for rural grocery stores. These funky foods are the main focus. Funky has synonyms of curious, eccentric, out-of-the-way, and strange. The goal of this fact sheet is to help increase knowledge of a selection of foods and encourage trying a variety of foods.

Dietary Guidelines for 2015 to 2020

In the development of the newly released Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), research found that about three-fourths of the United States population has an eating pattern low in fruit, vegetables, dairy, and healthy oils. Also it was found that more than half of the population is meeting or exceeding the total grain and protein food intake, but would benefit from eating a wider variety of grain and protein foods to improve nutrient intake.

In the key recommendations, the DGA suggest a healthy eating pattern that includes a variety of vegetables, whole fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and a variety of protein foods. Vegetables should include all subgroups — dark green, red/orange, legumes, and starchy. Whole fruits are preferred



over 100 percent juices because of the dietary fiber in the fruit. Fresh, canned, frozen, or dried fruits are all sources of fiber. Whole grains include the entire kernel (endosperm, bran, and germ). Some whole grain examples beyond whole wheat are brown rice, quinoa, and oats. The best sources of low-fat dairy include milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages. Suggested protein sources include lean meats and poultry, seafood, eggs, legumes, nuts, and seeds.

The following chart is divided into fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein foods. The foods included on the list were all found in grocery stores in rural Kansas. Many of these foods are available year round, but a few are seasonal. The What's Cooking: USDA Mixing Bowl website provides recipes for using many of the foods included here.

Fixing Funky Foods

| Fruits | Nutrition | Facts | Cooking |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Blood Orange | vitamin C, fiber, folic acid | store at room temperature; red flesh develops during low temperature nights | salad, marmalade |
| Mango | vitamins A, C | store at room temperature; cut fruit off pit; smaller ones are best | salad, salsa, smoothie, sorbets |
| Papaya | vitamins A, C, fiber, potassium | store at room temperature; when ripe skin yields to slight pressure | salad, salsa, meat tenderizer in marinades |
| Persimmons | vitamin C | refrigerate; soft, deep red-orange skin when ripe; hard fruit is tart | fruit salad, green salad; cooked quickly under broiler |
| Star Fruit | vitamin C | slow to discolor; avoid brown spots; skin is edible | garnish, salad |
| Ugli Fruit | vitamin C, fiber, folic acid | | use like grapefruit, only sweeter |

| Vegetables | Nutrition | Facts | Cooking |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Artichoke | vitamin C, fiber, sodium | flower bud of plant; Greeks and Romans ate with honey and vinegar | boil, steam, sauté, grill, microwave |
| Arugula | vitamins A, C, K, calcium, iron | peppery taste; Mediterranean origin | salads, sandwiches; pasta with goat cheese |
| Avocado | vitamins B, C, E, fiber, folic acid, magnesium, potassium | dark skin shows ripeness; source of healthy fat | sandwiches, salads, in place of sour cream, guacamole |
| Bok Choy | vitamins A, B, C, K | popular in China and Philippines; best in winter season | salads, stir-fry, mixed with cabbage in slaw |
| Brussel Sprouts | vitamins A, C, K, folic acid, manganese, phosphorus | French settlers brought to Louisiana in 18th century | before cooking cut an x on stem end, sauté, stir-fry, steam, microwave |
| Fennel Bulb | vitamin C, fiber, potassium | discard feathery tops; flavor similar to anise or licorice, becomes milder when cooked | braised, grilled, roasted, steamed |
| Jicama | vitamin C, fiber | root vegetable; sweet pear/apple taste; grown in Central America and Caribbean | peel, eat fresh with lime juice, salt, chili powder, or paprika; salad, stew, stir-fry |
| Kale | vitamins A, C, K, iron, potassium | best in winter months; native to Mediterranean | raw in salads or smoothies, sautéed, soups, stews, pasta |
| Leek | vitamins B, C, folic acid | flavor soup or stock; only white part is eaten | slice stalks in half, rinse to remove sand; boil, sauté, stir-fry |



| Vegetables | Nutrition | Facts | Cooking |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Napa Cabbage | vitamin C | common ingredient in Asian stir fry; made into kimchi; milder, more delicate than cabbage | stir fry, sauté, slaw, salad |
| Portobello Mushrooms | vitamin B, selenium, potassium, phosphorus | large cremini; larger are more flavorful; wipe to clean, do not soak | grilling, roasting, sauté; burger substitute |
| Radicchio | vitamins B, K, copper, folic acid | bitter, peppery flavor; used in Italy for centuries | leafy salads; cooks similar to cabbage |
| Rutabaga | vitamins A, C | store in a cool, dry place for a month or longer | boil and serve mashed, roasted, soup, salad |
| Tomatillo | vitamin C | husk should be light brown and fresh looking, firm; common in Texas gardens | remove husks, cook whole or in pieces, steam for 5 to 7 minutes, add salt, pepper, and chilies for a relish |

| Grains | Nutrition | Facts | Cooking |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Arborio Rice | Nutritionally like white rice | higher in starch, grown in Italy | risotto, salads, rice pudding |
| Bulgur Wheat | vitamin B, fiber, protein, magnesium | wheat that is soaked, boiled, dried, cracked removing some bran; dates to 2,800 B.C.; sold as pilaf or taboli | meatloaf, soups, stews, casseroles, salad |
| Chia Seeds | Fiber | mild nutty flavor; staple in Mayan and Aztec diets; chia derived from Mayan language, meaning strength | chia gel can be substituted for eggs in baked dishes; eat raw |
| Couscous | Selenium | made from whole wheat flour; traditional in North Africa | substitute for rice; cook in hot water, fluff with a fork |
| Spelt | vitamin B, fiber, protein, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus | also called dinkel wheat or hulled wheat; dates to 5000 B.C.; contains gluten | soft: 3 cups water to 1 cup simmered for 90 minutes; chewier: 2 cups water added 1/2 cup at a time |
| Flax | fiber, omega-3 fatty acids | milled, ground, or flax meal is the same; grind in a blender or food processor; used in Babylon 3000 B.C.; 300 flax products released in 2010 | add a tablespoon of ground to oatmeal, soup, or yogurt; substitute for 1/8 to 1/4 of flour in baked goods |
| Quinoa | vitamins B and E, calcium, fiber, iron, phosphorus, protein | originated in South America 3000 B.C.; gluten-free grain | pasta substitute; salads, hot side dish |
| Steel Cut Oats | fiber, iron, protein | nutty flavor; called Irish or Scottish oats; quick-cooking options may be available | takes 35-minute cooking time for oatmeal; can soak overnight to reduce to 5 minutes |



| Protein | Nutrition | Facts | Cooking |
|----------------------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans) | iron, fiber, protein | popular in Middle East, and North Africa | hummus, stews, salads |
| Edamame (Young Soybeans) | vitamins B and C, fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium | often a frozen food; originated in Japan around 1275 | salads, Asian food |
| Lentils | fiber, protein | earthy flavor; variety of colors | soups, stews |

Resources

2015 - 2020 Dietary Guidelines – <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/snapshot-2015-2020-dietary-guidelines-americans#recommendations>

Fruit & Vegetable Fact Sheets – <http://lancaster.unl.edu/nep/fruitveggie.shtml>

Food Fit – <http://www.foodfit.com/sitemap.asp>

The Cook's Thesaurus – www.foodsubs.com

What's Cooking USDA Mixing Bowl – <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

Reviewed by

Sandy Procter, PhD, RD/LD, K-State Research and Extension Specialist, and
Jodi Drake, Pratt County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

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