

Eat local!

By Alyssa Rolnick MHSc., RD

Springtime kicks off the growing season in Canada. It's time to start filling up your grocery cart with local produce as it becomes available. When you buy from Canadian farmers, the food tends to be fresher, more nutritious and doesn't require travelling long distances – which helps our environment, too.

Walk the aisles of your grocery store and look for some local foods including vegetables, fruit, meat, fish and dairy produce. You can also visit your local farmer's market, once spring turns into summer. Here are some tips and recipes featuring some of Canada's best produce.



The fresher the better Find out when your grocery store receives its produce delivery and plan your shopping accordingly. Check the label to make sure the produce comes from Canada, which has some of the world's highest standards when it comes to food safety and quality.

Buy in season Some early Canadian produce items include asparagus, snow peas, new potatoes and dark leafy greens such as Swiss chard, watercress, Brussels sprouts and spinach. Choose fresh asparagus by looking for straight, crisp spears with green or purple tips and tight heads. Their stalks should be firm and snap off easily. Consume your fresh produce within a week for best results. But if produce is not yet available, eat frozen or canned, which is packaged immediately after it is harvested.

Eat it right Most fresh produce is best eaten raw. Simply wash, trim and cut a variety of vegetable crudités such as green beans, spring onions and radishes. Some vegetables release more nutrients when lightly steamed or sautéed, including broccoli, carrots and tomatoes.

Local treats Most regions in Canada have award-winning cheeses, and locally grown spring lamb, pork, beef and harvested salmon.

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Asian Noodle Bowl with Spicy Almond Sauce

Serves 6 | Active Time: 18mins | Total Time: 20mins

Almond sauce provides a fresh twist on an Asian-inspired noodle dish. The toasted almond garnish adds extra crunch and extra nutrients to the meal.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup (50 mL) sliced almonds
- 3/4 pound (340 g) whole-wheat spaghetti
- 1/2 head broccoli (about 3/4 pound, 340 g), tops cut into floweret stems peeled and sliced thinly
- 2 cups (500 mL, about 4 ounces) of snow peas, trimmed
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup (250 mL) of unsalted almond butter
- 1/4 cup (120 mL) of reduced sodium soy sauce
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) of brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) chili-garlic sauce
- 1 scallion, green part only (about 3 tablespoons, 45 mL)



Directions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
2. Toast the almonds in a dry skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until they are golden, about 3 minutes.
3. Cook the pasta according to the directions on the package.
4. Three minutes before the pasta is ready, add the broccoli to the pasta pot.
5. One minute before it is ready, add the snow peas and red peppers to the pot.
6. While the pasta is cooking, make the sauce.
7. Place the almond butter, soy sauce, lime juice, brown sugar, chili-garlic sauce and 3 Tbsp of boiling water (from the pasta pot) into a large bowl and whisk until smooth.
8. Drain the noodles and vegetables, return them to the pasta pot, add the sauce and toss to coat.
9. Serve garnished with the toasted almonds and scallion greens.

Nutritional Info Per Serving (1 1/2 cups [375ml]): 410 calories; 15g protein; 16g total fat; 1.5g saturated fat; 17g fibre; 460mg sodium

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