

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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Do you have the best of intentions to increase your vegetable intake, follow the new guidelines, eat healthy.... and just get so bored when you look at that plate of veggies? If so, you are not alone! Along with all the other NEW versions of everything else, we seem to have developed a desire for new flavors as well. The good news is that there are plenty of ways to perk up the flavor of your old stand-by vegetables if you don't want to branch out and try some new ones.

Take a look at the seasonings aisle of your grocery store. Whether you bake or not, there are plenty of flavors there to perk up the veggies. Just because the bottle says it's a marinade for meat doesn't mean that you can't use it on vegetables! Use less. Only marinate for 10-15 minutes, instead of hours. Use it as a sauce to drizzle over after they're zapped in the microwave. Or add a few tablespoons to the pan while you stir-fry.

What are you stir-frying? Don't stick to the standard stir-fry mixture. You can add a bag of pre-cut cole slaw mix, throw in the leftover green beans from last night's dinner at the last minute, and completely change the looks of your plate.

How about pizza for dinner? There's no law that says you can only put green peppers and mushrooms on pizza. Add some chopped broccoli, chop up a fresh tomato, sliver some celery, and you've doubled the vegetable servings. Ask for extra tomato instead of extra cheese for extra health!

You can always add extra chopped tomato to tacos and burritos too. Drain a

can of corn or black beans and fold them into the tortilla too. Use no-salt-added corn to cut the sodium level.

Add an extra can of chopped tomatoes to chili, soup and stews. Don't let leftover vegetables turn into green fuzzies in the refrigerator. Add them to soup, stew or chili. Add them to a package of Ramen noodles along with some leftover chopped meat for a one-dish meal. With the extra meat and vegetable flavor you won't need the whole flavor packet, so just add half of it. It's mostly salt anyway!

If you don't have enough leftover vegetables for soup, you can freeze them until you accumulate enough. They will be soft, but soup vegetables are soft anyway. You can also puree canned or leftover vegetables to thicken soup, or to hide in macaroni and cheese or a noodle casserole. Carrots and sweet potatoes hide easily in the mac and cheese.

Making burgers or grilling some chicken for dinner? Leave the veggies in large pieces and grill them too. For easy handling, stick them on shish-ka-bob skewers. Or layer them in a baking pan and roast them. Turn them once or twice, so they brown a bit on all sides. The high, dry heat lets the natural sugars caramelize and brown. This caramel has a stronger flavor and more aroma, so roasted vegetables taste sweeter than steamed or boiled ones do. You'll be surprised at how good they taste!

If you are sticking to steamed or microwaved, use chicken or vegetable broth instead of water. Add a sliver of fresh ginger, a teaspoon of chopped garlic, a slice of onion or a sprig of fresh herb such as rosemary or thyme for more flavor.

Here's a recipe for Napa cabbage with an interesting sweet-sour sauce. It will perk up your plate for sure. You can adjust the amount of pepper to suit your taste. This comes from our own local business, Sanwa Growers. Enjoy!

## Sanwa's Hot/Sweet Napa with Ginger and Tomatoes

1 medium head of Napa Cabbage	½ lb ripe tomatoes
1 ½ Tbsp minced ginger root	1/4 C golden raisins
2 Tbsp brown sugar	2 Tbsp cider vinegar
1/4 hot chili pepper, minced	salt to taste

Trim base and tip of cabbage. Separate leaves and rinse well. Stack leaves and cut lengthwise into strips about ½ inch wide. Peel and chop tomatoes.

Combine all ingredients in large, heavy skillet or Dutch Oven. Cook and stir on high heat until most of liquid evaporates. Reduce heat and cook about 15 min, stirring often, until cabbage is tender and juices are reduced. Serves 4-6.

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