

PENNY SAVER NEWS

FAX: 932-5261

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BY: Mary A. Keith, Ph.D., L.D.

Food, Nutrition and Health Agent

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

5339 S. County Road 579

Seffner, FL 33584-3334

PH:(813)744-5519 x 136, FAX:744-5776

e-mail:mkeith@ufl.edu

Health in Your Back Yard

While the most of the country is buying frozen, canned or 'fresh' fruit transported from thousands of miles away, we can go pick one of the most nutritious fruits off the trees in our back yards. Talk about local fresh! And if you don't have an orange tree in your yard the chances are good that you can find a neighbor who will be delighted to give away some of their extra bounty. Here in Florida our trees produce so much fruit that some people consider them a nuisance. That's a real pity, because oranges are amazingly nutritious.

If you have them, use them. And as you use them, please, do more than just make juice. True, orange juice is quick, easy, delicious, convenient. But it is not nearly as nutritious as eating the orange. When you throw away the pulp you've just tossed out 85% of the fiber. It's a lot easier to chug down several oranges' worth of calories in juice than it is to eat the oranges. Plus, the fiber in an orange can keep you feeling full for the next 3 to 4 hours, while the juice won't make a dent in your hunger. Squeezing the juice destroys over half the vitamins and other antioxidants too.

Besides vitamin C, what else is in an orange? Plenty! There are over 200 known nutrients. For starters, that orange color is not just there for eye candy. The compounds that make an orange *orange* are nutritious. Some help lower cholesterol levels, others protect us against lung cancer, rheumatoid arthritis or kidney stones. These various color ingredients are not in the juice but the skin. Grating a little orange

zest into a salad dressing, adding some to a stir-fry sauce, mixing it into a salsa or even just using some to jazz up a can of cranberry sauce will all add health benefits as well as flavor.

And that vitamin C does more than slow down a cold. It might not even do that even though many people think so. But the medical evidence for vitamin C fighting off a cold has very little evidence to back it up. So don't thin your pocketbook buying extra vitamin C tablets this winter. What vitamin C does do is help keep our blood vessels from leaking. Leaky vessels bruise easily, we get black and blue splotches and our gums bleed when we brush our teeth. One orange has more than enough for our daily dose of C, enough to keep our blood vessels and gums intact and healthy.

Another vitamin we get from oranges is folic acid, almost 10% of our daily needs from one orange. Folate is important for our nervous system to function well, from developing correctly when we're infants to keeping the brain working when we're aged.

Oranges are also a good source of potassium, one of the three minerals that help to counteract the blood pressure effects of sodium. While not as much, they do have some calcium, another pressure fighter. Wouldn't you rather eat an orange than take hypertension medications? They also have a little vitamin A and thiamin.

All of that comes with just 80 calories in a medium orange. If you eat a whole orange the fiber will slow down how rapidly sugar enters your blood stream. But juice has more calories, and without the fiber has a much bigger, faster impact on blood sugar. If you want to reduce even those few calories, dilute it with water and add calorie-free sweetener. That's what the companies charge you for when you buy 'lite' juice or juice blends. Why pay them when you can do it for free? Don't worry if an

orange has a greenish tinge, that's normal. Thinner skinned fruit usually has more juice, as do smaller fruits. Don't keep oranges in plastic grocery bags, let them breathe. And leave them on the counter, ready to tempt you to eat one.

Here's an easy recipe to add new flavor to rice. Serve this with chicken, pork or ham.

Florida Orange Rice

2 Tbsp vegetable oil	2/3 cup diced celery, stalk and leaves
2 Tbsp diced onion	1/8 tsp dried thyme
2 Tbsp grated orange rind	1 cup uncooked quick brown rice
1 ¼ cup water	1 tsp salt
4 oranges	2 Tbsp sliced almonds optional

Grate rind from one orange. Peel orange, separate and chop sections, catching the juice. Juice the other oranges and add to make 1 cup of juice. Heat oil in heavy saucepan. Add celery and onion and cook until tender. Add water, juice, rind, salt and thyme. Bring to boil, gradually stir in rice. Cover, reduce heat and cook 10-15 minutes or until rice is done. Stir in reserved orange sections and almonds. Serves 6.

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