

Natural Health News

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EVERGREEN SPA & WELLNESS
ELY, MN

SAVING SUMMER'S GOODNESS

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Retail Store Hours

Monday-Saturday

10am-6pm

(Closed Sundays)

The summer is coming to an end. The supply from your local farmers of fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs is dwindling. Now is the perfect time to preserve the freshness from the earth's bounty for the upcoming fall and winter months. I would like to give you some great tips on how to get the most from your fresh foods. Here are several choices for food preservation and storage:

Freezing is an excellent option and it preserves the majority of a food's nutrient and flavors. Did you know herbs freeze well on baking sheets? Once they are solidly frozen, store them in plastic freezer bags in your freezer. You can also puree herbs for easy freezing. Place the freshly washed herbs into a blender with just enough water to make a paste. Blend into a semi-liquid state, then pout the liquid into an ice-cube tray and freeze. Pop the frozen "herb cubes" into a plastic freezer bag, name and date it and you will have garden fresh flavors for your winter soups and stews. Quickly freezing is the key to preserving freshness and flavor. There are three methods to quick-freeze food: immersion in a freezing solution and blasts of cold air. Be sure to keep your frozen foods at a low temperature until you are ready to use them. Slow, natural freezing destroys food because the low temperatures draw the water from the tiny cells affecting color and flavor.

Vegetables, fruits and meats can be dried indoors in a food dehydrator or an oven set at a low temperature. Dried foods are susceptible to insect contamination and moisture absorption and must be properly packaged and stored immediately. There are a few things to remember. First, the food has to be completely cool as warmth causes food to sweat which can create the perfect climate for mold to grow. Second, pack foods into clean, dry, insect-proof containers as tightly as possible without crushing. Third, pack food in amounts that will be used in a recipe, since exposure to air and moisture lowers the quality of the food.

Another preservation method is canning. Canned foods lack enzymes, and vitamins can be destroyed in the canning process of some vegetables. Tomatoes are an exception. Picked at the peak of ripeness, tomatoes have a carotene level considerably higher than store bought tomatoes, and carotene survives the canning process, although other vitamins may not. Canning doesn't improve the quality of food, so if you start out with low quality, it will only get worse in storage.

Using different methods of preserving and storing the year's harvest insures that you and your family will enjoy healthy vegetables, fruits and herbs throughout the winter season. Whenever you can, buy organic produce from local farmers so when you begin your preserving methods you have the freshest foods possible. Store bought commercial produce can be irradiated and, even though they may be less expensive, they have often lost freshness. Try one or more of these methods so you can keep eating your bounty for the months to come!



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"Natural Health
& Wellness Hour"
EVERY
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SAUERKRAUT: THE MIRACLE CABBAGE

Early fall provides the most ideal environment for sauerkraut-making and it can take place on a balcony or deck. Temperatures between 65-70 degrees F produce the best environment for a bacterium called *Leuconostioc mesenteroides* to grow and produce lactic acid. The ideal salinity for sauerkraut brine is 2.25 percent. When the acidity of the brine reaches about 1 percent, another bacterium, *Lactobacillus planetarium*, takes over to finish the job. The end result is tangy, crunchy bits of cabbage to top off a sandwich or round off a heavy meal. The miracle of sauerkraut is that the brine does not have to be inoculated with bacteria for the process to work; the best sauerkraut is made simply with shredded cabbage and sea salt that is magically inoculated with atmospheric bacteria. In much of Eastern Europe, sauerkraut is made not only from shredded cabbage, but from the whole cabbage head. Sauerkraut and other raw fermented foods are beneficial to the digestive system by increasing the healthy flora in the intestinal tract or creating the type of environment for them to flourish. Sauerkraut and its juice are traditional folk remedies for constipation. Fermentation actually increases nutrient values in the cabbage, especially vitamin C. Fermented foods also facilitate the breakdown and assimilation of proteins. They have a soothing effect on the nervous system. Before the days of refrigeration, sauerkraut served as the only source of vitamin C during the winter in northern climates. It was used on long ship voyages to prevent scurvy. During the Civil War, some enlightened doctors fed sauerkraut to prisoners of war, reducing the death rate from smallpox from 90 percent to 5 percent—something we should take note of with the current concerns about the use of smallpox germs as part of biological warfare. Best of all, Sauerkraut makes a synergistic combination with heavy, greasy and cooked foods such as sausage and cooked meats, the kinds of foods that nourish us through the winter. And because it aids digestion, you can eat these foods without feeling tired afterwards just by adding sauerkraut to your plate as a condiment. Sauerkraut is one of man's most ingenious ways to enjoying the garden bounty during the months when fresh fruits and vegetables are unavailable.

SAUERKRAUT RECIPE: To make 1 quart, use 1 medium cabbage, cored and shredded, and place in a bowl. Mix with 1 TBSP. Caraway seeds and 2 TBSP. sea salt. Pound with a wooden pounder or a meat hammer for about 10 minutes to release juices. Place in a quart-sized, wide-mouth mason jar and press down firmly with a pounder or meat hammer until juices come to the top of the cabbage. The top of the cabbage should be at least 1 inch below the top of the jar. Cover tightly and keep at room temperature (65-70 degrees F) for about 3 days before transferring to cold storage. The sauerkraut may be eaten immediately, but it improves with age.

SEPTEMBER SPECIALS

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AND MANY MORE ITEMS!

AUTUMN VEGETABLE SOUP

In a soup pot sauté 1/2 cup chopped onion in 1 TBSP. olive oil over medium heat until soft. Add 2 cloves minced garlic and sauté 1 minute. Add 1/2 cup each kale, cabbage, carrots, red or green sweet peppers (chopped). Cook vegetables for a minute, then turn heat down to low, cover pan, and let cook about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add 2 cups vegetable broth, 1 cup tomato juice, 3/4 cup cooked beans, 1/2 cup corn, 2 tsp. dried instant barley, 2 tsp. orzo pasta and 1 1/2 TBSP. red cooking wine. Bring to a gentle boil and simmer about 15 minutes. At the end, add 1/2 chopped fresh tomatoes and 1 TBSP. fresh chopped parsley. Simmer another few minutes. Enjoy!

“Disease is entirely the result of a conflict between our spiritual and mortal selves.”



~ Dr. Edward Bach ~

