Enjoy Frozen Foods This Month

Did you know that the first frozen fruit sold by stores was in 1930 and was sold as Birds Eye Frosted Foods? Frozen foods have greatly improved since 1930 and are available everywhere. March is National Frozen Foods Month and it is a great time to focus on frozen fruit and vegetables. Frozen fruit and vegetables are picked, processed and frozen usually within 24 hours. Because the time from picking to freezing the produce is so short, frozen fruit and vegetables often have more nutrients than fresh. This is especially true during winter when fresh produce has to travel many miles and days to get to our stores. Look for sales this month on all types of frozen food at your supermarket.

Tired of preparing vegetables and fruit the same way? Try these ideas instead this month.

1. Make sweet potato fries. Wash and slice whole sweet potatoes, drizzle with a little olive oil and sprinkle with cayenne pepper or chili powder and salt. Bake on a baking sheet at 400 degrees until cooked.

2. Choose frozen peach slices for a snack or dessert. Sprinkle the slices with a little ginger, a touch of honey and a few of your favorite nuts.

3. Cut winter squash in half, scoop the seeds and cut each half into slices. Drizzle with a little olive oil, cinnamon and brown sugar. Bake on a baking sheet at 400 degrees until the squash is soft.

Could Changes in Your Kitchen Help with Weight Loss?

- Keep a bowl of fruit in view. Keeping a bowl of fruit in a clear bowl on the counter is a good way to encourage your family to choose fruit when they are feeling hungry. This also applies to keeping cut up fruit and vegetables in your refrigerator. Use clear containers so everyone can see what is available and do any prep work necessary before placing them in the clear container. The easy snack choice then becomes fruits and vegetables because the prep work is done.
Celebrate the goodness of New York State produced maple syrup during Maple Weekend, March 19-20 and April 2-3. Local maple syrup producers open their facilities for free tours from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm each of these days. You can learn more about how maple sap becomes maple syrup by visiting your local library and borrowing *The Maple Syrup Book* by Marilyn Linton or by visiting www.nysmaple.com

**Frozen Fruit Cups**

**Ingredients:**
3 bananas
24 ounces fat-free strawberry yogurt
10 ounces frozen strawberries, thawed, with their juice
8 ounces canned crushed pineapple, with the juice

**Directions:**
1. Line 18 muffin-tin cups with paper baking cups.
2. Dice or mash bananas and place in a large mixing bowl.
3. Stir in yogurt, strawberries with juice and pineapple with juice.
4. Spoon into muffin-tin cups and freeze at least 3 hours or until firm. Remove frozen cups and store in a plastic bag in freezer. Before serving, remove paper cups and let stand 10 minutes.

**Nutrition Facts:** Serving Size: 1 muffin cup, 50 calories, 0 calories from fat, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 25mg sodium, 12g total carbohydrate, 1g dietary fiber, 9g sugar, 2g protein, 0% vitamin A, 6% calcium, 15% vitamin C, 2% Iron.

**Source:** *Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future—The Healthy Family Guide Book* (USDA)