

**Broccoli
Strawberries**

Seasonal Eating

May

**THIS MONTH I USED THE FEATURED
PRODUCE ON THESE DAYS:**

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How Can I Get More?

Broccoli

5 Cut up raw or lightly steamed broccoli into bite size pieces and add to your favorite pasta salad recipe.

4 Add cut up broccoli to a vegetable, beef or chicken stir-fry. Add the stalks 1-2 minutes before the florets.

3 Add lightly steamed broccoli to a quiche or frittata along with a little shredded Cheddar cheese for a great eggs and broccoli combination.

2 Follow all the TV chefs and roast your broccoli by tossing it with olive oil, salt, pepper and minced fresh garlic. Roast at 400-425 degrees until tender, about 10-15 minutes. Toss with parmesan cheese immediately and serve.

1 Dress up your sandwich for lunch by making a cup of broccoli cheese soup to go along side.

Strawberries

5 For a decadent dessert dip fresh berries in melted dark chocolate for a special treat.

4 Make individual strawberry trifles by layering cubed angel food cake, sliced strawberries and vanilla pudding in pretty glasses.

3 Top a spinach salad with sliced strawberries, celery, green onions, almonds and currants. Dress with a balsamic vinaigrette for a powerfully nutritious salad.

2 Perk up breakfast with sliced strawberries in your favorite cereal.

1 Add sliced strawberries and cashews to your favorite chicken salad recipe. A little curry powder and orange juice concentrate in the mayonnaise dressing complements the strawberries nicely!

Broccoli: Stalks vs. Florets

It seems like the florets get all of the attention in the broccoli. Both the stalks and the florets are nutritious as broccoli is a good source of fiber and vitamin A and an excellent source of vitamin C and high in folate. The florets are actually higher in vitamin A with more beta carotene. The darker color is a sign that they are higher in nutritional value. In general, the darker the color the more nutrients a fruit or vegetable has in it. However, the stalks are also beneficial so we want to make use of all of the plant. The stalks are wonderful when grated or finely julienned and used in slaw recipes (you can even buy bags of broccoli slaw mix). You can also chop them up and use in soups or mixed vegetables with carrots and peas. Add the chopped stalks to salads or stir-fries for a new twist.

Did You Know?

- The 600 varieties of strawberries today stem from 5 or 6 wild species and are a member of the rose family.
- Although strawberries continue to turn red, unripe berries do not ripen after being picked.
- Smaller berries often have more flavor than larger ones.
- Strawberries contain more vitamin C than other berries.
- One pint of strawberries = about 12-14 large berries

Welsh Broccoli and Chicken Casserole

- 2 slices white bread, cut into cubes
- 2 chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 4-5 mushrooms, sliced and sautéed in vegetable spray
- 1 (10-ounce) box frozen broccoli, thawed and cooked in microwave or fresh broccoli, cleaned and cooked
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup chicken broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 roll round buttery crackers, crushed

In greased 1 1/2 - 2 quart casserole, layer the bread cubes. Cover with cooked chicken, then sautéed mushrooms and cooked broccoli. For sauce: melt 4 tablespoons butter in saucepan. Add flour and cook and stir for a minute. Whisk in milk and broth and cook until thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over casserole and with a fork loosen layers so the sauce gets to the bottom. Sprinkle cracker crumbs over the top and spray with vegetable spray. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

Chef's Notes: Broccoli

Overcooking broccoli enhances its strong flavor and aroma, dulls the color and leaches out nutrients. It should be cooked a minimum amount of time until tender but still crisp.

About 7 minutes is optimum steaming time for broccoli. Remove the lid several times during cooking to release the steam which helps the broccoli retain its bright green color.

Although raw broccoli is often served as crudité with dip, a quick blanching will both tenderize and reduce the strong flavor.

Vividly green vegetables will slowly turn a drab yellow-green color when in the presence of acids for a moderate period so add acidic dressings just before serving.

Lemon juice and mustard seeds can liven up cooked broccoli but don't add until the cooking is complete.

If using larger stalks, peel the tough exterior off with a vegetable peeler or knife.

Look for broccoli with tightly closed tops that don't have any sign of flowering. Store in a damp paper towel or perforated bag and don't wash until ready to use.

Featuring: Frozen Strawberries

The strawberry season is so short that you will want to preserve some of the harvest for later in the year. To freeze strawberries, place one layer of clean, whole berries on a baking sheet and freeze until firm. Remove and package in freezer bags. Serve slightly frozen to help retain their shape. To pack in sugar, halve or third berries and mix 1 cup fruit to 1 cup sugar. Allow to stand until sugar dissolves and pack fruit and juice into bags leaving 1/4" headspace.

Berry Citrus Twist Fruit Salad

- 1 quart fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
- 1/2 fresh pineapple, chunked (or a 20 ounce can pineapple chunks, drained)
- 1/3 cup orange marmalade
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup blueberries

Combine strawberries and pineapple in a bowl and set aside. Stir together orange marmalade with a little of the orange juice to break it up and then add the rest of the juice and the lemon juice and whisk together. Pour over fruit and toss gently. Add blueberries just before serving.

Strawberry Season

In Tennessee the first berries come in around Mid-April. The first two weeks of May are the peak of the season., which, depending on the weather, may last until early June. If it is too hot they will only last through the end of May, so stock up early!