

Combine Your Colors For Healthy Cooking!



Sure, it looks pretty having your basket or refrigerator filled with a colorful assortment of fruits and vegetables, however there is another reason why it's a good idea to have variety in your shopping basket. More often than not, the different colors found in different fruits and vegetables represent a variety of different nutrients. We all remember being told as children that we should eat our greens, but what about our reds, yellows, blues and purples? A healthy balanced diet, that provides a variety of different nutrients, is an essential element of good health and wellbeing.

Phytochemicals are the naturally occurring chemicals found in fruits and vegetables that give them their different colors, smells and tastes. We now know that they also provide a variety of different health benefits, some of which include:

Green: Contain a number of nutrients including chlorophyll, folate, fiber, calcium, vitamin C, lutein, beta-carotene and zeaxanthin. They also contain indoles, carotenoids and saponins that are believed to have anticancer properties.

Examples include:

- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Green apples
- Green capsicum
- Cucumbers
- Avocados

Blue and Purple: Contain nutrients that include fiber, ellagic acid, vitamin C, lutein, quercetin and zeaxanthin. They also contain a pigment called anthocyanin, which is

where the distinct color comes from. This also holds antioxidants that reduce the risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease.

Examples include:

- Blue berries
- Plums
- Beetroot
- Eggplant
- Blackberries

Red: These fruits and vegetables contain nutrients such as ellagic acid, hesperidin and quercetin. They also contain the pigment lycopene which acts as a powerful antioxidant, promoting a healthy heart and fighting cell mutation.

Examples include:

- Red capsicum
- Red Chilli
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Cherrys
- Raspberries

Orange and Yellow: Contain a variety of nutrients including, flavonoids, lycopene, potassium and vitamin C. It also contains beta-carotene which helps give the vibrant color as well as keep your eyes and mucous membranes healthy.

Examples include:

- Yellow and Orange Capsicum
- Squash
- Oranges
- Lemons
- Pumpkin
- Pineapple
- Corn

Browns and whites: These contain nutrients such as beta-glucans, EGCG, SDG, and lignans which work to boost and improve immune function. Some such as garlic, also include allicin, which has antiviral and antibacterial properties.

Examples include:

- Mushrooms
- Banana
- Cauliflower
- Potatoes
- Brown pears
- Onions
- Ginger

Not only do different fruits and vegetables contain these different essential nutrients and phytochemicals, but they also often taste delicious when combined with each other, which is just another great reason to make sure each meal is filled with a combination of colors!

Try these delicious grilled vegetable shish-kebabs. They are easy to make, packed full of a variety of different nutrients and they are scrumptious!

Grilled Vegetable Shish-Kebabs



Ingredients

You will need 10 x Shish kebab skewers

Vegetables:

- 1 x Small red pepper
- 1 x Small yellow pepper
- 1 x Large red onion
- 1 x Medium zucchini
- 10 x Small mushrooms sliced in half

Marinade:

- 1 Large garlic clove
- ½ Cup oil
- ½ Cup soy sauce
- ¼ Cup honey
- 1 tsp Sesame oil
- Pinch of ground pepper

Preparation:

- Slice all vegetables into evenly sized chunks, and then alternately position them onto the skewers, making sure the end pieces are all firmly in place
- Finely dice the garlic and add it to the rest of the marinade ingredients, mixing well. Once mixed brush a generous amount over the shish kebabs

Cooking:

- Place over hot grill or BBQ and rotate every couple of minutes
- Continue to brush with marinade
- They are cooked when the vegetables start to appear char grilled

These delicious shish-kebabs can be enjoyed hot or cold, with rice and a side salad, or just as they are!