

9 Weeks of Summer – Week 6

5 Must Use Summer Cooking Ingredients



Chives

Chives are part of the onion, leeks, garlic, and shallots family. They are easy to grow and they come back every year. – a very forgiving plant to grow in your garden! They are rich in Vitamin C and E, and folic acid, which are all cancer-fighting properties. For people who don't like the flavour of onion, chives have a much lighter taste. Chop them up and mix with Dijon mustard, olive oil and lemon juice for a light-tasting, homemade dressing. They're great with omelettes, soups and potatoes but remember to add them at the end of cooking. This maintains the colour and preserves the flavour.

Strawberries

Strawberries epitomize summer. Their burst of flavour is exhibited by its vibrant red colour and natural sweetness. Research has shown that strawberries are high in antioxidants and regulate blood sugar, making them a wise addition to salads, oatmeal, or yogurt. To maximize the Vitamin C content, it is recommended to store strawberries for two days in a refrigerator storage bin for optimal humidity. For a delicious low-fat summer parfait, add lemon juice, a touch of honey and mint or basil to your strawberries. Then layer with fresh yogurt, and a sprinkle of nuts or granola.



Coconut

If you aren't spending the summer on the beach, enjoy the next best thing with a taste of the tropics! Coconut is highly nutritious and rich in fiber and phosphorus. It is classified as a “functional food” because it proves many health benefits beyond its nutritional content. The meat of the coconut is very good in destroying bacteria from infected food, and the coconut water is good for kidney and urinary bladder problems. When purchasing coconut, it's best to look for the shredded, non-sweetened variety at your local health food store. Try using coconut milk and white wine as a light, sweet sauce for fresh clams and fish.



Corn

What food is more synonymous with summer than fresh corn on the cob? As a staple for barbeques, there's nothing quite like that crispy bite of sweetness, even when it gets stuck in your teeth. Corn is a great source of antioxidants, as well as Vitamin B1, folate, fibre and Vitamin C. To barbecue corn, soak it in water with the husk on, and then put it on the grill. Rather than the traditional butter and salt topping, try dressing your corn with lime juice and chili powder.



Peppers

Green peppers are delicious, but in the summer, focus on some brighter colours—namely orange, yellow and red peppers because they're sweeter, more abundant and tasty during August and September. Peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C and vitamin A – two very powerful antioxidants. Red peppers are one of the few foods that contain lycopene, a carotenoid whose consumption decreases the chances of prostate cancer and cancers of the cervix, bladder and pancreas. Whether you're adding them to a stir-fry for a bit of crunch, eating them raw as a refreshing snack, or barbecuing them for a softer feel, they never fail to satisfy.

