Fruits & Vegetables: Eat the colors of the rainbow

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Fruits & Vegetables: Eat the colors of the rainbow

While the rainbow may not be the technically accurate description, fruits & vegetables broadly fall into five color groups. Each color is a carrier of specific phytochemicals that perform some unique functions including cell development, immune support and fighting specific diseases:

RED: Tomatoes, Red Grapes, Red Capsicum, Watermelons, Raspberries, Strawberries etc. Lycopene is the antioxidant that gives these fruits & vegetables their unique color. Its heart healthy and helps fight cancers.

PURPLE: Blueberry, Raspberry, Eggplant, Red Cabbage, Purple Grapes etc. Anthocyanin is the water-soluble flavonoid that

imparts the colors purple, blue and red. They are anti-inflammatory, anti-viral and have anti-cancer benefits.

ORANGE: Carrots, Sweet Potato, Pumpkin, Kale, Mangoes, Nectarines, Grapefruit etc. Carotenoids are fat-soluble antioxidants in foods the most popular or familiar is Beta-Carotene that is converted to Vitamin A in the body. TIP: Cooking/chopping these vegetables releases more nutrients than eating these raw or whole.

GREEN: Spinach, Artichokes, Peas, Green Beans, Cabbage, Broccoli, Kiwi, etc. Indoles, Saponin & Carotenoids are phytochemicals in these green leafy vegetables, and are known to have anti-cancer properties.

BROWN/WHITE: Cauliflower, Mushrooms, Garlic, Potatoes, Onion, Bananas, Dates etc. Allicin, Quercetin & Sulphoraphane are compounds along with Vitamin C and Potassium in these fruits and vegetables. Known anti-inflammatory, promotes heart health & cholesterol.

Spice oils & oleoresins

Microgreens for the apartment gardener

Fruits offer the nutritional rainbow, but select 'local colors'.

While the fruit rainbow ensures nutrient diversity, there's wisdom in buying regional. Many growers harvest raw fruit & artificially accelerate ripening in transit. It could reach you several months old with nutrients diminished. While occasional indulgence is nice, regionally grown is better on a regular basis. Check your regional crop calendar, there's quite a rainbow to choose.

Traditional Chinese Medicine prescribes seasonal 'colors' for health.
Here's the traditional wisdom. Spring: detoxify, so green leafy vegetables & white radish to stimulate liver function. Summer: reduce yang (heat), so red carrots, sweet potatoes to cool. Autumn: strengthen lungs and gut ahead of winter, so whites & some colors like peppers, onions, leek, mushroom. Winter: reduce yin (water), so the rainbow of pumpkins, potatoes, beets, turnips & spinach for warmth. Your seasonal 'colors'.

Open Sesame!
Seeds in an assortment of colors
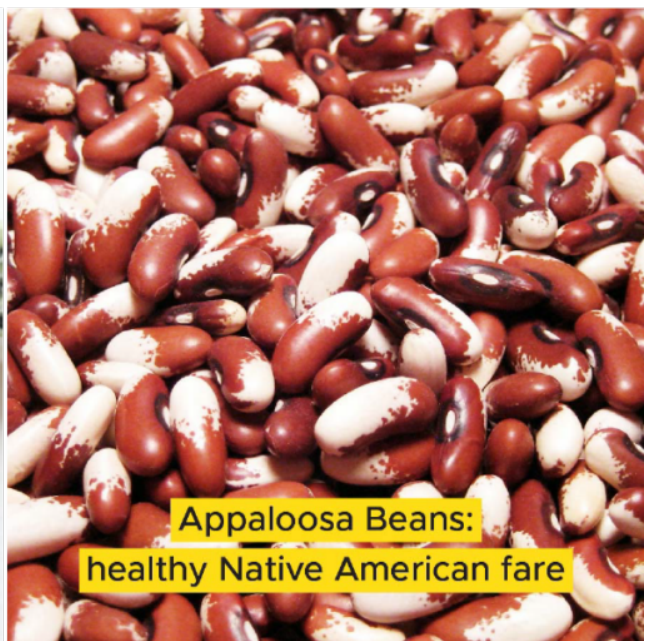
Appaloosa Beans:
healthy Native American fare

Open Sesame! They come in colors like white, black, tan, red, gold.

Yes, sesame seeds come in colors and each has a delicate flavor difference. What's more, they contain high levels of calcium, magnesium, iron & phosphorus, with a ¼ cup providing a third of daily value. More importantly, they contain lignans (sesamin & sesamolin), that are powerful against cholesterol & high blood pressure. So eat more sesame seeds and look for the rainbow.

Appaloosa Beans: healthy Native American fare, named for a horse.

Appaloosa beans are beauties — ivory white speckled with purple, burgundy, brown. Just ¼ cup provides 15 g fiber & 9 g protein. Like pinto or kidney beans in flavor & texture, Appaloosa is wonderful in stews, casseroles, chili, and a healthy meat substitute. The tender green outer pods are also edible, making this a 'whole meal bean'. Talk about Native wisdom!
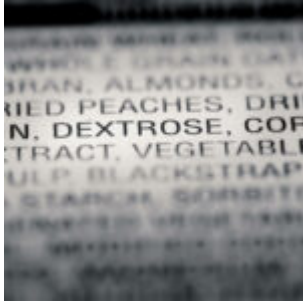
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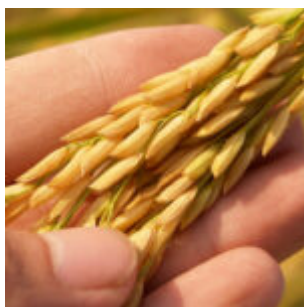
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