

Food labels can be confusing. Nobody has time to read every label of every food item, or we'd be there all day! While it is good to be calorie conscious, it is more important to be nutrient conscious. The first thing I look at is the ingredient list, not the calorie or fat content. It takes no time to glance at the ingredient list and decide if it's still something you want to buy. If the list of ingredients goes on for more than three lines, or the words look unfamiliar - like maltitol syrup, soy lecithin, oligofructose, evaporated cane juice invert syrup, etc - it goes back on the shelf. For example, peanut butter should consist of peanuts, oil, and maybe some salt and/or sugar - all familiar ingredients. Looking at ingredients makes one eat better. Once I read *high fructose corn syrup*, *maltodextrin*, or *fractionated palm kernel oil*, it doesn't sound appetizing, even if the calorie content is low. I challenge you all to look at what exactly you're putting in your bodies!

One Curious Eater,
Kate Hosey, Produce Box Intern

Roasted Garlic

- 1 Preheat the oven to 400°F.
- 2 Peel away the outer layers of the garlic bulb skin, leaving the skins of the individual cloves intact. Using a knife, cut off 1/4 to a 1/2 inch of the top of cloves, exposing the individual cloves of garlic.
- 3 Place the garlic heads in a baking pan; muffin pans work well for this purpose. Drizzle a couple teaspoons of olive oil over each head, using your fingers to make sure the garlic head is well coated. Cover with aluminum foil. Bake at 400°F for 30-35 minutes, or until the cloves feel soft when pressed.
- 4 Allow the garlic to cool enough so you can handle it without burning yourself. Using a small knife, cut the skin slightly around each clove. Use a cocktail fork or your fingers to pull or squeeze the roasted garlic cloves out of their skins.

Delish on slices of good crusty artisan bread or mixed into pasta, rice, soups and stews. Yum! ☺

Hi Courtney,

Two little tips to share .. Last year I froze my tomatoes by just popping them in a freezer bag. When I got ready to use them for cooking soups, stews and sauces, I took as many as I needed out of the freezer. Before they defrost completely (and this is only about 10 minutes) the skins just slip right off you can cut off the core and they are ready to use.

Also did you know that you can cube and roast butternut squash without peeling it? Wash the outside and the skin is actually edible... we have been enjoying it roasted with a bit of olive oil, and any combination of nutmeg, cinnamon, powdered ginger and allspice... Yum

Debbie O, in Raleigh

Great ideas, Debbie! Thanks! ☺

Israeli Eggplant Salad

- 1 medium eggplant
- 2 hard boiled eggs, chopped
- 2 Tbsp mayo
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Salt & black pepper, to taste

Cut eggplant lengthwise. Roast, cut side down, at 400 F, for about 30 minutes. Drain eggplant in sieve for 2-3 minutes. Chop eggplant. Combine eggplant with next 3 ingredients and mix gently. Season to taste with garlic powder, salt & pepper. Enjoy!

ROASTED CABBAGE WITH SIMPLE BALSAMIC REDUCTION

Start to finish: 10 minutes' preparation, 30 minutes to roast.

- 4 cups chopped red cabbage (in 1-inch pieces)
- 4 cups chopped green cabbage (in 1-inch pieces)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

SIMPLE BALSAMIC REDUCTION (20 minutes)

- 1 ½ cups balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled

Heat oven to 450 degrees F

For the cabbage: Core and chop all cabbages and mix together in a large roasting pan. Drizzle oil, salt and pepper over cabbage, and toss to mix well.

Roast for 30 minutes, uncovered, stirring once halfway through. Cabbage is done when still crisp-tender and edges begin to caramelize. Remove from oven, and drizzle with Simple Balsamic Reduction to taste, if desired. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

For the reduction: In a small pot, combine vinegar, sugar and garlic. Bring to a moderate boil, and boil 5 minutes to reduce mixture by half.

Reduce heat to low, and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened (about as thick as pancake syrup). Remove and discard garlic, and serve. (Leftovers can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to one week.)

Makes about ¾ cup.

From Beverly Mills and Alicia Ross' Desperation Dinners

Storage tips from Courtney:

Tomatoes

Keep tomatoes at room temperature, on a plate. Never store them in a plastic bag. If you want to speed the ripening process, put them in a pierced paper bag with an apple, which emits ethylene gas, a ripening agent.

Once ripe, tomatoes will last 2-3 days. Keep cut tomatoes fresh in the fridge by storing unwrapped, with cut-side down, in a small bowl or plate.

Eggplant

Refrigerate eggplants in a plastic bag in the veggie drawer. Eggplants will last four to five days. After that, they become bitter.

Bell peppers

Refrigerate peppers, unwashed in the veggie drawer. Keep them dry, as moisture will cause them to rot. Red and yellow peppers will last 4-5 days; green, about a week.

Peaches

Ripen at room temperature, stem end down. A sweet flowery smell means they are ripe and should be refrigerated unwashed. They will last in the fridge 3-5 days generally. White peaches ripen more quickly. Eat within a day.

Here's one of Marshall's favorite ways to enjoy sweet peppers:

"Cut the tops off Key Largo or bell peppers and seed. Stuff peppers with cooked rice, cooked burger and Manwich. Freeze stuffed peppers. Cook and enjoy all winter." Yum, Marshall! ☺