Blueberry and Blue Cheese Salad

Yield 4 Servings

Blueberry and Blue Cheese Salad

1 cup fresh Florida blueberries
8 cups salad greens (spring mix, romaine or your favorite)
1/2 lemon, juiced
2 tablespoons Florida honey
1/2 cup blue cheese cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon mild vinegar (white or rice wine vinegar)
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation

In a small bowl, whisk together oil, sour cream, honey, vinegar and lemon juice. Taste vinaigrette and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Rinse and dry blueberries.

In a medium-sized bowl, dress the salad greens with a small amount of vinaigrette. Toss to coat salad greens and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper if necessary. Place dressed salad greens on serving plate, and top with blueberries and blue cheese.

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Blueberry Breakfast Casserole

Yield 6 Servings

Blueberry Breakfast Casserole

2 cups fresh Florida blueberries, rinsed and dried
8 large Florida eggs, beaten
1/4 cup maple syrup
1 loaf bread (any kind)
1 1/2 cups low-fat milk
4 ounces low-fat cream cheese (cold so it can be cubed) 1/4 cup butter, melted
Cooking pan spray

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray a 9 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. Place half of the bread cubes in the dish. Evenly place the cream cheese cubes and 1 cup of the blueberries over the bread. Add the remaining bread cubes and blueberries to the top of the casserole. Cover the casserole when baking and remove the foil so the casserole can brown on top. Let cool slightly and serve warm with extra maple syrup on the side.
Florida Blueberries

Grown in mostly inland Florida counties, the blueberry is available from March through May, with peak availability in April. Blueberries, like all other dark purple and blue fruits, are high in antioxidants, which can help with the aging process.

How to buy:
They should be firm and brightly colored. Always check the bottom of the container for stains from rotting or moldy berries. Blueberries should be consumed two to three days after purchase.

Tips for storage:
Never allow blueberries to dry out. Use a damp paper towel to help keep moisture in the package, but do not rinse them until it is time to eat them. As soon as blueberries start to wilt, separate by hand. To freeze blueberries, arrange them in a single layer on a cookie sheet. This way they will freeze evenly and you won’t end up with a brick of frozen berries. After they are frozen, transfer them to a freezer bag and be sure to label with the date. They can be stored frozen for up to six months.

Cooking tips:
Wash blueberries before eating. Add blueberries to batters or mixes at the last minute to prevent them from breaking. Use frozen leftover blueberries in smoothies or milkshakes. Lightly heat with sugar and a splash of brandy to make a wonderful topping for desserts or ice cream.

Flavors well with:
Lemon, cinnamon, cloves, pecans, peaches, yogurt, mint

Nutrition info:
Serving Size: 148g (1 cup) • Calories 84
Calories from fat 4.41g • Total Fat 0.49g
Total Carbohydrate 21.45g
Protein 1.10g
Fiber 3.6g
**Asian Style Snap Beans**

Yield 4 to 6 Servings

1 pound fresh Florida green beans
1/4 cup of your favorite Asian sauce (spicy or sweet)
2 tablespoons fresh grated ginger root (or 1 teaspoon dried)
1 tablespoon sesame seeds (black or white)
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

**Preparation**

Cook green beans in a large pot of lightly salted water until desired tenderness (about 4 minutes). Drain beans and place in a mixing bowl. Toss with Asian sauce, ginger, and sesame seeds. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

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**Snap Bean and Tomato Saute**

Yield 4 to 6 Servings

2 pounds of fresh Florida snap beans
3 large Florida tomatoes, seeded and chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 bunch of fresh parsley, finely chopped
1/4 cup of water
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

**Preparation**

Wash and rinse the snap beans. Then cut off the tip of each end. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

In a tall-sided pot, sauté the onions in olive oil until they start to turn translucent. Stir in the garlic and continue cooking a few minutes more. Add the tomatoes and green pepper and cook for another five minutes. Add the fresh green beans and green pepper and cook for another five minutes. Add the fresh green beans. Bring liquid in pan to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 3 minutes or until desired tenderness. Serve warm as a side dish.
Florida Snap Beans

Florida ranks first nationally in the production, acreage and total value of fresh market snap beans. They are available from October through May, with peak months of February, March and April.

How to buy:
If the snap beans are bendable, leave them behind; they should break or snap crisply. The pods should be smooth and uniformly colored. The pointy ends should be perky and undamaged, and there should be no wrinkling, bruises or shriveled spots.

Tips for storage:
Store beans in a ventilated plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Cooking tips:
To get the best flavor out of snap beans, do not overcook them. Cook them in slightly salted water for four to seven minutes, then plunge them into ice water to stop the cooking process. Make sure to trim the top of the bean where it was attached to the plant.

Flavors well with:
Bacon, olives, onion, tomatoes, basil, oregano, dill, rosemary, marjoram

Nutrition info:
Serving Size: 110g (1 cup) • Calories 34
Calories from fat 1.17g • Total Fat 0.13g
Total Carbohydrate 7.84g
Protein 2g
Fiber 3.7g
Strawberry and Pecan Salad with Honey Dressing

Yield 4 Servings

1 cup Florida strawberries, rinsed, dried, hulled and sliced
1 ripe Florida avocado, sliced
3 cups salad greens (arugula, romaine, leaf lettuce)
Toast pecans
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon honey (tupelo, orange blossom)
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
Juice from 1/2 lemon
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

**Preparation**

In a small bowl, whisk together sugar, olive oil, honey, vinegar and lemon juice with salt and pepper. Taste vinaigrette for seasoning and adjust with salt and pepper. Arrange the salad greens in a serving bowl on an individual plate and add the slices of avocado and strawberries on top. Lightly toss salad dressing to coat, drizzle with salad dressing and toss gently. Add toasted pecans. Serve as soon as salad is complete.

Strawberry Clouds

Yield 4 to 6 Servings

2 cups fresh Florida strawberries, rinsed, dried, hulled and sliced
1 lemon, zested and juiced
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
Powdered or superfine sugar to taste
1/2 cup light brown sugar

**Preparation**

In a chilled bowl, whip the cream and a tablespoon of the powdered sugar until soft peaks start to form. Slowly fold in the yogurt, adding more lemon or sugar if needed. In the bottom of six small bowls or one large bowl, add the strawberries. In a chilled bowl, whip the cream and a tablespoon of the powdered sugar until soft peaks start to form. Slowly fold in the yogurt, adding more lemon or sugar if needed. In the bottom of six small bowls or one large bowl, add the strawberries.

with white strawberries on the side.

Chill in the refrigerator for at least two hours until sugar forms a crust. Serve cold.

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Florida Strawberries

Florida is known for being the largest producer of strawberries during the winter, and the primary growing area is Plant City. Strawberries are available from November until the beginning of April, with peak months of production in February and March.

**How to buy:**
Choose strawberries that are plump, fragrant and firm, with no signs of bruising, leaking or mold on the bottom of the container and no greenish white shoulders at the stem.

**Tips for storage:**
It is always best to eat strawberries the day of purchase. The best way to store strawberries is to cook them into a sauce or jam. You can freeze strawberries by hulling, lightly washing and then drying them. Next, freeze them on a tray in a single layer before transferring them to a freezer bag with the date.

**Cooking tips:**
Never hull strawberries until they have been washed or they will absorb too much water and become mushy and waterlogged. There are many modern and traditional recipes for strawberries, but the best way to enjoy them is how nature intended - simply prepared and fresh.

**Flavors well with:**
Balsamic vinegar, cereal, cheese, chocolate, honey, mint

**Nutrition info:**
*Serving Size: 144g (1 cup, whole) • Calories 49*
*Calories from fat 3.87g • Total Fat 0.43g*
*Total Carbohydrate 11.06g*
*Protein 0.96g*
*Fiber 2.9g*
Sweet Corn with Southern BBQ Butter

Yield 4 Servings

Ingredients:
- 1/4 cup of your favorite barbecue sauce (sweet, spicy, etc.)
- 1/4 stick butter
- 4 ears fresh Florida sweet corn, shucked
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation:
Preheat oven to medium heat. In small saucepan over low heat, combine barbecue sauce and butter until melted and smooth. Place sweet corn in a baking dish and brush with the sauce mixture. Bake, turning and brushing periodically, until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Sweet Corn and Ricotta Fritters

Yield 4 to 6 Servings

Ingredients:
- 2 ears fresh Florida sweet corn, kernels removed
- 1/2 bunch fresh Florida cilantro, chopped fine
- 4 ounces low-fat ricotta cheese
- 2 large Florida eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup self-rising unbleached or whole-wheat flour
- Olive oil (for shallow pan frying)
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation:
In a medium-sized bowl, combine corn, cilantro, ricotta, eggs, flour and a pinch of salt and pepper. Add a small amount of olive oil to a medium-high-heat pan. Heat oil to 350°F. Scoop batter into the pan, using a small amount of oil to separate fritters. Fry until golden brown on both sides, about 2 minutes per side. Serve warm with low-fat sour cream if desired.
Florida Sweet Corn

Florida is the largest producer of market fresh sweet corn in the U.S. Sweet corn is mostly grown in the southeast and central parts of Florida. Sweet corn is available from October through June, with peak availability in April and May.

How to buy:
It is best to buy fresh sweet corn with the husk still attached. Sweet corn cobs should feel and look moist and plump, with the kernels inside fat and shiny; press against the husk and you should be able to feel the kernels inside. The silk of the corn should be a little sticky and should look glossy, stiff and moist. Do not purchase sweet corn that has straw colored husks; they should be green.

Tips for storage:
Store sweet corn in the husk, placed in a refrigerator or a cool dry place. Keep the ears separated during storage to prevent mold.

Cooking tips:
Cook your corn as soon as you can. As corn sits, the sugars convert to starch. Steam corn for five to seven minutes or try roasting and grilling for a smoky flavor. Easily remove kernels from the cob by standing the corn on end on a cutting board and cut down the cob with a sharp knife. Salt can make corn tough, so only lightly salt the corn before cooking, and be sure to add or serve salt after cooking.

Flavors well with:
Seafood, onion, tomato, chili peppers, thyme, rosemary

Nutrition info:
Serving Size: 154g (1 cup)  •  Calories 132
Calories from fat 16.38g  •  Total Fat 1.82g
Total Carbohydrate 29.29g
Protein 4.96g
Fiber 4.2
Florida Tomato Chop Salad

Yield: 4 Servings

3 fresh Florida tomatoes, diced
1 Florida cucumber, seeded and chopped
1 red or sweet onion, chopped
1 Florida green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 bunch fresh Florida dill, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil

Preparation

In a large glass or plastic bowl, combine all ingredients and let marinate in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes. Serve over salad greens if desired.

Try adding feta cheese and olives to this recipe.

Tomato Linguini Sauté

Yield: 4 Servings

2 pounds ripe Florida tomatoes
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 bunch fresh Florida basil, hand torn (or 1 tablespoon dried)
1/2 cup olive oil
1 lemon, zested
2 Florida green bell peppers, chopped
1 red sweet onion, chopped
3 fresh Florida tomatoes, diced
1 pound fresh whole wheat linguini (or your favorite pasta)
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation

Wash, rinse and dry tomatoes. Core and cut in half. Remove most of seeds and chop coarsely. Chop tomatoes individually, add 1 tablespoon olive oil and let sit so they can release some of their water. Takes a few minutes or so. Add chopped tomatoes to a sauté pan. Add in zested lemon peel, chopped Florida basil, chopped garlic and chopped onion. Add remaining olive oil and sauté until the vegetables are soft and the mixture is fragrant. Add tomatoes, a 1/2 cup of water, and let simmer for a few minutes. Combine drained pasta with mixture and toss with cheese and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm with crusty bread.
Florida Tomatoes

Botanically the tomato is a fruit; however, they are legally considered a vegetable. They are mainly produced in South Florida, although some production takes place in North Florida. Tomatoes have two growing seasons in Florida - one from early September into early January, then late January through July. The peak months of production are December and early January as well as March, April and May.

How to buy:
The best test for a great tomato is not color but aroma. Smell the stem end, and you should smell a strong sweet-acidic fragrance. Choose tomatoes that are plump, shiny and that give slightly when pressure is applied. The perfect looking tomato does not mean it will have the best aroma and taste.

Tips for storage:
Tomatoes should be stored at cool room temperature, out of their packing and never in the refrigerator. Storing tomatoes in the refrigerator will diminish the flavor. If you purchase an unripe tomato, you can leave it in a warm place exposed to sunlight to ripen. Tomatoes can be frozen whole, as long as you peel them after thawing.

Cooking tips:
When cooking tomatoes one should remove the skin since the skin will separate from the flesh on its own during cooking and chewing on the skin itself can be a bit unpleasant. To quickly peel tomatoes, use a small sharp knife to cut a small cross shape into the base of each tomato, then drop them a few at a time into boiling water for about twenty seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and plunge into iced water. Finally, peel the skin away starting at the cross-shaped incision. To seed tomatoes, cut them into quarters after the skin and stem have been removed. Use your fingers to nudge the seeds and the flavorful jellylike substance surrounding them out.

Flavors well with:
Garlic, capers, cumin, rosemary, basil, dill, marjoram, tarragon, sage

Nutrition info:
Serving Size: 180g (1 cup, chopped or sliced)
Calories 32 • Calories from fat 32.24g
Total Fat 0.36g • Total Carbohydrate 7.06
Protein 1.58g • Fiber 2.2g
Yield 4 Servings
Open Face Watermelon Sandwiches

1/4 medium-sized Florida watermelon, seeds and rind removed
1 handful fresh Florida mint leaves, chopped
8 ounces goat cheese
1/2 loaf of your favorite crusty bread, sliced thin

Olive oil
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation
Crumble chilled goat cheese into a small bowl. Lightly mix cheese and chopped mint. Taste for seasoning and adjust with salt and pepper.

Cut bread into 8 small slices and drizzle with olive oil. Toast bread slices until golden brown and crisp on top. Let bread cool slightly.

Spread cheese mixture on the top of each slice of bread. Cut watermelon slices into fun shapes and layer watermelon on top of cheese. Lightly season the top of the sandwiches with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

Yield 4 Servings
Watermelon and Shrimp Cocktail Skewers

1/2 medium-sized Florida watermelon, peeled, seeded and cubed (about 32 cubes)
32 large Florida shrimp, cleaned, poached and chilled
1/2 bunch fresh Florida basil leaves

1/4 cup peanut butter
1/2 tsp horseradish (or mild flavored vinegar)
1/2 clove garlic
2 tbsp fresh ginger, minced
1/2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp fresh lime juice
1/4 cup fish sauce

Preparation
In a small bowl, whisk the vinegar and the peanut butter until completely combined. Add in the garlic, ginger and soy sauce and mix well. Reserve leftover sauce.

To assemble the skewers, alternate shrimp, watermelon cubes and torn basil leaves on 8 six-inch bamboo skewers. Serve skewers with leftover sauce.

Floridapumped out cards on dotted lines Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services www.Florida-Agriculture.com

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Florida Watermelon

Florida watermelons are a summer treat. Grown in the western parts of the state - from north Collier County to Columbia County - watermelon from Florida is available from late March until mid-July. The peak production time is in May and early June.

How to buy:
The exterior of a ripe watermelon should be a smooth, waxy green, with or without stripes. Watermelons will not ripen after they are picked, so it is important to select a ripe watermelon at the market. Ripe watermelons have a yellow or cream-yellow “ground spot” in the place the melon rested on the soil. If this spot is green or white, the watermelon is probably not ripe. If the watermelon has been cut, choose one with a bright, crisp, even-colored flesh.

Tips for storage:
Whole melons will keep in the refrigerator for no longer than a week. Once cut, they should be kept refrigerated and covered with plastic wrap.

Cooking tips:
Before cutting your watermelon, be sure to wipe it with a clean cloth and light soapy water. Every part of the watermelon is edible, including the rind and the seeds. The fiber-rich rind can be pickled, candied or turned into jam or jelly. The seeds are highly nutritious, packed with protein, vitamin E and potassium, and make a healthy, tasty snack if roasted in a low oven and salted.

Flavors well with:
Honey, salt, pepper, mint

Nutrition info:
Serving Size: 152g (1 cup, diced) • Calories 46
Calories from fat 2.07g • Total Fat 0.23g
Total Carbohydrate 11.48g
Protein 0.93g
Fiber 0.6g