

Adding Vegetables Creatively



If you have tried all the tricks up your sleeve to get children to eat their vegetables, and you still end up with them untouched after a meal, it may be time to creatively add some vegetables. Doing this will help boost the vitamins and minerals in the food you serve and help children become accustomed to the flavors of those vegetables.

Boosting Vegetables

Use a blender or food processor to puree vegetables to add to foods.

- Puree carrots, spinach, or peas and mix in tomato or pasta sauce
- Add blended vegetables to soups or stews to help thicken and add flavor
- Mix blended cauliflower or parsnips to mashed potatoes
- Make fruit smoothies with carrots or spinach

Use a grater for small pieces of vegetable that can easily be added to many foods.

- Grate carrots or zucchini into muffins, quick breads, pancakes, and omelets
- Grated vegetables are easy to add to lasagnas and casseroles
- Add to grilled cheese sandwiches, tacos, burritos, and quesadillas
- Mix with ground meat when making hamburgers, meatballs, or meat-loaf
- Add grated cabbage to lettuce for a salad or to top a taco

Vegetables to Puree

Puree or mash these vegetables after cooking. Try adding them to casseroles, soups, smoothies, sauces, baked goods, and many more.

- Avocado*
- Broccoli
- Beets
- Butternut Squash
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Peas
- Spinach*
- Red Bell Peppers
- Sweet Potatoes
- Zucchini and Summer Squash*

*This vegetable does not need to be cooked prior to pureeing.

Try some of these veggie loving tactics

- Offer dips with vegetable sticks
- Arrange vegetables in fun shapes
- Try different ways of preparation

If these ideas fail, continue exposing the children to vegetables and teach about the importance of vegetables in a healthy diet. Until they get the picture and start to enjoy vegetables, you may want to creatively add vegetables to some of their foods.



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Recipes



Cauliflower Mash

Ingredients

1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
Anything you normally add to mashed potatoes, like milk, margarine, salt and pepper, garlic, and/or grated Parmesan cheese



Source and photo: lowcarbdiets.about.com

Directions

Preheat oven to 400° F. Place cauliflower on a baking sheet. Spread out in an even layer. Drizzle with olive oil. Roast cauliflower for 10-12 minutes. Stir, and roast 10-12 minutes more. The cauliflower is done when you can pierce it easily with a fork. Transfer the cauliflower to a food processor. Add a little milk, garlic, salt, and other desired seasonings to flavor the cauliflower. Pulse until it reached a desired consistency. Serve immediately. Makes 15 servings for 3-5 year olds at lunch/dinner.

✓ Vegetables/Fruits

Tip

A great way to introduce this to children is to start with one pound potatoes and add 1/2 cup cauliflower puree.

Sneaky Yummy Grilled Cheese

Ingredients

Low-fat cheese, shredded
Orange Puree*
Whole wheat bread

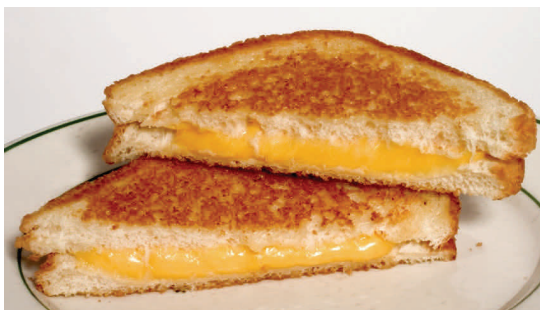


Photo: www.thiscrazyblessedlife.com

Directions

Mix shredded cheese with 1-2 tablespoons of the orange puree and season to your liking. Spread between bread and grill.

*Orange Puree

Puree 1 cooked sweet potato and 3 cooked carrots with 3-4 tablespoons of water. You can freeze 1-2 tablespoon portions in an ice cube tray. Once they are frozen, store in a freezer bag. When ready to use, thaw in the microwave for about 30 seconds.

Pureed butternut squash can also be used as one of the Orange Puree vegetables.