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Cooking Tips & Ideas for Veggies

More and more studies are now telling us that 8 servings of veggies and fruit per day is the bare minimum for the lowest risk of chronic disease and the more the better! Veggies are our best sources of many vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants so they benefit health in so many of ways. Eating plenty of veggies is necessary for immune health, gut health, and helps prevent cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity.

Below are some ideas for creating veggie side dishes. Aim for at least two or more different veggies at each meal. Don't be afraid to try a new one.

Wet Sauté Veggies

Start with clean veggies, then cut according to chart below. Place ½ cup water in a large skillet. Turn the heat to high, and when the water is boiling, add veggies and seasoning to pan, cover with a lid, and allow the veggies to soften, according to the times below. When most of the water has evaporated, remove the lid and stir with a spoon. Check for doneness and, if necessary, add a little more water, stir, until the vegetables are tender.

Roasted Veggies

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Wash veggies and cut into even-sized pieces. In a large bowl, toss with 2 Tbsp., of ghee or coconut oil. 1 – 2 crushed garlic cloves, and salt and pepper and any additional seasoning. Spread the veggies in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake on the middle racks of the oven, stirring about every 15 minutes to ensure even browning. If veggies are browning but not quite tender, turn the heat down to 350°F and roast longer, checking for doneness every 5 – 7 minutes. My favorite combination is sweet potatoes, red beets and carrots. Warms up great for leftovers.

Grilled Vegetables

In a large bowl, toss 1-2 lbs washed and cut veggies with 2 Tbsp. of ghee or coconut oil, 1 – 2 crushed garlic cloves, and salt and pepper and any additional seasoning. Let marinate for 20 – 30 minutes. Heat grill on high with lid closed. Remove veggies from marinade, wrap in foil (if necessary to avoid falling through the slats), and place on grill. Turn heat down to medium and close lid. Grill for time listed, checking every 5 minutes for browning and tenderness. Can also use an indoor grill like a George Foreman.

Veggie	Roast	Wet Sauté	Grill	Seasoning
Asparagus	Whole 25 minutes	Whole 5 – 10 minutes	Whole 2 – 3 minutes	Squeeze of lemon juice and zest after cooking
Beets	1” pieces 35 – 45 minutes	1” pieces 15 – 20 minutes	Halve wrap in foil, 25 – 30 minutes	Toss with a splash of balsamic vinegar after cooking
Bell Pepper	1” pieces, 25 – 35 minutes	1” pieces, 5 – 6 minutes	Halve, 5–6 minutes per side	Dried basil, oregano or rosemary before cooking
Broccoli	1” florets, 20 – 25 minutes	1” florets, 5 – 7 minutes	Halve, 8 – 10 minutes per side	Squeeze of lemon juice and zest after cooking
Brussels Sprouts	Halve, 35 – 40 minutes	Halve, 6 – 8 minutes	Whole, skewered, 7 – 8 minutes per side	Splash of balsamic vinegar or lemon juice before or after cooking
Butternut Squash	1” pieces 45 – 50 minutes	1” pieces 7 – 9 minutes	½” slices, 7–8 minutes per side	Dried thyme before cooking
Cabbage	8 wedges 25 – 30 minutes	8 wedges, 8 – 10 minutes	8 wedges; Wrap in foil, 30 min	Squeeze of lemon juice and tarragon after cooking
Carrots	1” pieces 35 - 45 minutes	1 1/2 “ pieces 6 – 8 minutes	Whole, 20 – 25 minutes	Squeeze of lemon juice and fresh chopped parsley and mint after cooking
Cauliflower	1” florets, 25 – 30 minutes	1” florets, 5 – 7 minutes	1” florets; wrap in foil, 20–25 minutes	Coriander or cumin before cooking
Eggplant	½” slices, 20 – 25 minutes	1” pieces, 6 – 8 minutes	½” slices, 6–7 minutes per side	Chopped fresh tomatoes and fresh basil after cooking
Green Beans	Whole, 12 – 15 minutes	Whole, 5 – 6 minutes	Whole; wrap in foil, 30 minutes	Dried thyme before cooking; squeeze of lemon juice and zest after
Kale	2” pieces, 10 – 12 minutes (kale chips!)	2” pieces 6 – 8 minutes	N/A	Squeeze of lemon juice and zest after cooking
Mushrooms	Halve, 30 – 35 minutes	Halve, 4 – 5 minutes	Halve, Skewer, 5–6 minutes per side	Dried thyme before cooking; squeeze of lemon juice and zest after cooking
Onion	8 wedges, 20 – 25 minutes	½” slices, 5 – 7 minutes	Quarter: Skewer 8–10 min. per side	Dried thyme or oregano before cooking; squeeze of lemon juice and zest after cooking
Parsnips	1” pieces 20 – 25 minutes	1 ½” pieces, 6 – 8 minutes	Whole 20 – 25 minutes	Cumin before cooking
Sweet potatoes	1” pieces, 35 - 45 minutes	1” pieces 7 – 9 minutes	N/A	pinch of salt and pepper before cooking
Tomatoes	Quarter or whole cherry tomatoes 20-30 minutes	1” pieces 3 – 4 minutes	Thick slices 3 – 5 minutes per side	Drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil, fresh basil and coarse salt after cooking
Turnips	1” pieces, 45 – 50 minutes	1” pieces 7 – 9 minutes	¼” slices, 3–4 minutes per side	Dusting of cumin, coriander before cooking
Zucchini/summer squash	Quarter, 6 – 10 minutes	½” rounds, 5 – 6 minutes	½” length-wise slices, 4–5 minutes per side	Lemon zest and dried oregano after cooking

** Don't forget to drizzle coconut or olive oil after cooking. This is need in order to absorb all of the extremely healthy fat-soluble nutrients in your food, compounds like lutein, beta-carotene and vitamin E.