

How well do you know your produce?

- 1.) What causes apples to turn brown after they are cut?
- 2.) Where are the majority of nutrients located in an apple?
- 3.) How many days on average does it take a strawberry to travel from the farm to the hands of a consumer?
- 4.) What causes broccoli to become tough and chewy?
- 5.) What is the best way to remove garden pests from broccoli?
- 6.) Should you wash the outside of a melon before cutting it?
- 7.) What is the difference between a freestone peach and a clingstone peach?
- 8.) What compound is responsible for the "hot" flavor of many peppers?
- 9.) What is the world's 4th largest food crop?
- 10.) What form of cooking results in the greatest nutrient losses of potatoes?
- 11.) Should spinach be washed before eating?
- 12.) Along with corn and beans, what vegetable crop completes the Native American trio, called the "Three Sisters"?
- 13.) How long can winter squash be stored?
- 14.) Is lycopene more available in processed tomato products or fresh tomatoes?
- 15.) Tomatoes are naturally acidic, so does that mean my salsa will be safe from harmful bacteria?

Answers

- 1.) Apples brown due to a compound called polyphenoloxidase. When an apple is cut, these compounds are released from the cell and cause a browning reaction on the fruit. The more Vitamin C the apple contains, the less the browning may occur. Dipping apple slices in a solution of 50% water and 50% Vitamin C rich lemon juice will help prevent extensive browning and can help maintain crispness.
- 2.) 2/3 of the fiber and many of the antioxidants in an apple are located in the skin!
- 3.) Strawberries are picked, sorted, and packed in the field. They are cooled to 34°F and loaded onto refrigerated trucks. The average strawberry reaches the consumer within 24-36 hours of harvest! That's berry fast!
- 4.) At room temperature, harvested broccoli will convert sugar into a fiber called lignin. The more time spent at room temperature, the more lignin is produced and the more fibrous your broccoli becomes! Keep broccoli refrigerated to extend the shelf life.
- 5.) Soaking fresh locally-grown broccoli in salt water for 5-10 minutes can help in removing any unwanted garden pests.
- 6.) Absolutely. Before cutting open a cantaloupe, wash the outside rind thoroughly in a clean sink under cool running water. Scrub with a clean vegetable brush to remove any soil or bacteria on the rind that might be carried from the knife blade to the flesh during slicing.
- 7.) Freestone peaches are used for the fresh market, whereas clingstone peaches are typically used for canning and processing.
- 8.) Capsaicin is the compound responsible for the "hot" flavor of many peppers. Jalapeno and cayenne peppers range from 2,000 to 25,000 Scoville heat units, whereas Tabasco peppers range between 60,000 to 80,000 units. Green Bell peppers are rated 0 on the scale because they do not contain capsaicin.
- 9.) After rice, wheat, and corn, potatoes rank 4th as the most widely consumed food crop.
- 10.) Nutrient losses are greatest when boiling; water soluble vitamins and minerals will leach out into the cooking water. To maintain the highest nutrition of a cooked potato, steaming or microwaving is recommended.
- 11.) Yes. To reduce the risk for food borne illness, always wash spinach with cool water before consuming. If growing spinach in your own garden, strive to keep out any animals. By removing sources of contamination prior to harvest, the chances for a harmful pathogen to be present on the spinach in your salad will be greatly reduced.
- 12.) Hard shelled squash varieties are unique to North America. The earliest natives cultivated them and honored them as one of the "Three Sisters", along with beans and corn. Many civilizations relied on the Three Sisters for sustenance as corn and beans made a complete protein and squash added beta-carotene and fiber to the diet.
- 13.) A large, hard rind winter squash can be stored for up to 6 months at 50-55°F. At room temperature, winter squash can only be stored 2-3 months.
- 14.) The lycopene in processed tomatoes (canned, ketchup, sauce) is actually more available to the body than that found in raw tomatoes. Heating breaks down the plant's cell walls, making the lycopene more accessible to the body. Lycopene is also better absorbed if consumed with a small amount of fat.
- 15.) No. Foods such as pickles or salsa need to have an acid added if they are to reach a pH level of 4.6 or lower to prevent microorganism growth and/or survival. Microorganisms such as *Clostridium botulinum*, the bacteria that causes botulism, can survive and grow in some foods at certain pH levels. Although tomatoes naturally have a low pH, adding other ingredients with higher pH values may make the product unsafe to eat. Adding sufficient lemon juice or citric acid to the recipe will lower the pH, making a safe canned product.