



MODEL ANSWERS HANDOUT

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

1) Vegetables are classified according to which part of the plant is eaten.
Examples of vegetables:

- Seeds – whole corn, green beans, snap peas
- Leaves - cabbage, lettuce
- Stems – celery, asparagus
- Fruit – tomato, cucumber
- Flowers – cauliflower, broccoli
- Roots – carrot, beetroot
- Bulbs – onion, garlic
- Tubers – potato
- Fungi - mushroom

3a) The food provider in your household has asked for your advice. He / she would like to know what to look for when choosing and buying vegetables. What would you tell him / her?

- Damaged, wilted and bruised vegetables should be avoided, as there is likely to be waste and loss of nutrients.
- Root vegetables should be firm and smoothly shaped so that they are easy to peel. They should not have a lot of dirt.
- Green vegetables should be firm, crisp and have a good colour. Avoid any vegetables which are soft or discoloured.
- Insect or mould infected vegetables should not be bought.
- Try to purchase fresh, local and seasonal vegetables. You may buy seasonal vegetables in bulk when it is cheaper and freeze for later use.
- Try to choose organic vegetables when possible.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables rather than canned varieties. If using canned vegetables such as canned beans, rinse them well.

3b) A member of your household has purchased a list of local vegetables online and this has just been delivered at your home. Can you name three tips that could be followed to help retain the nutrients when storing, preparing and cooking vegetables?

- Leafy vegetables lose vitamin C and water rapidly during storage and should be stored for the minimum time in a cool place. All fresh vegetables should be used

as soon as possible. If vegetables are frozen, make sure to blanch the vegetables before freezing them to prevent enzyme activity thus preserving colour, flavour, texture and nutritional value.

- Potatoes should be stored in a dark, cool, dry place to prevent them from becoming mouldy and green (due to the reaction to light), and to stop them sprouting in warmth.
- If the vegetable requires peeling, peel it very thinly, as there are vitamins and minerals under the skin which could easily be removed. Young potatoes, carrots and other vegetables often do not require peeling and can be served with their skins on. They should be scrubbed thoroughly beforehand, to remove pesticides.
- Thoroughly wash all vegetables, even that which is labelled as organic and that which you plan to peel.
- Discard the outer layer of leafy vegetables, such as lettuce or cabbage.
- Wash vegetables and fruits under running water rather than soaking or dunking it. Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel when possible.
- Prepare vegetables just before cooking to prevent the destruction of vitamins by enzymes.
- Do not chop into very small pieces as it exposes more of the surface and means more loss of nutrients.
- Try to eat raw vegetables as vitamins and minerals will be available at their maximum.
- Use colourful vegetables to garnish and decorate your food.
- Cook vegetables quickly in small amounts of water.
- Steaming and microwaving are preferable to boiling.
- When vegetables are just tender, they should be drained and served immediately. If kept hot, there will be further losses of vitamin C.
- Do not overcook vegetables. Steaming and light microwaving are better cooking methods to minimise nutrient losses and keep their taste.
- Use cooking water for soups and sauces to make use of any vitamins which would have leached out into the water.

4) Vegetables can be found available as fresh, frozen, canned or dried. It is recommended to try and use fresh, local and seasonal vegetables. Vegetables can be either eaten raw or they can be cooked. Can you think of healthy cooking methods which are suitable to cook vegetables?

- Steaming,
- Microwaving,
- Stir-frying,
- Boiling,
- Grilling,
- Roasting,
- Baking,
- Barbecuing.

5) Vegetables can be used in several interesting recipes. Ask your family members or look up online and try to name two traditional Maltese dishes / snacks using

vegetables as a main ingredient. An example of such a traditional Maltese dish is stuffed marrows.

- Stuffed aubergines,
- *Minestra*,
- *Kusksu*,
- Vegetable soups,
- Stuffed artichokes,
- Stuffed green peppers,
- Widow's soup,
- Pumpkin pie,
- Caponata.

6) Fruit usually contains the seed of the plant. They are usually broadly classified into: citrus, stone, soft/berry, hard, tropical and dried. Using the internet / books / leaflets / general knowledge, sort out the following fruit in the respective category:

- Citrus - orange, lemon
- Stone – plums, peach
- Soft / berry – strawberry, black mulberry
- Hard – water melon, pomegranate
- Tropical – coconut, pine-apple
- Dried – sultanas, raisins

10) Can you think of other healthy recipes using fruits?

- Bread pudding,
- Apple pie,
- Pancakes served with fresh fruits,
- Date pinwheels,
- Stuffed prunes,
- Chestnut puree,
- Poached fruits served with yoghurt,
- Fruit pizza.

11) Local and seasonal vegetables and fruits are richer in flavour, more nutritionally dense, cheaper to buy, help protect the environment, support the local economy and contribute to less food waste. Sort out the following local vegetables and fruit according to when they are in season:

- Winter / Spring produce: broad beans, globes artichokes, oranges, tangerines, peas.
- Summer / Autumn produce: olives, watermelons, melons, peaches, plums.