

NUTRITION NEWS

Tasty Mexican Fruits and Vegetables Help Consumers Meet New Dietary Guidelines

(NAPSA)—Health-conscious American consumers are selecting fresh, tasty and colorful Mexican tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, bell peppers and mangos in their grocery store's produce department so they can meet their personal nutritional goals and Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, unveiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Dietary Guidelines call for consumers to eat a sufficient amount of produce (2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables) per day. With the diversity of growing areas in Mexico, fresh, nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables are always on hand for American consumers—especially during winter and spring months, when their growing climate is warmer than ours. Every year, Americans devour about eight billion pounds of Mexican produce.

Look for some of these fresh, colorful Mexican produce items, available at your local grocery store:

- Juicy red tomatoes—Because of the year-round growing cycle, conventional and organic Mexican tomatoes are always an option and come in many varieties, from hothouse, vine-ripened, grape to cherry. A flavorful way to add lycopene to your diet.

- Delicious squash—Mexico produces all types of squash, from Italian zucchini, yellow straight or crookneck, to gray squash, acorn, spaghetti, banana and butter-nut varieties. Who knew beta-carotene could be so much fun?

- Succulent cucumbers—For nearly 40 years, Mexico has been



Fruits and vegetables from Mexico can be a tasty, healthful addition to any diet.

the provider of winter cucumbers to the United States—from pole-grown to hothouse to pickling cucumbers. A great, low-cal way to get minerals.

- Beautiful bell peppers—The varieties of bell peppers include green, red, orange and yellow, as well as the popular, hard-to-find purple and gold peppers, and they are as intense in vitamin C as they are in taste.

- Sweet mangos—This fruit is the world's most popular possibly because of its amazing taste and health benefits. Half a mango contains nearly 40 percent of the recommended daily value of vitamin A and 15 percent of the recommended daily value of vitamin C, with no cholesterol or sodium. The most popular types of mangos are Tommy Atkins, the most popular round-variety mango with red skin, as well as other varieties including Hayden, Kent, Ataulfo and Keitt.

For selection, storage and usage tips about Mexican fruits and vegetables, visit the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas at www.fpaota.org.