

Fall Harvest Produce

Even though summer is winding down, there is still a *lot* of peak season produce available in Minnesota. According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, radishes, Brussels sprouts, carrots, potatoes, and tomatoes are all in abundance during the month of September. Here are some benefits and nutrition facts about each of these fall finds, as well as ways to use them in meals or snacks.

- **Radishes:** low in calories, radishes contain a fair amount of vitamin C. They also have a small amount of other nutrients, including potassium, niacin, calcium, magnesium, and zinc. One half cup of sliced radishes also provides about 1 gram of fiber, which aids in digestion.

How to use them: sliced radishes are a great snack if you're looking for something crunchy, but want to stay away from potato chips. Dip them in some hummus if you are feeling adventurous. Or use them on top of a salad or tacos, or add them to tuna or egg salad!

- **Brussels sprouts:** perhaps the world's most disliked vegetable, Brussels sprouts are growing in popularity. This could be because the secret is out - these little vegetables are high in vitamins K and C, and are also rich in antioxidants. Vitamin K helps your body with blood clotting, and antioxidants can help reduce your risk of chronic diseases.

How to use them: Brussels sprouts are great roasted in the oven with a little olive oil and garlic. You can also finely chop them or dice them in a food processor and add them to salad for some bulk.

- **Carrots:** everyone knows that carrots are rich in vitamin A, which is beneficial for eye health. But carrots also contain a wealth of other nutrients in smaller amounts, including vitamin C, potassium, calcium, and fiber. Potassium can help regulate blood pressure.

How to use them: baby carrots are a great, quick side to a sandwich or other meal, since they don't require any preparation. Much like the Brussel sprouts, you can also roast them, or add them to soups, salads, or stir fry.

- **Potatoes:** a great healthy carbohydrate, potatoes are about 80% water! One medium potato (with the skin on) also contains about a quarter of your daily potassium needs, a lot of vitamin C, and fiber. Those with diabetes may want to watch their potato intake, because they have a high glycemic index, but potatoes make a good choice for most people.

How to use them: the good old baked potato can make a great meal - add some lean protein like shredded chicken on top, as well as veggies like tomatoes or green onions, and a small amount of cheese or sour cream. Potatoes and eggs are also great for breakfast. Try roasted potatoes instead of mashed potatoes next time you want to make them as a side dish.

- **Tomatoes:** the fruit of this bunch, tomatoes are a powerhouse combination of vitamins and antioxidants. Perhaps the most commonly known one is lycopene, which is where tomatoes get their vibrant colors from. Lycopene has been linked to lowering stroke risk and risk of certain types of cancer.

How to use them: tomatoes are great in salads and on sandwiches, of course. You can also make your own pasta sauce, or blister cherry tomatoes to add on top of meat or toasted bread. Add about 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a medium pan and set it over medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add the cherry tomatoes and let them sit for about 2-3 minutes. Some of them may “pop” which is okay. After the time is up, turn off the heat, stir the tomatoes around, and let them sit for another minutes before serving. You can also spice up this dish by sauteing some onions and garlic beforehand, or adding some fresh-chopped basil at the end.



Data on seasonal produce available at <https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season/>.