

Produce of the Month: Oranges

by Katherine Ancona, R.D.

February is finally here, which means it's time to highlight our Fruit of the Month, the orange! There are so many delicious ways to enjoy oranges! Not only does this fruit provide a tangy citrus taste that everyone loves, but it also provides a variety of nutrients that can benefit you and your family.

Nutrition Benefits Oranges are a great source of dietary fiber, they are high in Vitamin C, and also contain powerful antioxidants. Vitamin C is helpful because it is necessary in healing those scrapes and cuts your child gets, and making sure that their bones and teeth are growing strong. This nutrient is also important because it helps your child stay healthy and fight off those winter colds; it is essential for a powerful immune system! The dietary fiber contained in oranges is great for the digestive system, and will help your child stay satisfied between meals.

How to Enjoy Oranges There are a number of ways that you and your family can enjoy eating oranges. They can be added as part of a parfait with yogurt and other fruit, or made into a fruit kebab with sliced strawberries, bananas, pineapple, or grapes. Oranges can also be added as a part of your child's breakfast in the morning with either oatmeal or whole-grain cereal. Starting this healthy breakfast habit at home will help your child choose oranges with their breakfast or as a snack while at school.

Juices and Smoothies Another popular way to consume oranges is as a beverage; orange juice makes a great addition to breakfast or even as part of a smoothie. The main difference between consuming the whole fruit and the juice, is that the juice is slightly lower in fiber.

Nutrition Safari Each month, Whitsons School Nutrition program offers smoothie and juice sampling for students in schools through our Nutrition Safari program. Our traveling chefs and our food service team members love preparing juice and smoothie tastings using fresh fruits and vegetables.



Tips on How to Choose your Oranges Choosing a ripe orange will not only provide more flavor, but also provide more nutrients than those that seem to be lighter in weight. To select a ripe orange, select an orange with firm and smooth skin, and that seems heavy for its size, these oranges will be juicier. All types of oranges can be stored at room temperature for 1-2 days, or be refrigerated for 1-2 weeks. No matter how you decide to use oranges, they are sure to be an amazing hit with the whole family!



Get to Know the Whitsons Registered Dietitians

Meet our Registered Dietitian, Katherine Ancona. Katherine is a nutrition expert and an advocate

for healthy eating. She received her Master's Degree in Food, Nutrition, and Culinary Science from Clemson University in 2013. While attending Clemson University, she led a team of undergraduate students in modifying recipes to be healthier. She is most interested in wellness, pediatric, and culinary nutrition, and she also serves as a volunteer for the Kids Eat Right Campaign. Katherine completed her dietetic internship at Oklahoma State University in 2014, and began working for Whitson's Culinary Group as a Registered Dietitian in August of 2016. Katherine is available to answer your questions about nutrition. Just email her at nutrition@whitsons.com.

References:

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