**Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Bok Choy, Oh My! Tips for Celebrating National Eat Your Vegetables Day**

Today is National Eat Your Vegetables Day and that means that it’s time to *veg out.* No, not on your couch—in your kitchen!

Vegetables give your body the [nutrients you need](http://choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-why.html) to be healthy and strong. Not only that, but they taste delicious and can be prepared in many different ways. Whether they are raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; or whole, cut-up, or mashed, it’s incredibly easy to incorporate vegetables into snacks and at mealtime. Here are some tips for enjoying veggies at their best:

 **"*Veg out*" for National Eat Your Vegetables Day!**

* Buy fresh vegetables in season. Fresh vegetables cost less and are often at their most delicious, peak flavor!
* Buy vegetables that are easy to prepare. Pick up pre-washed bags of salad greens and add baby carrots or grape tomatoes for a salad in minutes. Buy packages of veggies such as baby carrots or celery sticks for quick snacks.
* Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, red and green peppers, celery sticks or cauliflower.
* Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional, but consider red or green pepper strips, broccoli florets, or cucumber slices.
* Decorate plates or serving dishes with vegetable slices for a delicious and nutritious garnish.

In honor of National Eat Your Vegetables Day, why don’t you *veg out* and try out these delicious, healthy vegetable party foods? And for more healthy ideas to inspire you to make half your plate fruits and vegetables, check out our MyPlate-inspired [recipes](http://pinterest.com/MyPlateRecipes/food-group-veggies/).

**Tasty Tomato Salsa**

* 6 tomatoes, chopped (add color by using yellow and red tomatoes)
* 1/2 white onion, chopped
* 2 tbsp canned, diced mild chiles or 1 small jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
* 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro, juice of 1 lime
* 1/2 tsp of chili powder and black pepper (optional)

*In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients. Serve with baked tortilla chips.*

*(Source: USDA’s* [*Team Nutrition*](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/Files/Fruits_and_Vegetables_Recipes.pdf)*)*

**Tasty Tots**

* 5 cups fresh sweet potatoes, peeled, coarsely shredded
* 2 cups canned low-sodium garbanzo beans (chickpeas), with liquid
* 1/2 cup fresh green onions, finely chopped
* 2 tbsp vegetable oil
* 1/2 tsp salt
* 1/2 tsp granulated garlic
* 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
* 1/2 tsp onion powder
* 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

*Preheat oven to 350° F*

*Place shredded potatoes on a large baking pan sprayed with a nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 350° F for 20 minutes or until slightly tender. Do not overcook.*

*Increase oven temperature to 400° F.*

*In a food processor or blender, purée garbanzo beans, including the liquid, until smooth.*

*In a medium mixing bowl, combine shredded sweet potatoes, puréed garbanzo beans, green onions, vegetable oil, salt, garlic, pepper, onion powder, and cinnamon. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 40-45 minutes to make tots easier to form.*

*Spray a large baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Using a cookie scoop or a spoon, roll 36 tots. Place 1 inch apart on baking sheet. Lightly flatten the tops of the tots with a spoon or a fork. Bake at 400 °F for 10-12 minutes or until lightly brown. Serve hot.*

*(Source: USDA’s* [*Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Homes*](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/r4hk_homes.html)*)*

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