Virginia Mason Cares about the Environment

The term “organic” refers to the way in which a product was grown or raised. Farmers who follow organic farming practices do not use conventional methods to control weeds, pesticides or to prevent disease in livestock. The methods they use, instead, are intended to reduce pollution, conserve water and create a product that is hormone and pesticide free. These practices are designed to support and encourage a healthy environment, using traditional farming methods such as crop rotation in place of synthetic herbicides to control weeds and promote healthy soil.

There are strict government standards that must be met in order to be certified organic by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), however many farmers are growing organically and have not gone through the expensive certification process. Ask the farmers at the market or look into where and how the food you purchase from the grocery store is grown. All of the farmers at the Virginia Mason farmers market follow organic farming practices and the prepared food vendors use organic and local ingredients as much as possible. All of our vendors have a focus on the health and sustainability of the environment and our natural resources in the production of their products.

Health Highlight: Garbanzo Beans

Garbanzo beans, also known as chickpeas, are well known as the main ingredient in Middle Eastern dishes such as hummus and falafel. These creamy legumes are also a great addition to salads or soups, vegetable dishes and make a great side dish. Aside from their delicious flavor they also offer us a variety of nutritional benefits.

These beans are an excellent source of molybdenum and manganese. Molybdenum, a mineral essential to the functioning of several of the body’s enzyme reactions, is also present within tooth enamel and helps prevent tooth decay. Manganese, another essential mineral, plays an important role in many reactions within the body, including a vital antioxidant reaction.

Garbanzo beans are a very good source of folate, a B vitamin, which is essential for healthy reproduction, heart health and the production of red blood cells.

Like most legumes, garbanzo beans are a good source of soluble and insoluble fiber, helping to reduce cholesterol as well as promote a healthy digestive tract. Studies have recently shown that the fiber in this bean may have a greater impact on our health than other sources of dietary fiber.

Pre-soaking the beans before cooking them will shorten the cooking time as well as make them easier to digest. It is recommended to soak garbanzo beans for at least four hours. Soaking in a pan with water overnight in the refrigerator is a great option. In the morning, remove any skins that have floated to the surface, drain soaking water and rinse the beans before cooking.
Chef Jeff's Market Fresh Recipe of the Week:

Edamame Bean Salad

Recipe by Chef Jefferson Anderson

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients:
1 Tablespoon Extra Virgin Olive Oil
½ (16 ounce) package frozen corn, thawed
½ (16 ounce) package Edamame, shelled
½ cup, red onion, diced
½ (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
½ (15 ounce) can Garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
¾ cups red bell pepper, diced
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoons fresh lime juice
¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Preparation:
1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl
2. Toss gently to blend flavors
3. Transfer to serving dish

Nutrition Facts per serving

Calories: 212
Total Fat: 5 grams
Protein: 9 grams
Carbohydrate: 37 grams
Fiber: 6 grams
Sodium: 507 mg
Cholesterol: 0 mg
Saturated Fat: 1 gram
Monounsaturated Fat: 0.83 grams
Polyunsaturated Fat: 0.12 grams

Understanding “Organic” Labeling

100 percent organic- This term can be used when a food has been produced and processed following certain regulated standards from an organically certified farm. All ingredients used must meet this standard if it is a food with more than one ingredient. These foods may use the USDA organic seal.

Organic- A product may be labeled as “organic” as long as 95 percent of the ingredients are produced in a way that meets the organic standards. These foods may use the USDA organic seal.

Made with organic ingredients- Foods that contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients may use this terminology; however they are not able to use the USDA organic seal. If less than 70 percent of the ingredients are organic they cannot use the term “organic” on the label but can identify them in the ingredient list.

Natural- This term does not mean the same as “organic”. There are not the same strict standards and regulations required to label a product as “natural”.

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