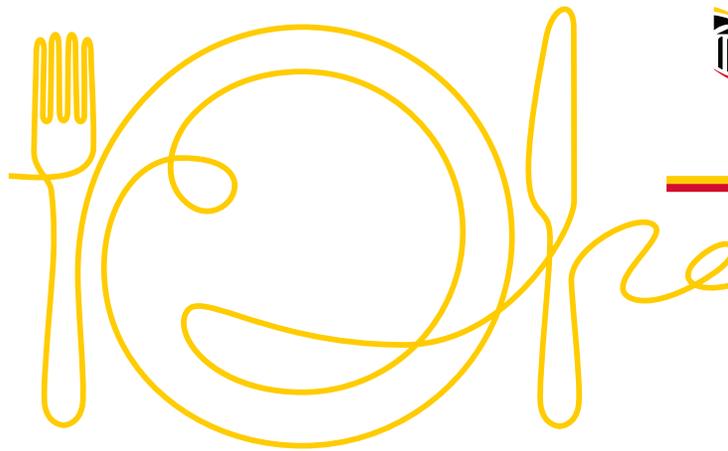


the real dish

with *Lauren*
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Enjoying The *Bounty* of Summer

SUMMER IS the ideal time to focus on seasonal produce. From perfect peaches to sweet corn, there's no time like the present to focus on eating more fruits and vegetables.

One of the benefits of seasonal eating is that produce tends to be a bit cheaper and the quality is usually more reliable. This is important if you (or your family members) are reluctant fruit and vegetable eaters. No one likes spending a lot of money on produce that just goes bad because no one's willing to eat it. Summer is a great time to experience the best of produce. I'm a big fan of going to a farm for pick-your-own produce. I've been going to local farms since I was a little kid; it's a great way to teach kids about fruits and vegetables, and making it into a fun activity can get kids (or adults!) excited about trying foods they might not otherwise eat.

If you don't have the time or interest in going to a local farm, consider a trip to the Farmer's Market, or joining Community Supported Agriculture. (You can look up nearby locations at localharvest.org.) Supporting local farmers is a great way to learn about food and feel more in touch with the seasons.



If you're a gardener, then you're probably very excited for the summer season, when all that hard work pays off with beautiful blooms and bountiful produce. Check out the [American Institute for Cancer Research's recipe round-up for summer squash](#). As you can see, there's plenty of ideas beyond zucchini bread! (But if you are looking for a recipe for a delicious and unique zucchini bread, I recommend [this one](#).)



these yummy [Mediterranean Turkey Burgers by Budget Bytes](#).

Consider other grilled options beyond meat too...Have you tried grilled fruit? Grilled stone fruit can be a great option for topping salads, serving with ice cream, or just as a sweet treat on its own.

Not ready to completely give up your burgers or hot dogs? Start with something smaller; think about what side dishes you can add to help increase vegetable or fruit intake. How about a slaw? I love [a vinegar and ginger based slaw](#) that is ridiculously easy, can be made ahead of time, and doesn't have any mayonnaise to worry about in the summer weather.

How about a bean salad side dish? Try a [Cowboy Caviar](#) as a fun dip or side salad, or a [vegetable and pasta salad](#).

Summertime Food Safety

When thinking about grilling, it's important to consider food safety.

Raw Versus Cooked

If cooking raw meats:

- Be sure to have separate utensils and platters for raw versus cooked meats.
- Be sure to wash hands with soap and water after coming into contact with raw meat.
- Consider using a food thermometer [to help you determine when your food is safely and thoroughly cooked](#).

Danger Zone

With hotter temperatures outside, be mindful of how long food is sitting out. Perishable food (or food that can spoil) should be refrigerated

Need even more summer produce inspiration? Check out [A Couple Cooks](#) for plant-focused meal ideas.

While summer is all about the grilling, why don't you try adding some of your favorite vegetables or fruits to the grill? Corn, zucchini, mushrooms, onions, and peppers are all great grilled. Try them as kabobs or use a grill basket to toss them right on the grill.

Adding more vegetables to your menu is a great way of increasing those important cancer-fighting phytonutrients, and can also help you reduce red and/or processed meat consumption.

Black bean or turkey burgers are another way to reduce red meat consumption and still provide great protein. While turkey is often considered dry, adding in some mix-ins like shredded vegetables or cheese can add some extra flavor and moisture.

Get inspired by online recipes, to expand your intake of healthier food options: Tasty [Spicy Black Bean Burgers by Hannah MaGee RD](#), or

Four Steps to Food Safety



CLEAN

SEPARATE

COOK

CHILL

Source: [CDC Website](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/)

within an hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees, or within two hours if inside. Food-borne pathogens (harmful viruses, bacteria and more) grow faster in the “danger zone” between 40-140 degrees.

When preparing food, always remember the [Four Steps to Food Safety](#). (Also see the graphic above.)



Grilling and barbecuing exposes meat to high temperatures, which can increase the formation of potential carcinogens. [When animal proteins are exposed to high heat \(usually from open flame\), they can form HCAs and PAHs](#), which have been found in lab studies to increase the

risk of cancer. While the occasional BBQ is no cause for major concern, if you’re a frequent summer griller, keep in mind some helpful tips for reducing your exposure to HCAs and PAHs:

- [Try marinades](#), which can increase moisture and flavor while also reducing HCA formation.
- If using larger cuts of meat, try pre-cooking to reduce how long they need to be on the grill, or cut in smaller portions that cook faster.
- Trimming fat is a good way to reduce flare-ups and burning.
- Don’t forget your vegetables, as these don’t create HCAs or PAHs when grilled and add great texture, flavor and color to any meal.



For more helpful information, visit:

- [LocalHarvest.org](https://www.localharvest.org/)
- [cdc.gov/foodsafety](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/)
- [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov/)
- [AICR.org](https://www.aicr.org/)

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