

Florida Food Fare

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Cauliflower

Description: The name of this elegant member of the cabbage family comes from the Latin "caulis" (stalk) and "floris" (flower). Cauliflower has been grown in Europe for centuries, but only since 1925 has it been an important crop in this country. Cauliflower is composed of bunches of tiny creamy white florets on clusters of stalks of the same color. It comes in three basic colors: white (the most popular and readily available), green and purple (a vibrant violet that turns pale green when cooked). The entire floret portion is edible. The green leaves at the base are also edible, but take longer to cook and have a stronger flavor.

Availability: Cauliflower is available year-round. A small acreage of this crop is produced in Florida primarily during the winter months for fresh use. It is produced mainly in West Central Florida, the growing season being October through April with the most abundant supply in January, February and March.

Nutritional Value: Cauliflower is fat and cholesterol free and very low in sodium and calories. A good source of vitamin C and folate, cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable and believed to help reduce the risk of some forms of cancer. One cup contains approximately 25 calories, 2.5g fiber, 22mg calcium, 303mg potassium, 46.4mg vitamin C and 57mg folate.

Selection and Care: When purchasing cauliflower, choose one with a firm, tight head and clean white florets. Leaves should be fresh and green. If leaves have grown through the florets it does not affect the taste. The size of the head does

not affect the quality. Do not buy heads that look grainy, or rice-like, or have leaves that are yellowed or withered. Refrigerate raw cauliflower, tightly wrapped for up to 5 days.

Use and Preparation: To use, separate the cauliflower head into florets and wash. Cauliflower is delicious raw on a vegetable tray or in a salad. It can also be used in soups or may be boiled, steamed, stir fried, or baked in a casserole. Adding a tablespoon of lemon juice to the cooking water will prevent discoloration.

Recipes:

Roasted Cauliflower

1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets	2 cloves garlic, minced
Olive oil or canola cooking spray	2 shallot, cut in quarters
Lemon pepper seasoning (salt free)	Grate parmesan cheese
1 medium red onion, sliced	

Preheat oven to 400°F. Put cauliflower florets in single layer on cookie sheet or baking dish. Add red onion, shallot and garlic. Spray with cooking spray or drizzle with olive oil. Stir to coat. Sprinkle with lemon pepper seasoning. Bake uncovered for 15 to 25 minutes, or until cauliflower is fork tender and slightly browned. Stir once during the baking. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and put back in the oven for 3 to 4 minutes. Serves 4.

Cauliflower and Broccoli Salad

1 bunch of broccoli, use only the florets cut into bite size pieces	1 cup golden raisins
1 or 2 bunches green onions, sliced thin or can substitute 1 cup chopped red onion	1/2 pound lean bacon, or turkey bacon, fried crisp, drained, and crumbled
	Dressing (recipe below)

Mix all ingredients. Pour on dressing. Use about half of dressing and add more to your taste. Refrigerate.

Dressing: Mix well.

2 cups low fat mayonnaise	4 teaspoons vinegar
1/2 cup sugar	

Vegetable Pizza

2 packages Crescent rolls	1 cup cauliflower, finely chopped
8 ounces reduced fat cream cheese, softened	1 green, yellow or orange pepper, chopped
1 cup low fat mayonnaise	1 cup tomatoes, chopped
1 package Ranch powdered dressing	1 cup low fat cheddar cheese, grated
1 cup broccoli, finely chopped	

Pat crescent rolls into pizza pan. Bake 7-10 minutes or until golden brown. Mix softened cream cheese with mayonnaise and dried salad dressing. Spread mixture on cooked pizza crust. Top with vegetables and cheese. Press down slightly. Chill at least 1 hour. Cut into pieces to serve.

Cream of Cauliflower Soup

2-3 tablespoons butter	1 14-1/2 ounces can fat free, low sodium chicken broth
1 small onion	1 bay leaf
2 leeks	1 cup low fat milk
2-3 garlic cloves	1 tablespoon fresh thyme
1 head cauliflower, cut up	Nutmeg and white pepper to taste

Sauté onion, leeks and garlic in melted butter until soft. Simmer cauliflower in chicken broth with bay leaf until soft. Remove bay leaf and some of the florets; add remaining ingredients, and puree in blender. Return to pan, add remaining florets and reheat. You may add more milk, if desired. Garnish with chopped parsley.