

Paint Your Plate

Discover a culinary rainbow with simple summer recipes that pack a colorful and nutritious punch. **By Joelle Hann**



The deep purple hues of chilled blueberry mango soup are a telltale indicator of powerful antioxidants.

Summer's abundance presents a tantalizing problem: how do we choose what to eat from this embarrassment of riches? One way to organize your pleasant amblings through the farmers' market is to shop by color. As simple as this sounds, the concept is backed by research. Phytochemicals, the vitamins and minerals found in plants that give them their brilliant hues, have been found to prevent and treat disease, and we require a variety of these nutrients from across the color spectrum to stay healthy.

When you "eat your colors," as Michael Pollan advises in his book *Food*

Rules (and maybe your mother also mentioned), you get healthy doses of fiber, potassium, and vitamin C, as well as antioxidants, such as carotenoids and flavonoids. These protect our cells from the effects of environmental toxins and from free radicals, which increase dramatically as we age, and in turn age us. Antioxidants have also been shown to help battle heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Vegan chef and cookbook author Colleen Patrick-Goudreau says shopping and cooking by color actually makes nutrition easier. Simply look at your basket: folate makes kale green, betacyanin makes beets red, lutein makes corn yellow, beta-carotene makes mangos and carrots orange, and so on. Try buying and cooking a different color every week, or assembling the most colorful dishes you can.

Blueberries, a key ingredient in the chilled blueberry mango soup recipe that follows, are packed with one of the most powerful antioxidants around, anthocyanin. The avocados, peppers, and greens in the accompanying summer salad provide lutein, more antioxidants, folate, vitamins A, C, and K, and manganese.

These refreshing summer recipes are simple to prepare and require the freshest ingredients available (buy organic when possible). They taste as rich as the season, and their appetizing rainbow of colors provides excellent support for overall vitality. >>

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Chilled Blueberry Mango Soup

Soup

- ½ cup orange juice
- ¾ cup pineapple juice
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups fresh blueberries
- ¼ cup mango chunks
- 6 ounces plain or vanilla yogurt (or nondairy yogurt)

Blueberry Croutons

- 1 cup fresh ripe blueberries
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup milk (or almond, soy, rice, or hemp milk)
- 1 cup crushed cornflakes
- 2 to 3 tablespoons neutral oil, such as canola or grapeseed

Bring the juices and sugar to a boil (if you like it less sweet, reduce the sugar). Stir constantly for 1 minute. Add blueberries and mango and cook for 1 additional minute. Set aside.

When cool, add the fruit mixture and yogurt in a blender and puree. Chill for at least 2 hours or overnight. (The soup will thicken as it cools.)

To make the croutons: Rinse the blueberries. Place the flour, milk, and cornflakes into three separate bowls. Dredge blueberries in small batches: first in the flour (shake off the excess), then in the milk, and finally coat them in the cornflakes.

Heat the oil over medium heat and add the blueberries until the outsides are

crispy (be careful not to let the berries burst). Drain the fruit on a paper towel and let cool.

Pour the chilled soup into bowls and garnish with the blueberry croutons. Add chopped mango or a sprig of mint for additional color contrast.

Recipe adapted from Color Me Vegan by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau (Fair Winds Press, 2010).

Frisée Salad with Avocado and Yellow Peppers

Dressing

- 1 large shallot
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 1 jalapeño, minced (discard seeds for less heat)
- ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

Salad

- 1 large or 2 medium heads frisée lettuce, depending on size
- 2 ripe avocados, halved, pitted, and sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, sliced thinly
- Optional toppings: 1 tablespoon toasted black sesame seeds, ¼ cup toasted walnut halves, or crumbled blue cheese

Chop the shallot finely, add the vinegar and salt, and let sit. Add the jalapeño and citrus juices, and whisk in the olive oil.

Wash the lettuce and tear into bite-size pieces. Spin or pat dry and add to a large mixing bowl with the pepper slices. Pour 2/3 of the dressing over the lettuce and peppers. Toss and place in bowls or on plates. Top with avocado slices, sesame seeds, walnuts, or blue cheese. Drizzle on the remaining dressing and add a pinch of salt, if desired. ■

Joelle Hahn is a yoga teacher and journalist based in Brooklyn, New York. She grew up on a farm in Western Canada and has been cooking since the age of 10.