

# SPROUTING

## Why Sprout?

1. **Nutrition** -Sprouts are high in protein and vitamins (especially the B-complex) and low in calories.

2. **Low Cost** -Sprouted wheat seeds cost approximately .04 per serving. One pound sprouted alfalfa seeds (cost \$2.50 per pound) will loosely fill a 12 gallon container. Cost per serving is approximately .05.

3. **Versatility** -Sprouts may be eaten fresh, stored in refrigerator, or frozen. Sprouts may be eaten raw, added at the last minute to soups and stews, or combined with meats or vegetables to make a main dish. Sprouts added to baked goods give a flavor treat plus nutrition. Sprouts such as mung beans make a very good finger food for your little ones, tasting like raw fresh green peas.

4. **Ease of Sprouting** -Equipment used for sprouting can be found in the home and the amount of time is minimal.

5. **Conservation of Energy** -Meals can be prepared from sprouts without cooking. Sprouted beans cook considerably faster. For example: pinto beans cook in 20-45 minutes rather than in hours.

## What to Sprout?

The following lists are not exclusive, but the more easily and successfully sprouted seeds, grains, beans, and nuts are:

1. **Seeds:** -Alfalfa, unhulled sesame, unhulled sunflower, mustard, radishes, red clover, etc. These seeds can be obtained from any health food store and most seed stores.

2. **Whole grains** -wheat, rye, oats, corn, and barley. Grains can be obtained from a feed store. Be sure they are of the current year's crop and are the highest quality you can purchase.

3. **Whole dried beans and peas** -Soybeans (more difficult than most to sprout.) lentils, green peas, lima beans, mung beans, chick peas, kidney beans, pinto beans, etc. Beans and peas can be purchased in both seed and health food stores. Again, try to purchase the most recent crop.

## How to Store Seeds for Sprouting:

Keep packages or containers of seeds dry, away from light and in an airtight container, if possible. Labeled glass jars are good containers. Once packages have been opened, contents should be definitely kept in an airtight container to keep out moisture and any unwanted friends.

## How to Sprout:

Seeds need (1) moisture, (2) warmth --70° F is ideal, and (3) ventilation, in order to sprout. If seeds are not sprouting, check these four important conditions first:

1. Select healthy, unbroken seeds (broken seeds tend to mold, rather than sprout.) For best results let them run through your fingers first so you can easily spot any undesirable seeds, rather than pouring directly into container.

2. Soak (cover completely with water) seeds at least 8 hours, overnight is easiest. Wide mouth mason jars or salad dressing jars (quart size) make excellent sprouting containers. Allow 1/4 cup alfalfa seeds per gallon jar, 1/2 cup bean seeds per quart jar, alfalfa seeds per gallon jar, 1/4 cup bean seeds per quart jar; 1/2 cup wheat seeds per quart jar. Seeds must have room for expansion and ventilation.

3. After soaking, drain the seeds well. Jar opening should be covered with a cheesecloth or nylon stocking material secured with rubber bands.

4. Rinse the seeds at least three times a day with tepid water. Be sure to drain well after each rinsing.

The jar with sprouting seeds should be placed inside a closet or cupboard to allow the sprouting to take place in darkness. Light encourages the production of chlorophyll, which gives the sprouts a rather strong taste and decreases the mineral and vitamin content to some degree. If kept in the dark, the seeds will not pick up any green color, but retain their clear whitish color and in general be tastier and more nutritious.

## Sprouts are Ready to Eat When:

1. Wheat sprout is the length of the seed.

2. Bean sprouts are 1/2 to 3 inches long.

3. Alfalfa sprout is 1 to 2 inches long.

4. Lentil sprout is 1 inch long.

5. Soybean or pea sprout is 2 inches long.

Eat everything--seed, sprout, and roots.

If seeds are allowed to sprout too long a bitter or strong taste develops. Use sprouts as soon as they are ready, if possible. They are best served raw. If not used immediately, store in a covered container in the refrigerator and use within a few days. Refrigeration of the sprouts stops the sprouting process. Don't be afraid to add them to dishes. They will never detract from the flavor. Experiment! For example, alfalfa sprouts may be used for any purpose that shredded lettuce is used. Also, beans sprouted for two days and used in any dried bean recipe will have 1/2 the starch and 2 to 3 times the normal vitamins and minerals. Bean 'back talk' is also greatly reduced.

## Ways to Serve Sprouts:

1. Raw, as a separate dish.

2. In tossed salad.

3. Garnish for soups, casseroles, stews -add in the last few minutes.

4. Blended into beverages.

5. Blended into sandwich spreads. (Alfalfa sprouts and peanut butter sandwiches are very good.)

6. In meat, fish or nut loaves.

7. With scrambled eggs or omelets--add the last couple of minutes.

8. In bread, muffins and waffle batters --use sprouted wheat.

9. In breakfast dishes.

10. In vegetable dishes --make vegetable casseroles with bean sprouts.

11. Stewed with tomatoes.

12. In sauces.

## Time it Takes to Sprout Some popular seeds:

Alfalfa 4-5 days

Beans 3-5 days

Lentils 3-4 days

Mung Beans 3-8 days

Radish Seeds 2-4 days

Soybeans 4-6 days