



Summer is the perfect season to increase your fruit and vegetable intake since fresh produce is widely available. Be sure to check your local grocery store or farmers' market for nutritious, in-season produce. Summer vegetables include: **green beans**, bell peppers, eggplant, sweet corn, peas, cucumbers, green onions, spinach, broccoli and more.

GO GREEN, WITH GREEN BEANS!

Green beans are more sweet and tender during their peak season from May to October. They are also commonly known as "string beans" or "snap beans" and can be eaten fresh, frozen, canned or dried.

Green beans are:

- Naturally fat-free, sodium-free and cholesterol-free
- Contain 44 calories per cup
- Good source of vitamin C (may prevent certain cancers and heart disease)
- Good source of vitamin K (aids in blood clotting and keeps bones healthy)



When using canned green beans, be sure to drain and rinse them to remove added sodium. Canned green beans are fully cooked and are safe to eat. To thaw frozen green beans, place them in a colander and rinse with warm water until completely thawed. **Canned and frozen green beans are just as healthy and nutrient-rich as fresh** and are perfect for green bean casserole, three bean salad, soups and more.



Preparing Fresh Green Beans:

- ◆ Choose slender beans that are crisp, brightly colored, smooth and blemish-free.
- ◆ Unwashed green beans can be refrigerated in a plastic bag for 3 to 4 days.
- ◆ Before eating or cooking, run the green beans under warm tap water and scrub well to remove any dirt or residues. Trim off the ends.



Cooking Suggestions:



- ◆ **Steaming:** Place clean green beans in a metal colander inside a saucepot. Add about 2 inches of water, cover, and allow to boil for 5 minutes or until crisp-tender.
- ◆ **Boiling:** Boil water in a medium pot. Add green beans and allow to boil, uncovered, for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove when crisp-tender and drain the beans.
- ◆ **Microwaving:** Place green beans in a microwave-safe bowl. Add about 2 Tablespoons of water. Cover with plastic wrap (leaving a tiny corner open) and microwave on high for 3 to 4 minutes.



The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA's MyPlate recommend that adults eat two cups of fruit daily. Summer is a great time to eat more fresh fruits like **pears**, berries, watermelon, and peaches since they are widely available. One medium pear or one cup of sliced or diced, raw, cooked, canned or drained pears counts as one serving of fruit.



PEARS: How to choose, store and prepare.



Selecting:

- Pears bruise easily, so handle them with care. Choose pears that feel firm to the touch and are free from bruises and blemishes, since the presence of these can make the pear spoil more quickly.

Ripening:

- To ripen pears, place at room temperature for 7 to 10 days. To quicken ripening, place pears in a plastic bag.
- To slow the ripening process, place the pears in the refrigerator immediately.
- To check for ripening of:
 - Bartlett varieties and Starkrimson: look for a color change and touch the neck to see if it gives slightly.
 - Anjou, Bosc, Comice, Concorde, Seckel and Forelle: touch the pear to see if it gives slightly

Did you know?

A pear does not ripen on a tree. It is harvested when mature, but is left at room temperature to ripen and develop both color and sweetness.

Storing:

- Store ripened pears in the refrigerator.
- Coat or dip cut pears into a mixture of half water and half lemon juice to prevent them from turning brown.

Preparing:

- Rinse fresh pears under warm water before preparing or eating to remove dirt and other residues.
- Drain and rinse pears canned in syrup to remove added sugar to help to decrease calories.
- Put any leftover canned pears in a plastic container with a lid and place in the refrigerator for up to four days. Do not keep them in the can.

Nutrition:

A medium-size pear has about 100 calories and 6 grams of fiber. Pears contain no sodium, fat or cholesterol and provide vitamin C, K, and potassium. Pears are perfect for snacks, toppings for salads, yogurt or ice cream, as a side dish or even with added to an occasional dessert like pies, cobblers or fruit crisps.



Purchasing Fruits & Vegetables on a Budget

- **Make a grocery list:** Decide what fruits and vegetables you need ahead of time to avoid unnecessary spending. Remember, frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables are all nutritious.
- **Buy in-season produce:** Choosing in-season fruits and vegetables saves money since they may be cheaper during peak season.
- **Properly store fruits and vegetables:** Be sure to store produce properly so that you don't end up wasting money by throwing away leftover food.



If you have questions about how to store or prepare fruits and vegetables, call the ISU AnswerLine toll-free at 1-800-262-3804.

Source: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/fruits-and-vegetables-on-a-budget>

FRESH FRUIT CRISP (Serves: 6)

Ingredients:

- 2-2 1/2 (15 oz.) cans of pears*
 - 1/4 cup white sugar
 - 1/2 cup rolled oats, uncooked
 - 1/4 cup flour
 - 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
 - 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
 - 1/4 cup margarine
 - Non-stick cooking spray
- *Can use whatever fruit you wish.



Directions:

1. Coat an 8-inch square baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Drain and rinse the canned pears under running water. Slice, then place in a dish. Sprinkle with white sugar.
3. In a small mixing bowl, combine the oats, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cut margarine in until mixture is crumbly.
4. Sprinkle oatmeal mixture over fruit.
5. Bake at 375° F for 30 minutes.
6. Serve warm or chilled. Refrigerate leftovers.

Nutritional analysis (1 serving—1/2 cup): 220 calories, 8g fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 1.5g trans fat, 75mg sodium, 36g carbohydrates, 3g fiber, 2g protein

Source: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/fresh-fruit-crisp>

Helpful Resources

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(515) 286-2062

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The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

If the cost of fruits and vegetables prevents you from buying them, the SFMNP may be for you.

The SFMNP provides eligible older adults with vouchers that can be exchanged for fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs and honey at local farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs and roadside produce stands June 1st through August 31st.



The SFMNP aims to expand farmers markets, CSA programs, and farm stands while increasing the consumption of agricultural commodities and the purchase of locally-grown foods. In order to receive SFMNP benefits, a you must meet both age and income requirements in addition to filling out an application.

For more information about SFMNP and obtaining a voucher, please contact **Polk County's Area Agency on Aging, at (800) 747-5352.**

SPICY GREEN BEANS (Serves: 6)

Ingredients:

1 pound fresh/frozen green beans or 1-15 ounce can green beans

1 small onion, chopped

2 teaspoons margarine

1 teaspoon flour

1 teaspoon oregano

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1-14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes



Directions:

1. If using fresh or frozen beans, cook until crisp-tender and set aside. If using canned, drain and rinse.
2. Cook chopped onion in margarine until soft.
3. Add flour, oregano, and garlic powder to onions. Cook and stir for 1 minute.
4. Add tomatoes and their liquid to the onion mixture.
5. Add beans to tomato mixture. Cook over low heat until heated through.

Nutritional analysis (1 serving—209g): 70 calories, 1.4g fat (0.3g saturated), 173.8mg sodium, 13.8g carbohydrates (6.3g sugar), 2.5g protein, 6% calcium

Source: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/spicy-green-beans>

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NEWS

You Can Use

September 2013

NUTRITION EDUCATION WITH SENIORS



The USDA's MyPlate suggests that *one-quarter* of your plate should include lean protein. Foods in the protein group include: meat, poultry, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans and peas, eggs and soy products. Protein is important for building and maintaining muscle in addition to healing cuts and bruises. Protein-rich foods contain:

- ◆ **Zinc:** necessary for a healthy immune system
- ◆ **B vitamins:** promotes brain health
- ◆ **Iron:** carries oxygen in the blood



*Older adult men need about 55 grams of protein daily.
Older adult women need about 45 grams of protein daily.*

Did you know?

1/4 cup of dried beans = 1 ounce equivalent of a lean protein food

1 cup of pinto beans = 16g of protein 3 ounces of beef = 21g of protein

Pack in the protein, with pinto beans!

Pinto beans are naturally cholesterol-free, fat-free, and sodium-free. They are also a good source of fiber. A one-half cup serving of pinto beans also provides about one-third of your daily fiber intake!

STORAGE:

- Store in a cool, dry environment (may be stored for up to one year).
- After opening, place the dried beans in an airtight container.
- Store cooked pinto beans in the refrigerator for 5 - 7 days or freeze for up to 6 months.



SOAKING:

- Spread dried beans evenly on a cookie sheet and throw away dirt, small stones or broken beans.
- Rinse beans under cool water and place in a large pot.
- Cover with three cups of water per one cup of beans and soak.
 - **Short Soak:** Boil beans for two to three minutes; remove from stovetop and let sit (covered) for 1 to 4 hours. Rinse after soaking and drain.
 - **Long soak:** Cover beans with cool water (approximately three inches above beans) and soak (covered) overnight. Rinse after soaking and drain.

COOKING:

- After soaking, cover the beans with clean, cold water and bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat and simmer for two to three hours or until beans are tender. Add more water during cooking if necessary. Two cups of dried beans makes about four to six cups of cooked beans.
- ◆ One and a half cups of cooked beans equals one 15 ounce can of beans.

Source: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/preparing-dry-beans>

Food Safety for Canned Foods

Canned foods are ready-to-use, have a long shelf life and are easy to store. However, there are steps we need to take to make sure that they remain of high quality and are safe for use.

PURCHASING:

- ◆ Buy canned foods that are free from dents, cracks, rust and bulging lids. Cans that are not in perfect condition may put you at a serious risk for food poisoning.
- ◆ Store any canned products that are left over in airtight containers.

DATES:

- ◆ **“Used by”, “Best if Used by” or “Best Before” date:** indicates how long the item will remain at peak quality before being opened.
- ◆ **“Sell by” date:** this date is listed to ensure food quality. Purchase the product by this date.
- ◆ **Packing codes:** a series of letters, numbers, or a combination of both are used for the manufacturer and distributor’s purpose only. It does not indicate food safety or food quality.

Source: <http://www.stilltasty.com/articles/view/5>

Fiesta Skillet Dinner (Serves: 5)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cooked brown instant rice
- 1-15.5 oz. can Mexican-style tomatoes
- 1/2 cup dry pinto beans**, cooked and rinsed
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 Tablespoon chili powder
- 2 cups cooked diced chicken
- 1/2 cup reduced fat cheddar cheese, shredded

Instructions:

1. Prepare the brown rice according to package directions.
2. While the rice cooks, mix the tomatoes, pinto beans, corn, chili powder, and chicken in a large skillet. Cook over medium heat until heated through.
3. Add the cooked rice and stir thoroughly. Top with shredded cheddar cheese.
4. Serve hot.



Nutritional analysis (1.5 cups) : 190 calories, 4g fat, 1.5g saturated, 0g trans, 590mg sodium, 24g carbohydrates, 4g fiber, 17g protein

Source: <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/2013/03/04/fiesta-skillet-dinner-easy-and-inexpensive/>

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NEWS

You Can Use

October 2013

NUTRITION EDUCATION WITH SENIORS



Add both visual appeal and health benefits to your plate by choosing a variety of colorful vegetables. Yellow and orange vegetables such as **corn**, sweet potatoes, squash, bell peppers, and pumpkin are packed with antioxidants and vitamin C. Antioxidants help protect cells from damage. Carotenoids, an antioxidant found in these vegetables, aid in heart and eye health, and the prevention of cancer. Vitamin C helps keep your immune system healthy.



More specifically, **sweet corn** contains a wide variety of nutrients such as: zinc, iron, potassium, vitamin C, selenium, and a few B vitamins in addition to lutein and zeaxanthin. Lutein and zeaxanthin, found in orange, dark green, and yellow vegetables like corn, aid in eye health and the prevention of macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in older adults.

We're crazy about canned corn, are you?

Corn, a cereal crop and member of the grass family, is considered a staple food around the world. It can be purchased fresh, canned, or frozen and can be incorporated into a delicious meal or mid-day snack. It is also considered to be a starchy vegetable in the MyPlate vegetable group.

Older adult women should consume 4 cups of starchy vegetables per week.
Older adult men should consume 5 cups of starchy vegetables per week.



NUTRITION:

- ◆ A typical 15 ½ ounce can contains 3 ½ servings (about a ½ cup per serving) after draining.
- ◆ One cup of canned corn counts as one serving of vegetables from the MyPlate vegetable group and contains about 130 calories.
- ◆ Corn is a whole grain because it contains all parts of the grain kernel. When buying canned corn or other corn products, look for keywords such as “whole corn” or “whole grain corn”.

PREPARATION/USE:

- ◆ After opening the can of corn, place the corn in a colander. Drain and rinse the corn under cool water to remove added sodium.
- ◆ Canned corn can be used in a wide variety of foods like soups, chili, stew, chowder, side dishes, salads, salsa, and casseroles.
- ◆ Canned corn can be eaten without additional cooking since it has already been cooked prior to packaging.

Did you know?

According to the Corn Farmers Coalition, only 1% of American-grown corn is eaten. The remaining 99% is used for animal feed, making sweeteners, fueling cars, and creating other food products.

Fruits and Vegetables on a Budget

Follow these five simple tips in order to stretch your food dollar and get the most out of your budget:



1. **Make a grocery list.** Determine which fruits and vegetables you need ahead of time to avoid unnecessary spending.
2. **Include ALL forms of fruits and vegetables.** Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried varieties are all nutritious and count toward your recommended daily intakes.
3. **Buy in-season produce.** In-season produce may be cheaper during peak season.
4. **Purchase extra produce during specials.** Buying produce in bulk and freezing it for later use may save you money in the long run.
5. **Store produce properly.** Store produce appropriately to keep fresh for a longer period of time.

Call the ISU AnswerLine (1-800-262-3804) or check out the “Harvesting and storing vegetables” publication at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/pm731.pdf> for information on how to store a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Cowboy Caviar (Serves: 8)

Ingredients:

- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained & rinsed
- 1 1/2 cups frozen **corn**, cooked*
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes with green chilies**
- 3 green onions, sliced
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil



*You can substitute frozen corn with one 15-ounce can of corn, drained and rinsed

** If you don't want “spicy”, use plain canned tomatoes

Instructions:

1. Stir together kidney beans, black beans, corn, tomatoes, chilies, and onions in a large bowl.
2. Add lime juice, oil, salt, and pepper. Additional spices may be added to taste.
3. Toss to gently combine all ingredients. Serve with tortilla chips or place a few spoonful's inside of a pita or wrap.

Nutritional analysis (1/2 cup) : 160 calories, 2.5g fat, 0g saturated, 0g trans, 130mg sodium, 28g carbohydrates, 8g fiber, 8g protein

Source: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/cowboy-caviar>

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Tomatoes, one of the most popular garden vegetables, are a good source of vitamins A and C in addition to antioxidants. Antioxidants, found in many fruits and vegetables, protect our cells from damage. Antioxidant action can be likened to lemon juice spread on an apple to prevent browning. Vitamin A is important for overall eye health, while vitamin C supports a healthy immune system and wound healing.

Lycopene, an antioxidant found in tomatoes and **tomato juice**, may protect against cancer of the lung, prostate, and stomach as well as heart disease. Lycopene is also said to lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels and help protect against macular degeneration (the leading cause of blindness in older adults) and cataracts. When tomato products (i.e. tomato sauce) are subjected to heat, lycopene is activated and may be better absorbed by the body.



When choosing tomatoes during the cooler months, look for varieties that are canned such as **tomato juice**, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, and whole peeled tomatoes. Canned tomatoes are nutrient-rich and may cost less than fresh tomatoes during the winter. Another benefit of canned tomatoes is that they have been picked at peak ripeness and are rapidly processed to lock in beneficial nutrients.

Other tomato sources include: pasta sauce, salsa, ketchup, tomato soup, chili, tomato pie, caprese salad



Did You Know?

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the average American consumes approximately *22-24 pounds* of tomatoes each year. About half of our consumption comes in the form of ketchup and tomato sauce.

The Inside Scoop on Tomato Juice

Selection:

- ◆ When shopping for canned tomato juice at the grocery store, be sure to look for reduced sodium or low-sodium varieties.
- ◆ When buying canned tomatoes, select cans that are free from bulging lids, cracks, and dents.

Uses:

- ◆ Soups, chili, smoothies, juice blends, salsa, gazpacho, alcoholic drinks, etc.

Nutrition:

One cup of tomato juice:

- 1) Counts as one serving from the vegetable group
- 2) Is a low-calorie beverage, containing about 40 calories; be sure to look at the sodium content
- 3) Provides a little more than one-third of the recommended daily value for vitamin C
- 4) Is a good source of vitamins A, C, and antioxidants



Limited Fresh Vegetable Options? Choose Frozen!

During the winter months, fresh vegetables are often limited and may be pricey. A nutritious alternative to buying fresh vegetables is to purchase frozen vegetables. Be sure to choose vegetable varieties (i.e. stir-fry) that do not have added salt and high-fat sauces. Here is a list of qualities that make frozen vegetables such a nutritious choice:



- **Long storage time.** Frozen vegetables can be stored in your freezer for 8 to 12 months. Store vegetables in the original package and seal tightly, or place in an air-tight container or freezer bag.
- **Budget-friendly.** Frozen vegetables are typically less expensive than fresh and canned varieties.
- **Easy preparation/use.** Frozen vegetables make a great snack and are perfect as a side dish or as part of a meal. To steam, simply place the vegetables in a microwave-safe dish and place a few tablespoons of water in the bottom of the dish. Microwave for 90-seconds, stirring frequently, and continue heating until vegetables are thoroughly cooked.
- **Nutrient-rich.** Since frozen vegetables are processed at peak ripeness, they are good sources of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that are important for optimal health.

Savory Vegetable Beef Soup

Serves: 6

Servings: 1½ cups each



Ingredients:

1¾ cup 50% less sodium beef/vegetable broth

2 medium potatoes, cubed (about 2 cups)*

1 cup cooked beef, cubed*

3 cups **tomato juice**

1 cup canned diced tomatoes

1 bag (16 oz.) frozen mixed vegetables*

1/4 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed

1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

*When using a canned product alternative, drain and rinse before use. Canned products will increase the overall sodium content.

Instructions:

1. Heat the broth and potatoes in a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce to low heat. Cover and cook for 5 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

2. Stir the beef, tomato juice, tomatoes, vegetables, thyme, and black pepper in the saucepan. Cover and cook for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

Nutritional analysis (1 ½ cups): 188 calories, 2g fat, 1g saturated, 0g trans, 477mg sodium, 30g carbohydrates, 6g fiber, 13g protein

Source: <http://www.campbellskitchen.com/recipes/savory-vegetable-beef-soup-23870>

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Dietary fat is an essential component of our diet and provides our bodies with energy. While eating too much fat is not good for our health, eating fat in moderation, especially healthy types of fat, is beneficial to support the body's natural functions.

Fat can be divided into two main categories: *saturated fat* and *unsaturated fat*. Saturated fats are those that are solid at room temperature while unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. It is recommended that older adults eat more unsaturated fats rather than saturated fats.

Unsaturated fats:

- ◆ **Monounsaturated fat (MUFA):** Found in nuts (such as **peanuts**), canola oil, olive oil, vegetable oils, and avocados. This type of fat provides omega-6 fatty acids which can improve blood cholesterol levels, aid in blood sugar control, and reduce your risk of heart disease.
- ◆ **Polyunsaturated fat (PUFA):** Found in fatty fish (salmon), walnuts, flaxseed, and canola oil. This type of fat contains omega-3 fatty acids and can improve blood cholesterol levels, decrease your risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes, and aid in general heart health.

Saturated fats:

- ◆ **Saturated fat:** Found in foods from animal sources and spreads such as butter or margarine. High amounts of saturated fat in the diet can increase blood cholesterol levels, increasing your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- ◆ **Trans fat:** Found in packaged and processed food products. This synthetic type of fat is created through food processing so that the product has a longer shelf life and is easier to cook with. Trans fats can increase "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and decrease "healthy" (HDL) cholesterol, therefore, increasing your risk for heart disease.

Pass the Peanut Butter, Please!

Selection:

- ◆ For a unique taste, try choosing a flavored peanut butter such berry nut or cinnamon raisin granola nut.

Nutrition:

- ◆ Two tablespoons of peanut butter counts as one serving from the MyPlate protein group.
- ◆ Each serving contains approximately 120 calories and 8 grams of protein.
- ◆ Peanut butter is a good source of protein, magnesium, and vitamin E and contains both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated ("healthy") fats.



Uses:

- ◆ Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, mixed in a smoothie, eaten with fresh apple slices or celery sticks

Did You Know?

According to the National Peanut Board, Americans consume enough peanut butter each year to make over 10 million peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

Holiday Food Safety: Leftovers

Leftovers are all too common after a holiday party or meal at home. Eating leftovers is budget friendly; however, it's very important to make sure your leftovers are safe to eat in order to protect yourself from foodborne illness. The first step is not to keep any foods that sat out for two hours or longer. For leftovers that did not sit out for more than two hours, follow these "4 Day Throw Away" campaign tips:

- **Store your leftovers properly.** For refrigerator or freezer storage, put leftover food into airtight containers and seal tightly. Do NOT store leftovers in their original cans or without a lid.
- **Label your leftovers.** Before you place your leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer, be sure to label them. Simply indicate the name of the food and the date on a piece of tape and place on top of the lid. This way, you can't forget how long a food item has been stored.
- **Place cooked foods above raw foods in the refrigerator.** By following this principle, there is minimal risk for cross contamination between cooked and raw foods.
- **Throw leftovers away after 4 days.** While your leftover refrigerated foods may appear to be safe in the refrigerator, they may actually contain bacteria that can make you sick if they've been sitting too long. As a general rule, throw any leftovers away after 4 days of storage.

Source: <http://www.4daythrowaway.org/leftoversafety>

Peanut Butter and Banana Toasts

Serves: 4

Serving size: 1 "toast" square

Ingredients:

2 graham crackers, broken in half (4 squares)
2 Tablespoons creamy peanut butter
1 small banana, sliced
1 teaspoon honey

Instructions:

1. Spread peanut butter onto the graham cracker squares.
2. Top with banana slices and drizzle with honey.

Nutritional analysis (1 "toast"): 110 calories, 5g fat, 1g saturated, 0g trans, 85mg sodium, 14g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 8g sugar, 3g protein

Source: <http://www.kraftrecipes.com/recipes/peanut-butter-banana-toasts-76291.aspx>



Helpful Resources

Polk County Congregate Meals
(515) 286-2062

Commodity and Supplemental Foods
(515) 286-3679

Nutrition, Food Preparation and Food Safety
ISU AnswerLine
1-800-262-3804

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