

# COOKED FOODS Vs RAW FOODS WHICH IS BETTER?



There has been much debate over whether vegetables are more nutritious raw vs. cooked. Raw promoters say the live enzymes are retained if eaten raw, and destroyed if heated over 105°-120°F. But, are enzymes all there is to it? While we do benefit from a diet high in live enzymes, there are other nutrients that are only available to us if the vegetables and fruit are cooked.

Some vegetables (and fruit) have thick cell walls that are broken open by cooking at a higher heat (around 190°F) for at least 30 minutes. In this process the antioxidants contained in the foods are increased and better retained, and our bodies are able to assimilate them and receive greater benefit from them. These would be foods like carrots, zucchini, broccoli, cabbage, tomatoes and mushrooms. When we cook tomatoes at 190°F for 30 minutes, antioxidant levels rise by approximately 60%, and cis-lycopene is increased by 35% and trans-lycopene is increased by 164%.

There are also many veggies and fruit that are better eaten raw, and although most of the time it is great for the digestion and pH to eat them raw with their live enzymes re-

tained, a benefit to eating some veggies cooked is that when we smell the aromas of the foods being cooked our digestive system prepares itself for consumption and digestion. Just smelling the food cooking will increase saliva production and digestive juices, helping us to digest and assimilate the foods better. This can make up for some of the lost enzymes.

Additionally, more nutrition can be retained if vegetables (other than those mentioned) are cooked for a little longer period of time at a lower temperature (180°F or lower) and with little or no water. You can add high water content foods such as onion slices, apple slices or tomato slices to provide the moisture needed and use a tight lid to keep steam from escaping. You will notice many foods will blossom and brighten when cooked, showing their beneficial nutrients opening up to us, while others will go dull and lifeless, showing these would be better raw and live.

Either way you choose to prepare and eat produce, the most important thing is we ARE eating our vegetables and fruit! Enjoy! ♦