What’s your favorite summer food? Now is the time to enjoy juicy fruits, fresh vegetables and all-American traditions. Let’s take a look at some of our summertime staples.

Ice cream
One of the first frozen desserts was made nearly 2,000 years ago. Runners in China would carry blocks of ice to the races. It’s said that Marco Polo brought snow from the Himalayas back to Europe. The first frozen dessert was served in London in 1662. When Queen’s Banana ice cream hit the streets in America in the late 1800s, it was sold at 5 cents for a scoop. The ice was made from crushed snow and rock salt. It was usually served in porcelain bowls and was meant to be eaten within minutes. Today, ice cream is served in various flavors and forms and can be enjoyed all year long.

Apple pie
Apple pie is probably America’s favorite fruit dessert. The story of the apple pie begins in England. When the Pilgrims came to America, they brought apple seeds and recipes with them. In the late 1700s, a preacher, John Chapman, began traveling through the Ohio and Indiana frontiers, planting apple trees. For about 50 years, he taught settlers how to grow the trees. People began calling him Johnny Appleseed.

Hot dogs
Americans eat about 20 billion hot dogs every year! No one really knows who invented the hot dog. Experts believe that German immigrants brought sausage making recipes to America in the late 1800s. Some German immigrants also brought over their long-dough dogs. A sausage served in a bun was called a “dachshund sausage” or “little-dog sausage.” College students started calling them “hot dogs.”

Watermelon
Watermelon was first grown in Africa thousands of years ago. In some African areas during dry spells, watermelons were the only source of water. European colonists brought watermelons to America.

What are some of your favorite summer foods and traditions? Share and compare your list of the fastest summer foods with a friend or sibling.

Cook’s Corner
Green Beans With Tarragon

You’ll need:
• 2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed
• 1/2 teaspoon salt
• 1/2 cup water
• 1 stalk celery, chopped
• 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper

To do:
1. Boil green beans and salt in 1/2 cup water in a saucepan until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Run green beans under cold water to stop the cooking process. Drain. Meanwhile, combine remaining vegetables in separate pan with olive oil. Sprinkle spices on top and cook on medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add vegetable mixture to green beans and stir to combine. Serves 4.

Yum! Summer Foods
Fresh tomatoes
Tomatoes ripened outdoors in the sun are a special summer treat. Tomatoes have been grown in South and Central America for centuries. Spanish explorers brought tomatoes from Mexico to Europe in the 1500s. However, many Europeans thought they were poisonous and refused to eat them. The legends that in 1820, a man who liked tomatoes, Col. Robert Johnson, ate tomatoes in front of a crowd in Salem, New Jersey. Everyone thought he would die before their eyes. When he didn’t, people began to believe tomatoes were safe to eat.

Corn on the cob
Corn is from a variety called “sweet corn,” and is best eaten before the corn kernels are fully grown. Only about 10 percent of the country’s corn crop is eaten by people. About half the corn is used to feed livestock. The rest is used to make products including syrup, fuel, oil, paint, medicine, cloth, starch and paper. Native Americans living in the area of Mexico were eating corn, or maize, 10,000 years ago. By the time Europeans arrived, people throughout the American continents were eating corn.

Try ‘n’ Find
Words that remind us of summer foods are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally. See if you can find:

Mini Fact:
Vanilla is Americans’ favorite flavor of ice cream.

Resources
On the Web:
• “Mr. Geo Goes Food Tipping: Famous Food and Delicacies in North America” by Baby Professor

Eco Note
Do you help with grocery shopping? If you try to read nutrition labels on foods, you can try to find a cereal that’s low in added sugars. Compare the fat, sugar and sodium content of foods; which are lower in sodium (salt) and fat, and higher in fiber, vitamins and calcium? Pay attention to serving sizes on things like peanut butter. And snack on fresh fruits, like blueberries or apples, or dried fruits, such as raisins, instead of candy.

Mini Jokes
Frank: What did the baby corn say to its mom? Fern: Where’s pop corn?

For later:
Look in your newspaper for grocery ads or notices about farmers’ markets in your area.

Teachers: Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!

Books from The Mini Page are wonderful resources and make great gifts. See all of our Mini Page products at MiniPageBooks.com, or call 844-444-5444 for more information. Mail payment to: Andrews McMeel Universal, Mini Page Books, 200 N. Columbus Rd. Kansas City, MO 64108. Include $4.00 shipping and handling per order.

Mini Page recipe home

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7 Little Words for Kids
Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. it falls from an oak tree (5)
2. passage through a mountain (6)
3. crunchy vegetable stalk (6)
4. person sentenced to jail (8)
5. they grow on trees (6)
6. cart pulled by a horse (5)
7. rock band member (7)

Answers: acorn, tunnel, celery, criminal, leaves, wagon, drummer.