



abundant now  
garlic

**Why try** Because it stores so well, garlic is inexpensive (about 25 cents a head) and widely available all year long. It's a star performer in so many favourite cuisines: Italian, Chinese, Indian, Greek and too many others to name. And for those who prefer to eat their medicine, garlic keeps blood pressure and cholesterol levels in check – plus it's a natural antibiotic.

**Get the best** Choose firm bulbs with unblemished skin and no signs of sprouting. At home, store garlic in a dry, airy place (not the fridge). Don't use if it becomes soft.

**Enjoy tonight** Slice the top off 1 or more heads of garlic. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with a pinch of coarse salt; wrap in foil and bake at 350F until soft. Ease cloves out with a small knife and spread on slices of baguette. —SANDRA E. MARTIN

TOOL

meat  
thermometer

From ensuring everyone's steak is done the way they like to protecting your family from tummy-troubling germs that lurk in undercooked food, a meat thermometer is a must in any kitchen. And while some cooks check for doneness by poking a knife into their dinner-in-progress, **Jenny Koniuk**, a recipe developer, food writer and our recipe tester at *Today's Parent*, warns against the practice. "Cutting into the meat lets the juices run out," she says.

**JENNY'S TIPS:** Look for a meat thermometer with a dimple along the stem that indicates how deep you need to insert it for an accurate read. Place it in the thickest part of your meat, avoiding fat and bone. Leave it in for 20 seconds or until the temperature stops rising. —S.E.M.

HIGH

**Thermapen**, \$89 US, thermoworks.com  
This pro-chef fave is accurate even with thin, delicate fish.

MID

**Taylor Commercial Anti-microbial Instant Read Thermometer**, \$32, coleparmer.ca  
Measures temps up to 450F, updating every second.

LOW

**Accu-Temp Instant Thermometer**, \$8, kitchenstuffplus.com  
A basic in stainless steel, with a cover for the pointy end.



IT WORKS!

Make sandwiches with cookie cutters or arrange cucumber slices in pretty patterns: "Children are most excited about food that's fun to eat," says researcher Brian Wansink.

culinary  
chameleons

Your colour preferences may explain why your kids don't find your meals as appealing as you do.

Want to boost your picky kid's appetite? Add colour to his meals. Researchers at Cornell University found that kids were most attracted to plates that included seven food items and six different colours (yellow, red, green and orange foods were their favourites). Bonus: Brightly coloured foods deliver the best hits of beta carotene, antioxidants and vitamins. This means getting kids to eat well should be easy, right? But because mom or dad is responsible for buying and preparing the family's food, their tastes dictate what goes on everyone's plates. And adults, the study found, prefer only three items and three colours, so they may be unintentionally editing out healthy foods their kids would like. —KATIE O'CONNOR

GAMES

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD

Creative mom Jennifer Tyler Lee has transformed mealtime into game time with **Crunch a Color** (\$15, chapters.indigo.ca). Picky eaters earn points for trying different foods. To win, you must collect three colour cards and a protein card totalling 30 points (avocado or broccoli alone will get you 10). A portion of the game's profits go to chef Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard Project and other kids' nutrition programs. —KATE STEWART

