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**To Rinse or Not to Rinse?**

Ah yes, that is the question. Some people wash their fruit and vegetables, some people don’t. Do you wash your store bought or home grown produce? We have pondered this lately and have a few thoughts. Not the least of which is, "Does it really do any good?" Effort might be better spent washing a real germ source, … ones hands. Course, if one grows their own, not spraying solves a major concern before it starts. We will concentrate on the fruity end of things here. As far as vegetables are concerned, we pretty much took care of our relationship with them in a special ‘Christmas Edition’ years ago. Ah yes, who could forget "The NHN&WR Cook Book" with its Cabbage Salad and Refrigerator Soup? Come to think of it, what became of ‘Special Christmas Editions’? Don’t think the staff ever recovered from the last one, it was a calendar, …"365 Excuses for Drinking". Thank heaven for Henry VIII in that one. His wives Birthdays took care of almost a week.

We are big on fresh produce here and right off the bat will own up to being bi-polar rinsers. i.e.: if aliens are expected at meal time, we rinse. ‘Tet to Tet’ we don’t. This accomplishes three things: Doesn’t give people an excuse for not visiting, avoids libel suits and keeps our own immune systems in top notch order. Think about it. Isn’t non-rinsing somewhat akin to inoculation? A small dose of something bad?

Now for fruit. We are apt to have 4-5 kinds of fruit a day. Bananas are a staple, sliced in milk for most breakfasts. (Is that last word a word? Microsoft seems to think so, but I can hardly pronounce it. Comes out breakfastses) Bananas are outside the realm of our subject though. They come in their own containers. Just un-zip’em and eat’em. We have never come across a person who admits to washing bananas, peeled or unpeeled.

We buy oranges in lieu of orange juice. Avoiding pre-bagged bargains which end up with spoilage, we select ours individually, preferably ‘juice’ oranges. Something about ‘Seedless’ oranges that just doesn’t seem right and those with the big belly buttons are too expensive. Have yet to try a ’Blood’, Are they just for Leonard Bernstein’s west Side Hoodlums? Oranges are also a breakfast item. Un-rinsed, we cut them in half through their north and south poles, then quarter them. One bite with the front teeth captures/strains out the pips. Then pop the whole quarter section into the mouth to consume the flesh. Should someone appear at this moment and say, *"good morning"* , … wonderful. Look up, make a wide facial smile and observe the effect your orange grin has on the greeter. *"An apple a day keeps the Doctor away."* We’ve two favorites, Red Delicious and Empire. Empire is something like a Mac, but not so sweet and with a better shelf life. The Red Delicious is crisp, tart and lasts forever. Kinda big though, takes forever to eat one. We only rinse apples when assembling a fruit bowl display to impress visitors. Red, Empire, whatever, Jason is ambivalent, eats every core in sight. We don’t rinse pears either. If their skin is real yuky looking we’ll peel it off. Rather than eat a pear as one would an apple, we pull out the stem and attack it from the top. This gives a nice wide bottom for finger support as you circularly gnaw your way down around the core. Actually, our favorite pears are avocados. Sort of like bananas, they come in their own hygienic containers and can be eaten out of same. After halving through the poles you are left with a big pit in one of the halves. Don’t be gauche and dig it out. You will deface your pear half and be left holding a slippery slimy pit. Hold the pear half in the palm of your hand and whack the pit smartly with a substantial knife. With a slight twist and upward motion the pit will leave the pear and remain attached to the knife. With practice you can do this with a nonchalant and debonair demeanor. Put a small dollop of French Dressing in the cavity and enjoy. Boy are these good, but eat’em fast before they turn black. (Note: We’ve one family member who even washes these because the cutting knifeblade will carry germs into the flesh. Oh well, ... to each their own.) Peaches are good but not a rinse non rinse category since we peel them. Plums would be non-rinse. Grapefruit is a no no per Ken’s BP medication. We are not too big on those exotic half this half that varieties. That leaves, ... the berries.

King of the hill here is the raspberry. To wash one of these is a crime. A wee bit of mold on one? Pfuiii. No problem, … pop it in anyway. Lucile & Ken have an agreement. She doesn’t drink his gin. He doesn’t eat her raspberries. Jason has signed no such agreement. He has been known to put the end of a raspberry cane in his mouth, then back up and strip off all the berries. Strawberries are a distant second in the berry department, but still good and available all year nowadays. These could be regarded as the acid test for rinsers/non-rinsers. In winter check the label. No doubt you will see, *"Product of Mexico".* We rest our case.

Lucile & Ken.

North Hero.