

NEW

# CAULIFLOWERS ?



Cauliflower cheese will never be the same again. Scientists have developed amazing variants of vegetable where the traditional white florets have been changed to a garish orange, purple and green.

The “rainbow cauliflowers” are said to taste the same as the normal varieties, but add a splash of colour to the dinner table.

Some scientists have even claimed that they are healthier for you.

Andrew Coker, a spokesman for the plant company Syngenta - which is developing the plants in Europe - stressed that the colourful cauliflowers were not the result of genetic engineering, but came after decades of traditional selective breeding.

Although its not the first time that orange and green cauliflowers have been seen in Britain, their creators say they will be the first to be commercially available in supermarkets and markets.

They retain their colour even after cooking. “The pictures may look garish, but they are really are this colourful,” said Mr Coker.

“Consumers are looking for ever new experiences on their dinner plates and colour features very large in their desire for different things.

“These are the results of traditional selective breeding - where different strains have been cross bred and cross bred until these strains have been created.

“We are now trying to ensure that we have the consistency of colour, taste and size before bringing them to the mass market. But you will find them in smaller outlets from this year.”

In tests, the garish cauliflowers have proved a hit with shoppers.

While traditionalists may balk at the unusual colours, it is not the first time that plant breeders have changed the appearance of vegetables.

Until the 17th century most carrots eaten Europe were white, yellow or purple. The orange pigment was added by Dutch plant breeders looking for a way to celebrate Holland’s royal family.

The last few years has seen the introduction of purple carrots to supermarkets in Britain, along with yellow tomatoes and purple potatoes.

In America, where colour cauliflowers have been available for several years, they have been a big hit with foodies. The orange cauliflower has higher than normal levels of beta carotene, a form of vitamin A that encourages healthy skin.

The purple colour comes from anthocyanin, which may help prevent heart disease by slowing blood clotting.

Tests of the orange cauliflowers in America found that they contained 25 times the concentrations of beta carotene in normal cauliflowers.