



How to Choose & Store Fresh Produce

PRODUCE

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

HOW TO STORE

Apples	Firm, crisp, well-colored apples. Apples must be and storing ability. Immature apples lack color and are usually poor in flavor.	Remove any spoiled apples. Put in a plastic bag in the coldest part of refrigerator, preferably the crisper, or store them in a cool place. Store no longer than six weeks.
Apricots	Plump and juicy looking, with a uniform, golden-orange color. Ripe apricots will yield to gentle pressure on the skin.	Store at room temperature, or in refrigerator if fully ripe.
Asparagus	Spears should be firm and bright green (except white or purple asparagus).	Refrigerate in open plastic bag
Beets	Fresh and unwilted greens.	Refrigerate in open plastic bag. Use quickly before sugars turn to starch.
Berries	A bright clean appearance and uniform good color for the species. The individual small cells making up the berry should be plump and tender but not mushy, fully ripe with not attached stem caps.	Store at room temp. if using same day same day; in refrigerator on paper towel-lined plate.
Broccoli	Completely green with no yellowing; should smell sweet, not like cabbage.	Refrigerate in open plastic bag.
Brussels Sprouts	Buy on stalk. Avoid yellow or brown leaves.	Refrigerate in open plastic bag.
Cabbage	Firm or hard heads of cabbage that are heavy for their size. Outer leaves should be a good green or red color; reasonably fresh and free from serious blemishes.	Refrigerate in crisper.
Carrots	Bright green tops, crisp, deep orange color.	Store in closed plastic bag in refrigerator with tops removed.
Cauliflower	Tightly packed florets without discoloration.	Store in closed plastic bag in refrigerator.
Cherries	Shiny, firm, not squishy. Deep scarlet or yellow. Good cherries have bright, glossy, plump-looking surfaces and fresh-looking stems.	Refrigerate. Wash cherries when you're about to eat.
Corn	Silk should look fresh with unwilted leaves. Kernels should be plump, filled out	Refrigerate in crisper. Cook as soon as possible.
Cucumbers	Firm skins, not limp or shriveled.	Refrigerate away from apples, up to one week.

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Eggplant	Shiny skin with firm, even texture.	Refrigerate in crisper.
Garlic	Firm, plump heads with no shoots.	Store in cool, dark, dry place.
Grapes	Well-colored, plump grapes firmly attached to the stem. Bunches are more likely to hold together if the stems are predominantly green and pliable.	Grapes are picked ripe, so only store them if you have to. Avoid washing before storing. Check through bunches for spoiled grapes and remove them. Put in a plastic bag in refrigerator. Store for no longer than a week.
Green Beans	Crisp and bright. Get young, tender beans with pods in a firm, crisp condition. There are many varieties of snap beans that are not green...try the yellow and purple beans!	Refrigerate in crisper.
Greens: lettuce, beet tops, chard, collard, kale mustard, turnip	Rich, dark leaves/ good bright colors with no yellowing. Beet tops and red chard show reddish color.	Refrigerate in damp towel-lined open plastic bag.
Kohlrabi possible.	Best flavor when small, 1 - 2 inches in diameter.	Does not store well and should be used as soon as
Leeks	White stalk; fresh, well-hydrated top.	Refrigerate in crisper.
Melons: Cantaloupe/ Muskmelons	A ripe cantaloupe will have a yellowish cast, have a pleasant cantaloupe aroma, and yield slightly to light thumb pressure on the blossom end of the melon.	Hold them for 2 to 4 days at room temp to allow completion of ripening. Store ripe in refrigerator for 1 or 2 days.
Honeydew	A soft, velvety texture indicates maturity. Slight softening at the blossom end, a faint pleasant fruit aroma, and yellowish-white to creamy rind color indicate ripeness. All melons should smell sweet at stem end (except watermelon). Should not hear seeds rattling when shaken.	
Nectarines	Avoid fruit with green tinge. Flesh gives slightly pressure.	Keep at room temperature.
Okra	Tender pods (the tips will bend with very slight pressure) under 4 inches long. They should be bright green color and free from blemishes.	Refrigerate in a paper bag.
Onions	Sweet summer onions should be firm.	Store spring onions in refrigerator and sweet onions in cool, dry place.
Parsnips	Whiter means fresher.	Refrigerate in crisper.
Peas	Pods filled but not bursting.	Refrigerate in open plastic bag.
Pears	Color and texture varies; best when firm with some give at stem end.	Room temperature or in crisper.
Peppers	Firm and crisp with glossy skins and deep characteristic color, relatively heavy weight, and firm walls or sides. Sweet peppers don't have to be green! They come in purple, yellow, orange and red!	Store at room temperature.
Plums	Uniform color and some spring when pressed. heavy weight, and firm walls or sides.	Refrigerate.

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Potatoes	With new potatoes, look for firm potatoes that are free from blemishes and sunburn (a green discoloration under the skin). Some amount of skinned surface is normal, but potatoes with large skinned and discolored areas are undesirable. For general-purpose and baking potatoes, look for reasonably smooth, firm potatoes free from blemishes, sunburn, and decay.	Keep in cool, dark place.
Radishes	Firm and smooth. Small radishes tend to be milder.	Refrigerate in open plastic bag.
Rhubarb	Crisp stalks in red, pink, green or speckled color.	Remove greens. Chill up to 4 days.
Strawberries	Berries with a full red color and a bright luster, firm flesh, and the cap stem still attached. The berries should be dry and clean, and usually medium to small strawberries taste better than large ones.	Use as soon as possible; store in crisper.
Spinach	Bright green leaves, flat or crinkled.	Wrap stalks in damp paper towel and refrigerate in crisper.
Summer Squash (includes zucchini)	Tender and well developed, firm, and fresh-appearing. You can identify a tender squash because the skin is glossy instead of dull, and it is neither hard nor tough.	Keep in crisper or at room temperature.
Sweet Potatoes	Firm, smooth skin with no soft spots.	Store in cool, dark place.
Tomatoes	Firm but not hard, aromatic, full color. Cracking on skin doesn't matter. <i>A good tomato doesn't have to be perfectly round. Some of the best-tasting varieties have interesting shapes and coloring!</i>	Store at room temperature, out of sun.
Turnips	Greens fresh and unwilted.	Will keep for some time at room temp. Wash when ready to use.
Watermelon	The watermelon surface should be relatively smooth. The rind should have a slight dullness (neither shiny nor dull). The ends of the melon should be filled out and rounded. The under-side, or "belly" of the melon should have a creamy color.	Refrigerate for 1 or 2 days.
Winter Squash (butternut, pumpkin)	Full maturity is indicated by a hard, tough rind. Also look for squash that is heavy for its size (meaning a thick wall and more edible flesh). Slight variations in skin color do not affect flavor.	Store in cool, dark place.