

How to Select Fruits & Vegetables

Apples

Choose firm apples that have good color. The skin should be smooth with no soft spots or wrinkles. Refrigerate and use within 2 weeks.

Avocados

Choose avocados that are slightly soft when gently squeezed in the palm of the hand. Avocados will continue to ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe avocados and use within 3-5 days.

Bananas

Choose bananas that are free of bruises and breaks in the skin. Bananas will continue to ripen at room temperature. Ripe bananas can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days. The skin will darken, but the fruit is fine.

Broccoli

Look for broccoli with tender, firm stalks and closed, dark-green buds. Avoid yellow, limp, or wilted broccoli. Refrigerate and use within in 3-5 days.

Cabbage

Cabbage should be firm and heavy with crisp-looking leaves. Store cabbage in a refrigerator and use within 1-2 weeks.

Cantaloupe

Choose melons with yellow skin under a rough, net-like surface that have a sweet smell. Melons should be a little soft when pressed with your thumb. Cantaloupes will continue to ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe melons and use within 3-5 days.

Carrots

Pick carrots that are firm, well-shaped and have a bright orange color. Avoid soft or cracked carrots. Remove green leaves and refrigerate. Use within 1–2 weeks.

Cauliflower

Choose white or creamy-white, firm buds. Avoid brown or bruised heads. Refrigerate and use within 3-5 days.

Celery

Look for fresh, crisp stalks that are thick and solid. Avoid limp or soft celery. Refrigerate and use within 2 weeks.

Corn

Look for cobs with shiny, plump, firm kernels. Avoid corn with tiny kernels or decay. Refrigerate and use within 3–5 days.

Cucumbers

Cucumbers should be firm with good green color. Avoid cucumbers that are yellow or have soft spots. Refrigerate and use within 3–5 days.

Grapes

Select plump, firm grapes. Avoid soft grapes or grapes with dry or broken stems. Refrigerate and use within 1–2 weeks.

Grapefruit

Choose firm, round fruit, heavy for its size. Greenish color or scarred skin does not affect flavor or quality. Refrigerate and use within 7–10 days.

Greens

(beet, spinach, chard, turnip, collard, mustard)

Look for fresh, young, crisp green leaves. Avoid dry, limp, or yellowed leaves. Refrigerate and use within 1–3 days.

Lemons & Limes

Select smooth, fine-textured skin and fruit that is heavy for its size. Refrigerate and use limes within 2 weeks, lemons within 1 month.

Mangoes

Pick mangoes that are soft. Mangoes can be ripened at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe mangoes and use within 3–5 days.

Oranges

Choose firm fruit, heavy for its size. The quality of an orange is not affected by a slight greenish color or scarred skin. Refrigerate and use within 1–2 weeks.

Peaches

Choose plump, well-shaped, slightly soft peaches with creamy or golden undertone. Avoid green or bruised peaches. Peaches will continue to ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate and use within 3–5 days.

Pears

Look for firm, well-shaped pears that are slightly soft. Avoid soft or bruised pears. Pears will continue to ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate and use within 5–7 days.

Peppers

(chili, sweet, bell, hot, banana)

Select firm, smooth peppers that have a shiny color. Avoid peppers with soft spots or bruised skin. Refrigerate and use within 3–5 days.

Potatoes

Choose firm, fairly smooth potatoes. Avoid potatoes with cuts, bruises or buds. Do not refrigerate. Keep in a cool, dry place and use within 2–3 months.

**Summer Squash
(yellow, zucchini)**

Look for small to medium-size squash that are heavy for their size. Avoid squash with soft spots. Refrigerate and use within 3–5 days.

**Winter Squash
(acorn, butternut, spaghetti)**

Look for firm squash that are heavy for their size and have a hard, tough skin. Avoid bruised or scarred squash. Do not refrigerate. Store in a cool, dry place and use within several weeks.

Strawberries

Select strawberries that are bright red with fresh green caps. Avoid moldy or bruised berries and stained or leaking containers. Store in refrigerator in a plastic bag. Use within 2–3 days.

Sweet Potatoes

Choose firm, evenly colored, medium-size potatoes. Avoid potatoes with buds, scars, or soft spots. Do not refrigerate. Keep in a cool, dry place. Use within 1–2 weeks.

Tomatoes

Pick firm, smooth tomatoes with bright color. Tomatoes will continue to ripen if left at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe tomatoes and use within 5–7 days.

Watermelon

Look for firm, smooth melon with a dullness to the rind. The underside should be yellowish or creamy white. Avoid melons with bright white or greenish colored undersides. Refrigerate cut melon. Uncut melons can be refrigerated or kept in a cool place. Use within 3–5 days.