

THE APPLES TO ZUCCHINI GUIDE TO
83 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN YOUR MARKET

PICK FRESH

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Chef Todd Mohr

This guide is designed to help you identify and select the best fruits and vegetables at your store or market. My goal is to help you enjoy foods more by choosing the most flavorful and nutritious products from the store.

This guide is NOT meant to cover every fruit and vegetable found in the world, that's just not possible. Nor is this guide meant to be botanically correct, items are grouped by their kitchen usage, not scientific classification. The items described will be the ones typical to my market on the east coast of the United States.

Please keep in mind, also, that there are many different varieties of each example. I mean to speak in the most general terms to help you make the best educated decision when purchasing.

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Fruit

Citrus Fruit, Vine Fruit, Melons, Tree Fruit, Stone Fruit, Tropicals

Citrus Fruit – Sectioned, juicy flesh with thick rind of bitter white pith and thin colored skin, internal seeds, grow on trees. (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit)

Vine Fruit grow from a single vine or from a shrub, have juicy flesh and are most delicate with paper thin skins. (grapes, berries)

Melons have a tough, smooth or netted outer skin, juicy flesh and hard rind (watermelon)

Tree Fruit grow from hard-wood trees and have a hard flesh protecting internal seeds. (apples, pears)

Stone Fruit have a single internal seed surrounded by soft, juicy flesh and thin colored skin. (peaches, plums, nectarines)

Tropicals – Fruits grown in a tropical, or sub-tropical environment. (pineapples, bananas, mangos, papayas)

Vegetables

Cabbages, Seed-Vegetables, Gourds/Squashes, Greens, Fungi, Onions, Roots

Cabbages – overlapping leaves to form a tight head (cauliflower, Brussels sprouts)

Seed-Vegetables – technically fruits or pods with internal seeds and delicate flesh (tomatoes)

Gourds/Squashes – tough outer skin, tough flesh and internal seed cavity (squash)

Greens - leafy part of a vegetable eaten raw for salads, or cooked. (lettuces, kale)

Fungi – mushrooms

Onions – paper thin skin protects internal layers, fibrous root structure

Roots – tuber vegetables whose edible part grows beneath the ground.

Vegetables contain much less sugar, and considerably more starch and fiber than most fruits, thus are usually cooked.

Apples

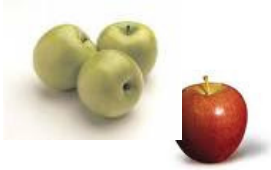
Tree Fruit

Appearance: Baseball sized, heart shaped fruit with top stem and smooth skin

Color: Red, green, yellow, pink

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Sweet to sour



-The old saying “One bad apple spoils the whole bunch” is true, as bruised apples emit ethylene gas that hastens spoilage of adjacent fruits.

- The stem should be firmly attached to the apple.

- Dry or missing stems are signs of an apple in decay.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces, baked goods

Select: Firm, hard to the touch with pliable stem end

Avoid: Brown spots, bruises, soft spots, or dry or missing stems

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 months

Apricots

Stone Fruit

Appearance: Small, round, golf ball sized fruit with smooth skin

Color: Yellow to bright orange

Texture: Very delicate and fragile

Flavor: Sweet and very juicy



They are a very delicate fruit that doesn't travel well and has a short season, so look quickly for those that are round in shape and have a firm, tight skin without wrinkles or soft spots.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or spicy foods, baked goods

Select: Firm, tight skin and bright color

Avoid: Wrinkled skin, dryness, or green and mushy fruit

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 1 week

Artichokes
Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Looks like a pine cone or small pineapple
Color: Green
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Mild



Use: Grilled, steamed, baked, roasted, with hollandaise sauce
Select: Tight, solid green, compact heads that feel heavy
Avoid: Wilted leaves, loosely packed heads, dryness or brown root end
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 3 weeks

Arugula
Salad Greens

Leaves: Small, oblong with central rib
Color: Green with white rib
Texture: Soft
Flavor: Bitter, spicy



- A member of the cabbage family, sold as individual leaves

Use: Sparingly in salads, in soup, or sautéed like spinach
Select: Individual leaves with bright white rib and deep green color
Avoid: Wilted leaves, brown spots at stem
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 5 days

Asparagus
Vegetable

Appearance: Long, pencil shape with floret top
Color: Green
Texture: Stalky
Flavor: Mild



Use: Salads, steamed, grilled, roasted, braised, pureed for soup
Select: Firm spears with tightly closed tips and bright color
Avoid: Mushy tips, pliable, soft stalks, gray color
Storage: refrigerated, standing in a glass with ½ inch of water
Life: 1 week

Avocados
Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Pear-shaped and sized with rough skin
Color: Dark green to black
Texture: Creamy
Flavor: Mild



Use: Raw in salads, pureed for sauces, diced for salsa, sliced for sandwiches.
Select: Firm avocados that yield slightly to the touch
Avoid: Overly soft, blemished, or cut fruit
Storage: Ripen at room temperature, then refrigerate
Life: 2 weeks

Bananas

Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Bunch of long, finger-shaped fruit with smooth skin

Color: Yellow or green when immature

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Sticky, sweet and starchy



- Bananas ripen after being harvested and continue to do so until most of the starches in the banana turn to sugar.
- You can consider purchasing bananas of varying degrees of green to eat as they ripen.
- Avoid bananas with mold at the stem, or a grayish color that would indicate damage due to cold temperatures.
- To store bananas at home, separate all the bananas from each other and store in a paper bag in a dark, cool place.

Use: Eaten raw, in cereals, dried, in baked goods, or tropical cuisines

Select: Larger bunches that are slightly green

Avoid: Soft bananas with bruises or excessive black spots

Storage: At room temperature in a paper bag in darkness

Life: 1 week

Beets

Root

Appearance: Tennis ball sized bulbous tubers with irregular skin and root end

Color: Red to purple

Texture: Hard and starchy

Flavor: Bitter and acidic



Use: Pureed for soup, steamed, poached, baked, as a side dish

Select: Small to medium sized firm beets with smooth, moist skins

Avoid: Growth from the root end, soft texture, overly dry skin

Storage: Room temperature

Life: 3 weeks

Boston and Bibb Lettuces

Salad Greens

Leaves: Soft, pliable,
Color: Pale green
Texture: Soft, buttery
Flavor: Mild



- Soft-ball sized, compact heads whose leaves make cups when separated.

Use: Salads, plate liner, composed salad base
Select: Firm heads of green color
Avoid: Burnt leaf edges, leaves falling off, hollow center of head
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 1 week

Blackberries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: A Marble sized berry that looks like bunches of tiny grapes
Color: Deep purple to black
Texture: Soft and delicate
Flavor: Sweet



Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or spicy foods, tarts and baked goods
Select: A deep, even color berry that is firm
Avoid: Mushy fruit or juice stains in the container
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 5 days

Blueberries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Pea to pebble-sized individual berries

Color: Deep blue to purple

Texture: Soft and delicate

Flavor: Sweet



- Blueberries should bounce off the floor or table top if dropped.
- Blueberries in a container should roll around like peas. If they are stuck together, that means some have decayed, sticking to many others.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or spicy foods, baked goods

Select: A deep even color berry that is plump and firm

Avoid: Soft berries or white spots that would indicate mold, or berries that are stuck together with juice stains in the container

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 1 week

Bok Choy

Cooked Greens

Appearance: Oblong leaves with central rib

Color: Green to dark green with white rib

Texture: Tender

Flavor: Rich and chewy



- Bok choy has a mild flavor like leaf lettuce or romaine and can be eaten in salads, but is most often used in stir fry or in soups.
- Pickled and fermented bok choy is a Korean dish named kim chee.

Use: Salads, stir-fry, soups, braising, saute'

Select: tight heads with bright white stalks and dark green leaves

Avoid: wilted leaves, dark brown spots, or loosely packed heads

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 1 week

Broccoli
Cabbages

Appearance: Tree-like central stalk grows leaves, topped by florets
Color: Green
Texture: woody stalk and tender florets
Flavor: Mild



- Broccoli leaves are not eaten because of their poor texture and bitterness.
- Purchase broccoli with whole stalks still attached.
- Avoid pre-cut broccoli florets, as they will dry out quickly.

Use: Blanched in salads, steamed, stir-fry, baked in sauce
Select: Tight, dark green floret clusters
Avoid: Yellow flowers or bendable stalks
Storage: Fresh cut off the stem end, in a glass of water
Life: 2 weeks

Brussels Sprouts
Cabbages

Appearance: They look like little baby cabbages
Color: Green
Texture: Hard and compact
Flavor: Slightly bitter and nutty



Use: steamed or roasted with game, ham, duck
Select: small, firm, compact sprouts, bright green, tight heads
Avoid: blemishes, dark spots, wilted leaves, dry root ends
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 2 weeks

Green and Red Cabbage

Cabbages

Appearance: Medium melon sized round heads

Color: Green or red with white ribs and stem interior

Texture: Crisp

Flavor: Mild to bitter (green is mild, red bitter)



Use: Shredded for cole slaw, in salads, soups, stews, stir-fry, or poached leaves to wrap around meat fillings.

Select: Firm, heavy, tightly packed heads

Avoid: Loose leaves, dry cores, wilted brown leaf ends

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Carrots

Roots

Appearance: Long, pencil shape with top greenery

Color: Orange root with green tops

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Sweet and mild



Use: Salads, steamed, grilled, roasted, braised, pureed for soup, in baked goods

Select: Bright orange color, crisp, stiff, with smooth skins.

Avoid: Hairy carrots that are bendable or soft

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Cauliflower

Cabbages

Appearance: Volleyball sized head of florets surrounded by leaves

Color: White florets and green leaves

Texture: Hearty and firm

Flavor: Sour



- The most popular of cabbages, one head grows from each stalk, surrounded by dark green leaves

Use: steamed, blanching, stir fry, baked in sauce

Select: heavy, compact, bright white heads with crisp, green leaves attached

Avoid: yellow color or spreading florets

Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag

Life: 3 weeks

Celery

Vegetable

Appearance: Large bunch of long, stick shaped stalks

Color: Light green

Texture: Stringy, stalky

Flavor: Mild



Use: Salads, steamed, braised, blanched as crudite

Select: Crisp stalks that will not bend with true green color

Avoid: Soft, bendable stalks and dryness at root end

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Swiss Chard

Salad or Cooked Greens

Appearance: Glossy wrinkled leaves with heavy central stem

Color: Green leaves, red stem

Texture: Hearty and chewy

Flavor: Tart, bitter



Use: Steamed, sautéed, soups, in cream sauce. Pairs well with fruit

Select: Crisp, curly leaves of dark green color and bright red stalk

Avoid: Unblemished ribs, curled leaf edges, any white or gray color

Storage: Air circulation

Life: 1 week

Cherries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Marble sized individual fruit with central pit and long stem

Color: Yellow to red to nearly black

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Very sour



- There are two types of cherry, sweet cherries and sour cherries.
 - Bing cherries are the most popular and widely available.
 - Neither type of cherries will ripen further after harvest.
 - A dried stem or one that is easily removed indicates older fruit.
- Once the stem is removed, the cherry loses quality quickly.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or spicy foods, baked goods

Select: Firm, plump berries that seem heavy for their size and have stem attached

Avoid: Missing stems, wrinkled skin, bruises and blemishes

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

Corn

(a grain, technically)

Appearance: Long cylinder with outer skin and silk strands

Color: Green leaves and white or yellow seeds

Texture: Hard, woody

Flavor: Mild and sweet



Use: Roasted, grilled, or steamed with husks left on. All kitchen applications when the kernels are shucked from the cob

Select: Firm, small kernels that burst when pressed

Avoid: Brownish silks, mold or decay, insect infestation, soft, moist, discolored kernels

Storage: Room temperature. Refrigeration will turn sugars back to starches

Life: 1 week

Cranberries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Pea to grape sized individual berries

Color: Lipstick red with white and beige

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Very sour



- Color is NOT an indicator of ripeness with cranberries.
- Cranberries cannot be eaten raw, they're horribly sour.
- Whether making sauces, using in breads or relishes, always examine each of the berries for foreign sticks, rocks, or rotten berries from the swamps they're cultivated in.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or spicy foods, baked goods

Select: A hard, plump and firm berry is best.

Avoid: Soft berries or juice stains in the container

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 3 weeks

Cucumbers

Vegetable

Appearance: Spear shaped cylindrical vegetable 1-2" in diameter

Color: Green with white or yellow

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Mild to bitter



- Pickling cucumbers are smaller and bitter; cornichon, dill, gherkin.
- Slicing cucumbers are juicy and mild: hot-house, common green

Use: Salads, Tzatziki sauce, pickling, juicing

Select: Firm but not hard texture, bright color

Avoid: Pliable, soft, limp cucumbers with brown or soft spots. Avoid waxed cucumbers, or peel them before eating.

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 2 weeks

Curly Endive

Salad Greens

Leaves: Pointed, irregular, sturdy

Color: Dark green

Texture: Soft but sharp

Flavor: Bitter



- Also called frisee or chicory

Use: Salads to add flavor and texture, serve with cheeses, palate cleanser

Select: Deep, dark leaves

Avoid: Wilted leaves, white spots, loosely packed head

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 5 days

Daikon

Root

Appearance: Long, cylinder like a zucchini

Color: White with top greenery

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Mild to peppery



Use: Salads, steamed, grilled, roasted, braised, pureed for soup, in baked goods

Select: Clean, white color, crisp, stiff, with smooth skins.

Avoid: Hairy daikon that are bendable or soft

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Dandelion

Salad Greens

Leaves: Long, narrow, saw-blade looking

Color: Dark green

Texture: Stalky and crisp

Flavor: Bitter



- A wild weed throughout most of the U.S.

Use: Sparingly in salads, as garnish, cooked as a vegetable

Select: Young, smaller leaves. Deep green with bright white pronounced rib

Avoid: Larger older leaves, wilted leaves

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Dates

Stone Fruit

Appearance: Oval shaped 2 inches long with thin, translucent skin
Color: Dark brown or golden raisin
Texture: Sticky and soft
Flavor: Sweet and juicy



- Dates have been around since ancient times.
- A ripe and fresh date will look like it's been dried because of the loose, wrinkled skin, but this is preferable.

Use: Eaten raw, in cereals, dried, in baked goods, or tropical cuisines
Select: Wrinkled, shiny and moist dates
Avoid: Dry dates with a white film, indicator of mold
Storage: At room temperature in a covered container
Life: 1 week

Eggplant

Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Oblong, football sized, smooth skin, woody stalk
Color: Many varieties, but mostly deep purple to black
Texture: Dense and chewy
Flavor: Bitter when raw, but absorbs flavors well



- There are hundreds of varieties of eggplant, from the deep purple western version to myriad Asian purple and green varieties.

Use: Baked, breaded and fried, sautéed, grilled, sautéed
Select: Heavy eggplants with a smooth shiny skin
Avoid: Blemished or wrinkled skin or dried top stalk
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 1 week

Endive
Salad Greens

Leaves: Long, cup shaped
Color: Yellow to white
Texture: stiff, crisp
Flavor: Bitter



- Because of its structure, one of very few lettuces that can be cooked or grilled

Use: Appetizer cup, composed salads, braised or grilled
Select: Bright yellow leaf tips and sturdy white base
Avoid: Wilted leaf tips or white color
Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag
Life: 2 weeks

Escarole
Salad Greens

Leaves: Thick, sharp, irregular
Color: Dark green
Texture: Sharp, pointy, firm and crisp
Flavor: Bitter



- Sometimes called broadleaf endive
- looks like Curly Endive's bigger brother

Use: Salads to add bitter flavor, braised or used like spinach in soups
Select: Deep green outer leaves, paler yellow inner leaves
Avoid: Loosely packed heads, wilted leaves, decaying root end
Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag
Life: 2 weeks

Fennel
Onion

Appearance: Large bulb vegetable with feathery leaves
Color: White bulb, green leaves
Texture: Hard and stringy
Flavor: Licorice



Use: Steamed, grilled, poached, sautéed, in soups or sauces
Select: Large, bright white bulbs with fragrant, soft leaves
Avoid: Dried bulbs that begin to spread and open, dried leaves or brown color
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 3 weeks

Garlic
Onion

Appearance: Golf ball sized group of cloves with paper-thin outer skin
Color: White
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Pungent and bitter



Use: All kitchen applications, for flavoring sauces, marinades, sautéed items
Select: Dry, tightly held cloves with smooth, dry skins
Avoid: Green sprouts or mold on the stem end
Storage: Room temperature
Life: 2 weeks

Grapefruit

Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Softball sized with slightly pocked skin

Color: Yellow or orange skin with pink or white flesh

Texture: Soft

Flavor: Sweet and tart



- Grapefruit are either white fleshed or pink fleshed.
- White grapefruits are generally more tart and pink grapefruits sweeter.
- The zest should give strong aroma when scratched with a finger nail.
- If a display is cut in half, the segments should be full and moist, no gaps or dryness. The center of the cut grapefruit should full. Hollow grapefruit are degrading.

Use: Sectioned and eaten raw or in fruit salads, topped with sugar and broiled

Select: Firm, but not hard fruit that are heavy for their size with bright color and clean zest aroma.

Avoid: Soft fruit with blemishes, bruises or moist spots

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 3 weeks

Grapes

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Marble sized round berries

Color: Green to red to black

Texture: Soft and delicate

Flavor: Sweet



- Grapes grown for wine and those grown to eat are two different types of grapes.
- Grapes are classified as white grapes or black grapes. White grapes are actually green, and black grapes are really red.
- The white varieties are generally more bland than the black ones.
- White grapes usually have a thinner skin and a tougher flesh.

- The easiest way to tell if a grape is good is to eat one when nobody is looking.

Use: Fruit salads, juice, jams, jellies, compotes, "Veronique" preparations

Select: Full, plump, tight groups of grapes that are firmly attached to the stem

Avoid: Grapes that fall easily from the stem, soft wrinkled grapes, or white mold at the stem

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

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Iceberg Lettuce

Salad Greens

Leaves: Soft at edges, crisp at the stalk

Color: Green to white

Texture: Crisp

Flavor: Bland



- The size of a playground ball, smaller than a basketball, the most widely used lettuce

Use: Salads, shredded for garnish, platter liner

Select: Tight, compact heads that are heavy for their size

Avoid: Brown, soft spots, or decayed root ends

Storage: Refrigeration wrapped in plastic bag

Life: 2 weeks

Jicama

Root

Appearance: Irregularly round, baseball sized tuber

Color: White to beige

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Sweet



Use: Salads, salsa, steamed, stir-fry

Select: Heavy, firm vegetables. Size does not indicate tenderness or maturity

Avoid: Soft, light vegetables with brown or soft spots

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Kale
Cooked Greens

Appearance: Large, course, ruffled leaves
Color: Dark gray-ish green
Texture: Sharp and firm
Flavor: Bitter and chalky



- Some kale is edible, some is used for decoration and garnish.

Use: Simmered, poached, stuffed, used in soups or for garnish or platter liner
Select: Tight, sharp leaves with deep green/gray color
Avoid: Wilted, bendable leaves, brown spots or curled leaf edges
Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag
Life: 3 weeks

Kiwis
Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Egg sized fruit with fuzzy outer skin
Color: Brown skin with lime green flesh
Texture: Firm
Flavor: Sweet and mild



- The thin, fuzzy brown skin and lime-green flesh kiwi makes it unique among fruits.
- Kiwi will not continue to ripen, but will soften at room temperature.
- Choose kiwi whose fuzz stays attached to the skin and does not rub off.
- Kiwi are generally not cooked because they immediately fall apart.

Use: Cut or diced for salads, used as garnish or decoration on baked goods
Select: Fruit that yields to pressure, but not too hard or soft
Avoid: Dry or dusty stem ends, bruised or blemished skin, and soft spots
Storage: Refrigeration allowing air circulation
Life: 1 week

Kumquats

Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Golf ball sized, football shaped

Color: Yellow or orange

Texture: Soft

Flavor: Sour and tart



Kumquats can be eaten whole, but because of their bitterness are usually combined with other fruits for a salad, but mostly used in jams and preserves that can be further sweetened.

Use: Jams and preserves, in fruit salads

Select: A consistent color fruit that yields and recoils when pressed.

Avoid: Soft fruit with blemishes, or that is still green near the stem

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 3 weeks

Leaf Lettuce

Salad Greens

Leaves: Elongated with ruffled edges

Color: Bright red or deep green

Texture: Soft

Flavor: Mild



- Leaf lettuce grows in bunches, rather than on a “head”.

Use: Salads, Sandwiches, tray liner

Select: Nicely shaped leaves, true deep color, tight bunches

Avoid: Wilted leaves, loose head, bruises, breaks or brown spots

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 1 week

Leeks

Onion

Appearance: Long, cylindrical plant with root end and flat leaves

Color: White root end with green leaves

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Strong, but more mild than onions



Use: Baked, braised, grilled, in stocks, soups, sauces

Select: Firm, green leaves with stiff roots and stems

Avoid: Dry leaves, brown or soft spots, overly dry root ends

Storage: Room temperature

Life: 1 week

Lemons

Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Oval shaped fruit the size of a handball with slightly pocked skin

Color: Yellow skin with white flesh

Texture: Firm

Flavor: Sour



- The bright yellow, oval-shaped fruit is the most widely used.
- Lemons that are hard usually have too much pith and less flesh
- Lemons should have a very strong fragrance when scratched with thumbnail

Use: Desserts, sauces, fish, poultry, zested for garnish

Select: Thin rinds that yield slightly to the touch with a strong fragrant zest

Avoid: Soft fruit with blemishes, bruises or moist spots, green color or dried stem-ends

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 3 weeks

Limes
Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Golf ball sized to large marble sized with smooth skin
Color: Shades of green
Texture: Firm
Flavor: Tart to sour



- Limes should have a thinner rind than a lemon, so should be a bit softer.
- Avoid limes that are rock-hard, they have no juice.
- Limes should have a very fragrant odor when scratched with your nail.

Use: Juiced for cocktails, paired with spicy items like Thai, Indian, Indonesian cuisines.
Select: Softer limes without bruises or brown spots and a fragrant zest odor
Avoid: Very hard fruit with blemishes, bruises or moist spots
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 3 weeks

Mache
Salad Greens

Leaves: Small, dime-sized
Color: Medium green
Texture: Soft, delicate
Flavor: Slightly nutty



- Also called lamb's lettuce

Use: Salads with other delicate lettuces like Bibb or Boston
Select: Firm, crisp, green leaves
Avoid: Moist, wilted leaves that stick together
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 5 days

Mangoes

Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Small football shaped with smooth multi-colored skin
Color: Red, yellow, orange and green
Texture: Firm
Flavor: Sweet and juicy



Mangoes will continue to ripen at room temperature, so you can choose one that is slightly green, with a clean, fragrant aroma, and a smooth skin without blemishes or cuts.

Use: Eaten raw, in spicy or tropical foods, as a tenderizer for meats
Select: Slightly green fruit with a clean aroma and smooth skin
Avoid: Wrinkled fruit with bruises, blemishes or cuts, or soft at the stem end
Storage: Refrigerated with air circulation
Life: 2 weeks

Melons

Melons

Appearance: Volleyball to basketball sized with irregular or netted skin
Color: Tan, light green or yellow
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Sweet and juicy



- Sweet melons include cantaloupes, casabas, Crenshaws, and honeydews because they have rough, netted skin.
- Melons are 90% water, so are not usually cooked. Cooking destroys all their texture.
- Because sweet melons have a central seed cavity, you'll see people "thumping" their melons. If your melon sounds hollow when thumped, or has seeds rattling around when shaken, it's an older melon, and the central cavity is degrading.

Use: Cut, sliced, served with cheeses or cured meats like prosciutto
Select: Smell is the best indicator, a strong, fresh aroma from a heavy, solid melon
Avoid: Soft or moist spots, bruises, or hollow-sounding melons
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 3 weeks

Mushrooms

Fungi

Appearance: Very small, central stalk leading to “umbrella” covering

Color: White or shades of brown

Texture: Very soft and delicate

Flavor: Mild to nutty



- There are hundreds of varieties of mushrooms, each with distinct appearance, texture, and flavor

Use: Soups, salads, sauces, stuffing, steamed, sautéed, grilled

Select: Clean, firm mushrooms with true color to the variety

Avoid: Soft, discolored, moist mushrooms with overly dry stem

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 1 week

Mustard Greens

Cooked Greens

Appearance: Large, firm leaves with ruffled edges and central stalk

Color: Green

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Peppery



Use: Salads, garnish, sautéed, braised

Select: Crisp, bright green leaves

Avoid: Brown spots, discoloration, wilted leaves, stalk rot

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 1 week

Napa Cabbage

Cabbage

Appearance: Squat, oblong head, small football shape

Color: Light green with white ribs

Texture: Tender leaves, crisp stalks

Flavor: Mild and more moist than green or red cabbages



- Also known as Chinese cabbage

Use: Stir fry, Asian cuisines, soups, steaming

Select: Clean, crisp heads with soft green leaves

Avoid: Wilted leaves, dry root end, brown spots or blemishes

Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag

Life: 2 weeks

Nectarines

Stone Fruit

Appearance: Tennis ball sized round fruit with fuzzy (peach) or smooth (nectarine) skin.

Color: Yellow, pink, and red with some white varieties

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Sweet and juicy



- Peaches and nectarines are either freestone where the flesh separates easily from the pit; or clingstone where they don't.

- The color of a peach or nectarine is not an indicator of its ripeness or flavor.

- These fruit will soften after harvest, but will not ripen further.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, baked goods, pureed for cold soup

Select: A noticeable sweet aroma, good size, and firm flesh with bright color

Avoid: Wrinkled skin, soft spots, bruises, dry stem end

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

Okra
Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Quill shaped with 4-5 pronounced external ridges
Color: Green
Texture: Hard and stalky
Flavor: Sweet and mild



Use: Soups, pickled, boiled, steamed, breaded and fried, in stews or gumbo
Select: Small pods that are deep green and slightly soft at the tip
Avoid: Pale green color, hard, stiff tips, root end decay, brown or soft spots
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture Life: 1 week

Onions
Onion

Appearance: Tennis ball to soft-ball sized with paper-thin outer skin
Color: White, yellow, red, beige
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Strong and sweet to bitter



Use: All kitchen applications, grilled, poached, roasted, sautéed, baked
Select: Dry, firm, heavy onions with dry and brittle outer skin
Avoid: Green sprouts, bruises, moist or soft spots
Storage: Room temperature
Life: 3 weeks

Oranges
Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Tennis ball to softball size round fruit with slightly pocked skin
Color: Orange
Texture: Firm
Flavor: Sweet



- Valencia and Navel oranges are seedless, the most popular.
- Blemishes on an orange do not affect the flavor and texture of the juice.
- If sample oranges cut, look for full, plump sections and thin rind.
- Ripe oranges should be VERY fragrant when scratched.

Use: Juiced, sectioned for salads, garnish
Select: Ripe oranges should yield to pressure and recoil, have a bright orange color and a very strong fragrant zest aroma
Avoid: Soft fruit with blemishes, bruises or moist spots
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 3 weeks

Papayas
Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Look like very large pears, but the size of a melon
Color: Yellow with green or red and pinkish skin
Texture: Soft
Flavor: Very sweet and juicy



- Color of the skin is the best indicator of ripeness, as a more ripe papaya will be a brighter yellow with less green.
- These are edible and can be used for garnish, or dried and roasted for a peppery snack.
- Papayas contain papain, a natural tenderizers that breaks down proteins. This is why meats are marinated with papaya juice or slices.

Use: Pureed for drinks, chilled soups, sorbets or as a meat tenderizer
Select: Mostly yellow papayas with smooth skin that yields to pressure
Avoid: Green color, bruises, blemishes, dried stem end
Storage: Refrigerated with air circulation
Life: 2 weeks

Parsnips

Root

Appearance: Long, pencil shape like a carrot

Color: White

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Mild to peppery



Use: Salads, steamed, grilled, roasted, braised, pureed for soup, in baked goods

Select: Clean, white color, crisp, stiff, with smooth skins.

Avoid: Hairy parsnips that are bendable or soft

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Peaches

Stone Fruit

Appearance: Tennis ball sized round fruit with fuzzy (peach) or smooth (nectarine) skin.

Color: Yellow, pink, and red with some white varieties

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Sweet and juicy



- Peaches and nectarines are either freestone where the flesh separates easily from the pit; or clingstone where they don't.

- The color of a peach or nectarine is not an indicator of its ripeness or flavor.

- These fruit will soften after harvest, but will not ripen further.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, baked goods, pureed for cold soup

Select: A noticeable sweet aroma, good size, and firm flesh with bright color

Avoid: Wrinkled skin, soft spots, bruises, dry stem end

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

Pears
Tree Fruit

Appearance: Baseball sized thin stem end to bulbous blossom end
Color: Green, yellow, red
Texture: Hard, soften when ripe
Flavor: Sweet



- Like apples, there are hundreds of varieties of pears, but only a few that you'll find in the grocery store.
- Unlike apples, pears will not fully ripen on the tree, and will continue to ripen after you've purchased them.
- You can tell everything you need to know about a pear from the stem end. Always purchase pears with the stem in tact. It should be firmly affixed. Allow pears to ripen at room temperature. They will not do so under refrigeration.

Use: Raw with cheeses, jams, jellies, compotes, sauces for game or pork, baked goods
Select: Firm but yields slightly at the stem end with consistent color
Avoid: Brown spots at the stem end, dry stem, bruises or moist spots
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 4 weeks

Peas
Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Oblong pod filled with round seeds
Color: Green
Texture: Pod is stringy and fibrous, peas are soft and delicate
Flavor: Delicate, mild flavor



Use: Soups, sauté, braising, blanched in salads or garnish
Select: Small pods that seem overly filled and about to burst
Avoid: Drab color or dry, split pods or peas that are not round.
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 1 week

Peppers

Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Sweet peppers are bell shaped, hot peppers generally torpedo shaped

Color: Green, red, yellow, orange, purple, black

Texture: Crisp and firm

Flavor: Sweet to spicy to very hot



- There are seemingly endless numbers of members of the capsicum family.

- They are generally divided into sweet peppers and hot peppers, each with a central seed cavity, internal rib structure, and colored flesh.

Use: Baked, grilled, fried, sautéed, pureed for soups, stuffed, julienne for stir fry

Select: Plump, brightly colored peppers with smooth skin and bright green stem

Avoid: Soft, wrinkled, dull peppers with loose seeds inside and a dry stem

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture, OR roast and remove skin, freeze the filets

Life: 1 week raw, 6 months roasted and frozen.

Pineapples

Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Football sized pine cone with sharp green leaves atop

Color: Yellow to beige with green leaves

Texture: Hard and prickly

Flavor: Very sweet and juicy



- Pineapples do not ripen after harvesting. They must be left on the stem until completely ripe. However, they are then very perishable. So, unless you're in Hawaii, it's very difficult to get a truly ripe pineapple.

- While it will not continue to ripen, a pineapple will become sweeter when left in a windowsill for a day before eating.

Use: Eaten raw, baked, grilled, sautéed, juiced

Select: Yellow color that yields slightly to the touch with sharp leaves

Avoid: Wilted or brown leaves, moist soft spots, or moist shrub end

Storage: Refrigerated with air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

Plantains

Tropical Fruit

Appearance: Bunch of long, finger-shaped fruit with smooth skin

Color: Green

Texture: Hard and stalky

Flavor: Bland and starchy



- Plantains are larger, harder, and less sweet as bananas. Plantains will continue to ripen after harvest like bananas, but with a much higher starch content, will always be more stalky and bitter.

- Plantains are not eaten raw, but are always cooked. Generally, they are treated more like a starchy vegetable or root item than like a banana.

Use: Sauté, pan fried, grilled, stewed, steamed or mashed

Select: Large, full fruit with more berry shape than string bean shape

Avoid: Bruises or moist spots or overly dry stem end or white mold developing

Storage: At room temperature in a paper bag in darkness

Life: 1 week

Plums

Stone Fruit

Appearance: Golf ball sized round fruit with smooth skin.

Color: Green, yellow, red, or eggplant purple

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Sweet and juicy



- Different from Peaches, Plums will continue to ripen at room temperature.

- Plums deteriorate quickly with the stem removed, so avoid plums with brown spots or dry sockets where the stem had been.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, baked goods, puddings

Select: A noticeable sweet aroma, good size, and firm flesh with bright color

Avoid: Wrinkled skin, soft spots, bruises, dry stem end

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 2 weeks

Potatoes

Roots

Appearance: Round to oblong shape with thin outer skin

Color: White, red, or purple

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Mild to starchy



Use: Salads, steamed, grilled, roasted, braised, mashed, pureed for soup

Select: Firm, heavy potatoes with shallow eyes and thin skin

Avoid: Sprouting potatoes, green coloring, soft or moist spots, deep eyes

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Radicchio

Salad Greens

Leaves: Wrinkled, soft at edges firm at stalk

Color: Red and white

Texture: Soft and pliable

Flavor: Bitter



- A softball sized head that looks like a small red cabbage

Use: Sparingly in salad mix, appetizer cup, grilled or braised, cooked as vegetable

Select: Firm, compact heads that are heavy for their size, deep red color

Avoid: Brown and wilted leaves, light heads, any brown color on leaves or stalk

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Radishes

Roots

Appearance: Small, round, marble-sized with thin root and top greenery

Color: Generally red, but there are white and black varieties

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Bitter and peppery



Use: Salads, steamed, stir-fry

Select: Firm, plump, clean radishes with smooth skin and fresh greenery.

Avoid: Soft, hollow, or with broken skins or decayed greenery

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 4 weeks

Raspberries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Marble sized berry that looks like a bunch of tiny grapes

Color: Red

Texture: Very soft and fragile

Flavor: Sweet



- Raspberries are the most fragile of all fruits.
- When ripe, they pull easily from their vine or bush, leaving a hard white center behind, and giving the characteristic hollow-cone shape of the pinkish red fruit
- Raspberries have tiny external seeds, and are very susceptible to mold.

Use: Jams, jellies, compotes, salads, sauces for game or spicy foods, baked goods

Select: Full, plump, bright berries that are loose in the container

Avoid: Soft berries, white mold, or juice stains in the container

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 3 days

Rhutabaqas

Root

Appearance: Round, tennis ball sized with one end slightly pointed.

Color: Purple to yellow skin, yellow flesh

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Starchy



Use: Baked, boiled, pureed or sliced and sauteed

Select: Small, firm, heavy vegetables

Avoid: Soft or moist spots, deep cuts in the skin

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Romaine Lettuce

Salad Greens

Leaves: Elongated with thick middle rib

Color: Outer leaves are dark green inner leaves pale green to yellow

Texture: Hearty, crisp

Flavor: Mild



- Strong texture with mild flavor to stand up to strong dressings

Use: Caesar Salad, sandwiches, composed salads

Select: Dark outer leaves and tight, compact head

Avoid: Loosely packed heads, brown spots, wilting leaves, brown at stem end

Storage: Refrigeration in a plastic bag

Life: 2 weeks

Savoy Cabbage

Cooked Greens

Appearance: Softball sized head of ruffled, wrinkled, veiny leaves

Color: Green with white veins and stalk

Texture: Tender and soft

Flavor: Mild



Use: Stir fry, soups, steamed, plate liner, garnish

Select: Tight, compact deep green heads with soft leaf edges

Avoid: Dried core ends, blemished leaves, moist brown spots

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 4 weeks

Scallions

Onion

Appearance: Pencil sized with flat, straight leaves and bulbous root end

Color: Green leaves, white root

Texture: Firm root, soft leaves

Flavor: Pungent and fragrant



Use: Stir fry, garnish, sauté, soups, sauces

Select: Bright green leaves and clean white bulbs

Avoid: Flexible roots, limp leaves, dried leaves, dry root ends, moisture or discoloration

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 1 week

Shallots

Onion

Appearance: Small, marble-sized, with one flat side and a root end with paper thin skin

Color: Beige skin with white to purple flesh

Texture: Hard

Flavor: Mild



Use: All kitchen applications: sauté, roasting, braising, poaching, sauces

Select: Plump and heavy for their size with dry outer skin

Avoid: Green sprouts, soft texture, dried root end,

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 3 weeks

Snow Peas

Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Flat pod whose seeds fill only ½ the pod

Color: Green

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Sweet and delicate



Use: Salads, stir fry, steamed, blanched for appetizer, even split and stuffed

Select: Bright green firm pods that will snap when bent

Avoid: Brown spots, flexibility, or shriveled appearance

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 5 days

Spinach

Salad or Cooked Greens

Leaves: Oblong leaves with central rib
Color: Green to dark green with white rib
Texture: Tender
Flavor: Rich and chewy



- Can be cooked or used as a salad green

Use: Salads, vegetable side dish, appetizer dips, stuffing
Select: Deep green leaves that are dry with white ribs
Avoid: Moist or wilted leaves that show decay
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 1 week

Winter Squashes

Gourd

Appearance: Softball to basketball sized with hard outer skin
Color: Green, yellow, or orange
Texture: Stalky or stringy, very hard, firm flesh
Flavor: Mild



- Winter squash: Acorn, butternut, spaghetti, pumpkin, banana

Use: Baked, steamed, sautéed, pureed for soup, baked in sauce
Select: Firm, full, heavy squash with true color for the variety
Avoid: Dry stems, bruises, soft spots, or evidence of insects
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 4 weeks

Summer Squashes

Squash

Appearance: Medium pear-shape to spear-shaped

Color: Yellow, green, orange

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Mild



- Summer Squash: yellow crookneck, zucchini, patty pan

Use: Salads, sauté, steaming, grilling, baking

Select: Smooth, shiny bright skins with uniform color and firm texture

Avoid: Soft, moist or wrinkled fruit

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 2 weeks

Strawberries

Vine Fruit

Appearance: Large marble sized, heart shaped with top greenery

Color: Red

Texture: Soft and delicate

Flavor: Sweet



- Always examine the bottom of a strawberry container. If you find red juice, white mold, or crushed berries, this will quickly ruin the rest of the box.
- Avoid berries with the hull removed or “pared” as they will deteriorate quickly.
- Huge berries may look like a bigger bargain, but the larger the berry, generally the more white core or hollow center with little juice.

Use: Jams, jellies, salads, compotes, sauces, baked goods

Select: Small berries of bright color with greenery still attached

Avoid: Soft berries, wilted greenery, juice stains or white mold

Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation

Life: 1 week

String Beans
Seed Vegetables

Appearance: Long, pencil shape with bulging internal seeds
Color: Bright to dark green or yellow
Texture: Stringy and fibrous
Flavor: Mild



- String beans, Pole Beans, Snap beans, haricot vert, wax beans

Use: Steaming, sautéing, stir fry, blanched for salad, baked in sauce
Select: Bright color, crisp beans that don't bend
Avoid: Soft, pliable beans with brown or black spots, or dry, open pods
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 5 days

Tangerines
Citrus Fruit

Appearance: Golf ball to softball sized with loose rind
Color: Orange
Texture: Soft
Flavor: Sweet



- Often called mandarin orange.
- The rind on a tangerine is loose compared to other citrus, which may cause you to mistake it for rotten.
- Soft tangerines are acceptable, hard tangerines are not.
- Do not judge tangerines by their skin. They're often irregular and lumpy. The smoothness of the skin

has nothing to do with quality.

Use: Sectioned and eaten raw or in fruit salads, or for garnish
Select: Soft tangerines with loose skin and consistent color with strong zest fragrance
Avoid: Hard fruit with green streaks that are dry or soft at the stem end
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 3 weeks

Tomatoes
Seed Vegetable

Appearance: Round to slightly oblong, baseball sized with thin skin
Color: Green, red, yellow
Texture: Soft and tender
Flavor: Sweet and acidic



Use: Soups, salads, baked dishes, pureed for sauce, pan fried, roasted
Select: Smooth, shiny bright skins with uniform color and firm texture
Avoid: Soft, moist or wrinkled fruit
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 1 week

Turnips
Root

Appearance: Round, tennis ball sized with flat root end
Color: White and red to purple skin, white flesh
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Mild to peppery



Use: Steamed, baked, pureed
Select: Small turnips with smooth skin and heavy for their size
Avoid: Rubbery or limp with dry or soft spots and excessive bruises
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 3 weeks

Turnip Greens

Cooked Greens

Appearance: Long, thin leaves with central stem
Color: Green with white stem
Texture: Firm
Flavor: Bitter



Use: Steamed, sautéed, baked, braised
Select: Slightly indented leaves with white stalk and firm texture
Avoid: Soft, moist leaves with bruises, tears, or moist spots
Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture
Life: 2 weeks

Watermelons

Melons

Appearance: Very large, heavy melon with smooth skin and thick rind
Color: Green, pink, white with black flecks
Texture: Hard
Flavor: Very sweet and juicy



- Watermelons differ from sweet melons in their size, color, shape, and location of their seeds.
- Watermelons can grow to enormous sizes, most sweet melons cannot.
- A watermelon will continue to ripen off the vine, so you can choose a melon that is dark green with a hard flesh.

Use: Eaten raw, fruit salads
Select: Dark green melons with a hard flesh and dark black seeds
Avoid: Bruises, soft or moist spots or white seeds
Storage: Refrigerated allowing air circulation
Life: 2 weeks

Zucchini
Squash

Appearance: Medium pear-shape to spear-shaped

Color: Green

Texture: Soft and tender

Flavor: Mild



Use: Salads, sauté, steaming, grilling, baking

Select: Smooth, shiny bright skins with uniform color and firm texture

Avoid: Soft, moist or wrinkled fruit

Storage: Refrigeration with air circulation and moisture

Life: 2 weeks