

# Produce Guide

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>How to Use this Guide</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Fruits and Vegetables (+ a few more)</b>	<b>7</b>
Apples	7
Apricots	8
Artichoke	9
Asparagus	10
Avocados	11
Bananas	12
Beans	13
Beets	14
Blackberries	15
Blueberries	16
Bok Choy	17
Broccoli	18
Brussels Sprouts	19
Cabbage	20
Cantaloupes	21
Carrots	22
Cauliflower	23
Celeriac (Celery Root)	24
Celery	25
Chard	26
Cherries	27
Chickpeas	28
Collard Greens	29
Corn	30
Cucumber	31
Dates	32
Eggplant	33
Fennel	34
Figs	35
Garbanzo Beans	35
Garlic	36
Ginger	37
Grapefruit	38

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Grapes	39
Green Beans	40
Green Onions	41
Honeydews	42
Kale	43
Kohlrabi	44
Leeks	45
Lemons and Limes	46
Lentils	47
Lettuce	48
Limes	49
Mangoes	49
Mushrooms	50
Nectarines	52
Oats	53
Okra	54
Onions	55
Oranges	57
Parsnips	58
Peaches	59
Pears	60
Peas	61
Peppers - Sweet/Bell	62
Peppers - Hot/Chili	63
Pineapple	65
Plums	66
Potatoes	67
Pumpkin (& Pumpkin Seeds)	69
Radishes	70
Raspberries	71
Rhubarb	72
Rice	73
Rutabaga	74
Shallots	75
Spinach	76
Split Peas	77
Squash (Winter Squash)*	78
Strawberries	80
Sunflower Seeds	81

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Sweet Potatoes	82
Tomatoes	83
Tomatoes - Cherry	85
Turnips	86
Watermelons	87
Zucchini & Summer Squash	88
<b>Storing Produce</b>	<b>89</b>
Leftovers	90
Ethylene	91
Green Bags	91
Freezing	92
<b>Preparing Produce</b>	<b>97</b>
Judging Bad Spots	98
<b>Eating Produce Raw</b>	<b>99</b>
Snacking	99
Sandwiches	100
Salads	101
<b>Cooking Produce</b>	<b>103</b>
Boiling	103
Steaming	105
Sauteing	109
Roasting	112
Protein	114
Oatmeal	119
Omelets	120
Wraps	121
Casseroles	122
Chilis	124
Soups	127
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>131</b>
Appendix A: Cooking Asparagus	131
Appendix B: Washing Berries for Longer Fridge Storage	131
Appendix C: Massaging Kale	132
Appendix D: Roasting pumpkin seeds	132
Appendix E: Benefits of Greens	132

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Appendix F: Heat	133
Appendix G: Sources of Fiber	134

# Introduction

Eating more veggies doesn't have to be hard! But we at Backyard Harvest know it can be--How do I prepare broccoli? What is parsnip good for? What if I don't like kale? That's why we designed this guide--to provide you with simple, tasty recipes that show how to prepare lots of different fruits and vegetables. What's more, we focused on recipes that require mostly common ingredients, so you won't be limited by your pantry or your spice rack. There are breakfast ideas, lunch ideas, and a bunch of dinner ideas, so you can find what works best for you with whatever veggies you have available!

Plus, this guide contains tips on how to store each vegetable and fruit used in these recipes so they stay fresh longer--saving you money! We know that one of the biggest drawbacks of having fresh food in the house is that it goes bad quickly. We hope that, with all the different recipes for each vegetable, if you have a little more than you need for one recipe (too many potatoes?), you can easily substitute the remainder into another meal before it would go bad.

We hope that this guide helps ease your introduction to new vegetables, leads you to find a new favorite dish, and inspires you to experiment with even more vegetables and recipes. We would love to hear how the guide helped you, and how it could be better!

In solidarity,  
The Backyard Harvest Team 2019

## A Special Thank You

This guide was first created by our AmeriCorps Volunteer, Cheyne Mayer, who spent many hours researching, writing, and seeking feedback from our community. One of our volunteers, Michelle Mason, reviewed the accessibility of content, format, and structure based on her own perspective and the work she's been doing to inform our community about resources and opportunities for support. We talked with food pantry managers and clients to help shape the specific produce items included as well as the ways of cooking produce items. By working together, we hoped to provide the best product we could for our community.

A very special thank you goes out to everyone who helped make this guide what it is today!

# How to Use this Guide

This guide begins with a listing for each fruit and vegetable, organized alphabetically. Each fruit and vegetable listing includes the following sections:

**-Selection:** What to look for to tell if a piece of produce is in good condition. Each of these sections begin with good qualities to look for and end with things to avoid.

**-Storage:** How to store and how long produce will store. All estimates of how long produce will store assume that it was in good condition when you got it. Adjust the estimated storage lifespan depending on what condition it's in.

-See *Storing Produce* if you don't recognize a term in these sections.

**-How to Eat:** Whether to eat raw and/or cooked, which parts of the fruit/vegetable to use, and which cooking techniques to use.

-These sections reference cooking terms. Flip to the pages in the *Cooking Produce* chapter for boiling, steaming, sauteing, roasting, etc., for more information. For cooking verbs like dicing, slicing, simmering, etc., see the *Glossary*.

**-Storage Once Cut:** How to store produce after you've cut into it for whenever you only use part of the fruit/vegetable (perhaps you only want half an apple, or you chopped up too much onion).

-All estimates of how long cut produce will store assume that it was in good condition when you cut it. If it was in good condition when you got it but you've had it in storage for a while since then, adjust the estimated storage-once-cut lifespan depending on what condition it's in.

-Example: You've had an apple sitting at room temperature for a week and it's starting to yield to gentle pressure. You cut it in half and want to store the other half. Although the Storage Once Cut section says you can store your cut apple for up to a week in the fridge, you estimate it will probably only last a day or two.

-See *Storing Produce* if you don't recognize a term in these sections.

-For storing cooked leftovers, see the sections for boiling, steaming, sauteing, roasting, etc., in the *Cooking Produce* chapter. Look just below the numbered cooking steps in each section for advice on storing the leftovers.

**-Nutrition:** Some of the nutrients the fruit/vegetable is a good source of, plus a few others it contains in smaller amounts.

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# Fruits and Vegetables (+ a few more)

## Apples



**Selection:** Pick apples that are firm and do not yield to gentle pressure. Make sure to examine the apple from all sides to look for bad spots. Avoid apples with bruises or torn skin, but scabs and variations in skin color are fine.

**Storage:** Apples can be stored at room temperature if eaten within a few days to a week. If storing for longer than a week, refrigerate them in a plastic bag or green bag and they will keep for two weeks or more. Keep them away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Don't eat the seeds.

Apples are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. Apple slices can be added to oatmeal and salads, or fried in butter. There are also many dessert recipes that apples can be used in, such as pies, crisps, and fresh applesauce.

**Storage Once Cut:** Wrap the cut end of the apple with plastic wrap and store in the fridge in a sealed container or green bag for up to a week. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste. If chopped up,

**Nutrition:** Apples are a good source of fiber, and also contain vitamin C and potassium.



## Apricots



**Selection:** Look for fruits that have no green whatsoever and yield to gentle pressure. They may be yellow to deep orange. Avoid those that are bruised, soft, or mushy.

**Storage:** Do not stack more than two high, they crush easily. Store apricots at room temperature until ripe. Check on them twice a day, if possible, as they are very perishable. Gently squeeze your apricot to judge ripeness; under ripe apricots are still firm, ripe apricots will give slightly, and very ripe (but still passable) apricots will give a little more but not be mushy (eat very ripe ones that day; apricots are still really tasty when this ripe). For under ripe apricots, store on the kitchen counter for 1-3 days, or place in a paper bag for 1-2 days (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 1-3 days before they get mushy. Avoid refrigerating apricots, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and apricots freeze well once ripe for long storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Pits will be loose; toss. Apricots are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. Apricot slices are good in oatmeal, on pancakes, and in desserts like crisps.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, apricots must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days, or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Apricots are a good source of fiber, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

## Artichoke



**Selection:** Pick artichokes that are deep green, have tight leaves, and feel heavy for their size. Don't look at whether the tips are brown (this may just be from frost damage, and artichokes that have been in temperatures cold enough to damage them with frost taste the best, so this isn't a good factor for selection). Instead, press the leaves together. If they make a squeaking sound, that's a good artichoke. Avoid artichokes that are soft or mushy.

**Storage:** Refrigerate artichokes in a plastic bag or green bag for up to a week. For best taste, eat artichokes within 1-2 days.

**How to Eat:** Mature artichokes are not eaten raw, and can be boiled or steamed. Artichoke hearts can be eaten raw, boiled, steamed, and sauteed. Baby or young artichokes can be eaten raw or sauteed.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container or green bag for 3-4 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Artichokes are a good source of fiber, potassium, magnesium, folate, and vitamin C.

## Asparagus



**Selection:** Look for spears that are firm (but not hard, besides at the base) with bright colors and tightly closed tips (at the top). The highest quality spears will have tips with a dark green or purple tinge. If you have choice, pick asparagus with a moist base. Avoid spears that are wilted, wrinkled, or have tips that are mushy, yellowing, or starting to spread out and flower. Don't worry about thickness--both thick and thin spears taste good. Thinner spears are better for steaming and sauteing, while thicker spears are better for roasting and grilling.

**Storage:** Asparagus should be refrigerated immediately to save flavor. There are two options: 1) Wrap the spears in a damp (not wet) towel and place in a high-humidity crisper, or 2) trim an inch off the ends and stand the spears up in a container with 1-2 inches of water in the bottom (make sure all ends are underwater), and cover loosely with a plastic bag (if the water becomes cloudy, that's fine; just change it). Asparagus will store for up to a week, but eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Trim an inch off the end, or up to where the green starts to turn to white.

Asparagus can be eaten raw with dip, in salads or wraps, or all by itself (just cut or snap off the woody part on the end). Asparagus can be sauteed and roasted, and can also be boiled or steamed using a slightly different method from how most vegetables are boiled and steamed (See *Appendix A*).

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Asparagus is high in folate and a good source of vitamins A and C.

## Avocados



**Selection:** Color is not the best indicator for ripeness. Look for avocados that are firm or yield to gentle pressure. Firm avocados (ones that don't yield at all to gentle pressure) are not ripe, but will ripen after you take them home in 4-5 days (to ripen faster, see *Ethylene*). Avocados that are softer than firm but don't quite yield to gentle pressure will ripen in 1-2 days. Avocados that do yield to gentle pressure are at their prime and should be eaten the same day. Avoid avocados that are mushy or have dents.

**Storage:** If ripe, eat that day. If firm, ripen at room temperature for 4-5 days, or in 2-4 days if placed in a paper bag with an ethylene producer (see *Ethylene*). If softer than firm but not yet ripe, ripen at room temperature for 1-2 days. Once ripe, avocados can be kept in the fridge, but their flavor will go bad pretty quickly so use within 1-2 days.

**How to Eat:** Slice open, remove the pit, and scoop out. Do not eat if the avocado smells rancid with browning inner flesh. If browning is only in certain spots, that's from bruising; cut out the bruise and use the rest.

Avocado is eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, wraps, and on top of just about any cooked vegetables, as well as chili.

**Storage Once Cut:** Wrap the cut end in plastic wrap and store in the fridge in a sealed container or green bag. Eat within 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Avocados are a good source of fiber, folate, vitamin K, and copper. The heart-healthy unsaturated fats in avocados help with the absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K. All this valuable nutrition is why it can be hard to pick out a good avocado--vitamins and nutrients break down quickly.

## Bananas



**Selection:** Look for bananas that are plump and bright in color. Pick the bananas with the least sharp corners; sharper corners mean starchier, less sweet bananas. Both green and yellow bananas are okay to take home, but green bananas take longer to come ripe. Avoid bananas that are bruised, covered in brown freckles, or dull-colored.

**Storage:** Store bananas at room temperature until fragrant and ripe. Green bananas will ripen in 3-5 days. Bananas that are yellow with green tips and no brown freckles will ripen in 1-2 days, but may be eaten (many people prefer the texture and less sweet taste). Bananas that are yellow and lightly freckled with brown spots are ripe and should be eaten that day or the next day. If you are unable to easily peel the stem, it's not ripe yet.

Bananas ripen faster when they're near ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). This includes other bananas, so break up banana bunches when they're ripe and separate the bananas. Ripe bananas may be refrigerated, but should be eaten within 1-2 days for best taste. When refrigerating, store in a green bag away from ethylene-sensitive produce. The skin may turn dark in the cool temperatures, but the fruit inside will still be okay to eat.

If your bananas become overripe, they can still be used in dessert recipes. These bananas can be frozen whole until you are ready to use them. Bananas may also be frozen for smoothies (see *Freezing*). When freezing bananas, the skin will turn dark, but the fruit inside will still be okay to eat.

**How to Eat:** Bananas are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. Banana slices can be eaten raw in oatmeal, on pancakes, or in smoothies. Slices can also be fried in butter or pureed and frozen to make banana ice cream. If your bananas are overripe, you can still use them to make banana bread, muffins, and cookies.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container and eat within 1-2 days, or freeze.

**Nutrition:** Bananas are a good source of potassium, fiber, and vitamins B6 and C.

## Beans



**Selection:** When buying bulk dried beans, look for unbroken beans with tight skin. Avoid any shriveled beans, which are harder to cook down, and beans with tiny holes, a sign of insect damage.

**Storage:** Dry beans should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside. Keeping beans away from light and air is important to keep them from going rancid. Stored this way, beans can keep for many months, though for best results, they should be eaten within 6 months. The longer they're stored, the longer they'll take to cook and soften up.

**How to Eat:** Whereas canned beans are precooked and can be used immediately (after draining and rinsing), dry beans must be soaked and cooked before eating or using in other recipes (see *Protein* for instructions). If you've avoided using dry beans because it seems like it would take too long, think again! The amount of hands-on time is just minutes.

After being cooked, dry beans are interchangeable with canned versions. Pinto, kidney, and black beans can be added to salads, wraps, casseroles, chilis, and some soups. They can also be eaten as their own dish with salt & pepper and melted butter or cheese. White beans (great northern, small navy, or cannellini) are good in soups like chicken noodle and french peasant (see *Soups*).

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Beans are a good source of protein, fiber, and other nutrients depending on the type of bean--iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, copper, and folate. When beans are eaten with rice or other grains, you will get a complete protein (see *Glossary*).

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## Beets



**Selection:** Look for beets that are smooth, hard, and round. Smaller beets (1.5-2.5 inches in diameter) will be the most tender, but slightly larger beets will still be nice and sweet. Avoid beets that are soft or have soft spots.

If the leaves are attached, they should be firm and dark green. Avoid wilted greens.

**Storage:** Remove any greens from beets before storing to prevent dehydration of the root. Trim the stems down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Refrigerate the greens in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel) and use within 2-4 days.

Refrigerate the beet root in a plastic bag with a damp (not wet) towel inside to maintain humidity or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper drawer if possible. The root will keep for at least 3+ weeks. Under the best conditions, it will keep for up to three months.

**How to Eat:** If you've only ever had canned beets and didn't like them, don't write off all beets! Fresh beets are way better.

Do not peel (except bad spots). Don't eat beets raw, except grated into salads. Beets can be steamed, roasted, and added to chilis and some soups. They can be sliced thinly and roasted to make chips, or grated for certain cake recipes.

If the root is a bit soft, it's still fine to eat, but you can firm it up by trimming the top of the beet and soaking it in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes before using.

Don't eat the greens raw. Don't throw out the stalks; they cook down quickly and are good to eat. Beet greens can be steamed, sauteed, or thrown into just about any chili or casserole, and most soups.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container or green bag for 3-5 days. Use within 1-2 days for best taste. For greens, refrigerate in a sealed container or green bag for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Beet roots are a good source of fiber, potassium, and folate. Beet greens are high in vitamins A and K, potassium, and magnesium, and a good source of calcium.

## Blackberries



**Selection:** Look for plump, shiny berries that are firm to the touch with color ranging from deep purple/black to deep blue/purple. Avoid soft, bruised, and watery berries. If the container is stained or leaking, that's a red flag that the berries are past their prime.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for any with dents) right away so they don't spoil the whole container.

Don't wash before storing. If the berries are at all wet, let dry before storing (spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 10-20 minutes), then put a dry paper towel in the bottom of the berry container (any container will do) and gently place the berries into that container.

Store in the fridge with the lid open (unless the container has air holes). Keep the container in a green bag if possible. Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*).

Eat within 3-4 days, or freeze them for longer storage (see *Freezing*). For a quick trick to make them last twice as long in the fridge, see *Appendix B*.

**How to Eat:** Blackberries are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. They are also good with ice cream and in many dessert recipes such as crisps and cakes.

**Storage Once Cut:** Allow to air dry for 30-60 min if wet, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Blackberries are high in vitamin C and fiber, containing about half of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C and seven grams of fiber per cup.

Frozen berries are generally about as nutritious as fresh ones.



## Blueberries



**Selection:** Look for berries that are completely blue with no dents or wrinkles and a slight silvery shimmer (it's a natural protective layer). Avoid soft, bruised, wrinkled, and watery berries. If the container is stained or leaking, that's a red flag that the berries are past their prime.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for any with dents or wrinkles) right away so they don't spoil the whole container.

Don't wash before storing. If the berries are at all wet, let dry before storing (spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 10-20 minutes), then put a dry paper towel in the bottom of the berry container (any container will do) and gently place the berries into that container.

Store in the fridge with the lid open (unless the container has air holes). Keep the container in a green bag if possible. Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*).

Eat within 3-4 days, or freeze them for longer storage (see *Freezing*). For a quick trick to make them last twice as long in the fridge, see *Appendix B*.

**How to Eat:** Blueberries are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. They are also good in oatmeal and diced into salads for a sweet twist. There are also many dessert recipes that blueberries are good in, such as muffins and crisps, or with ice cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Allow to air dry for 30-60 min if wet, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Blueberries are high in vitamin C and manganese, and a good source of fiber. Frozen berries are generally about as nutritious as fresh ones.

## Bok Choy



**Selection:** Look for perky leaves with firm, crisp stalks. A few brown spots and holes are fine if the leaves look good otherwise. Avoid limp, damaged, or discolored leaves.

**Storage:** Bok choy should be stored in the fridge. Either wrap it in a damp (not wet) towel, or keep it in a green bag in a high-humidity crisper. It will keep for up to a week.

**How to Eat:** The green part of bok choy is not eaten raw, but the white stem can be eaten raw sliced into salads, sandwiches, and wraps. All parts can be steamed, sauteed, and used in omelets, chilis and many soups. When steaming, sauteing, or preparing for an omelet, separate the green part of the leaf from the white stem, since the stem needs much more time to cook.

Wilted bok choy can be added to a chili or soup, or rehydrated by trimming a ½-inch off the ends and soaking the ends in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes.

**Storage Once Cut:** For leaves pulled off the stalk, store as you would if whole. For cut up leaves, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Bok choy is high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of folate. Bok choy also contains trace amounts of calcium and iron.

## Broccoli



**Selection:** Look for broccoli heads with tight, green florets (the flower clusters) and firm stalks. The broccoli should feel heavy for its size. Avoid broccoli with browning stem ends, yellowing florets, or squashed and damaged florets.

**Storage:** Refrigerate broccoli in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). Store in the crisper drawer if possible. Broccoli will keep for 3-5 days. Broccoli can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** When eaten raw, broccoli is usually eaten in salads or with dip. When cooking, don't throw out the stalk; the stalk can be used in any recipe that calls for broccoli and is good to eat (just trim a ½-inch off the end and peel any skin that's hard to cut through). Broccoli can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in omelets, casseroles, and chilis. It may also be cut up into ⅛-¼ inch slices and used as a topping for homemade pizza.

**Storage Once Cut:** Store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut ⅛-¼ inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

**Nutrition:** Broccoli is high in vitamin C and folate, is a good source of fiber and potassium, and contains trace amounts of calcium and iron.

## Brussels Sprouts



**Selection:** Look for sprouts that are bright green, compact, and firm when squeezed. Smaller sprouts tend to be sweeter, while larger sprouts taste closer to cabbage. Avoid sprouts that are soft or discolored.

**Storage:** Brussels sprouts should be refrigerated in a plastic bag or green bag for up to a week. For best taste, eat fresh or within 1-2 days. Brussels sprouts can be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** If stored for a few days, brussels sprouts may become a little smelly, but they're safe to eat if they appear fine otherwise. Brussels sprouts aren't eaten raw. They can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in some chilis and soups. Roasted brussels sprouts are particularly good.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Brussels sprouts are high in vitamin C, and a good source of fiber and folate.

## Cabbage



**Selection:** For both red and green cabbage, look for heads that feel heavy for their size, with tightly packed, crisp leaves. If the outer leaves are damaged or wilting but the leaves just underneath look good, feel free to tear off the bad leaves and take the rest. Avoid heads that are limp or discolored, or have lots of holes and insect-damage.

**Storage:** Cabbage should be kept in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel) and stored in a high-humidity crisper. Cabbage will keep for 2-3 weeks or more, just remove outer leaves before use if shriveled or damaged. Keep cabbage away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*).

**How to Eat:** Cabbage can be eaten raw in salads, on sandwiches, or in wraps (and when the leaves are big enough, you can use cabbage as the wrap). It can also be boiled, steamed, sauteed, and roasted, and can be used in some casseroles, chilis, and soups. Red cabbage often turns bluish when cooked; this is perfectly safe to eat.

**Storage Once Cut:** Store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

**Nutrition:** Cabbage is high in vitamin C, and contains trace amounts of calcium and iron.

## Cantaloupes



**Selection:** Look for cantaloupes that are orange or golden beneath the webbing, heavy for their size, and firm but not rock-hard. Look for a yellow patch from where it sat on the ground in the field; if the patch is white, it was picked too early. Ripe-and-ready cantaloupes will give slightly when pressed on the stem end and smell faintly fragrant on the flower end (the brown circle). Avoid melons that have soft spots, are green beneath the webbing, or have the stem still attached.

**Storage:** Store cantaloupes at room temperature until ripe, 1-2 days. Ripe cantaloupes will give slightly when pressed on the stem end and smell faintly fragrant on the flower end (the brown circle). Once ripe, refrigerate cantaloupes unbagged for up to 5 days. They may look hardy, but they are quite perishable, so make sure to keep them away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*).

If you cannot use all your cantaloupe before it would go bad, it can be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Remove the seeds right before eating. Leave the seeds in any part of the cantaloupe that you're going to store for later.

Cantaloupe is generally eaten raw by itself or as a side. It pairs well with ham, poultry, and seafood, and is great sprinkled with a little salt & pepper. Cantaloupe can also be used in salads, fruit salads, and smoothies.

**Storage Once Cut:** Leave the seeds in and refrigerate it cut-side-down on a plate or with the cut side wrapped loosely in plastic wrap to prevent dehydration. Eat within 1-3 days. If cut into pieces, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Cantaloupes are high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of folate.

## Carrots



**Selection:** Look for carrots that are firm from top to bottom and have vibrant color. Avoid carrots that are wilted, soft, or green for more than an inch on top.

If the leaves are still on, they should be crisp and bright green. Avoid carrots with greens that are wilted and dull-green.

**Storage:** Remove any greens from carrots before storing to prevent dehydration of the root. Trim the stems down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. If wilted or dull-green, throw away the greens, but if not, refrigerate the greens in a plastic bag with a dry towel inside or in a green bag (no towel) and use within 1-2 days.

Refrigerate the carrot root in a plastic bag with a damp (not wet) towel inside or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper if possible. The root will keep for 2-4 weeks.

Carrots may be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots).

Carrots are generally eaten raw; this is both most nutritious and convenient. They can be eaten whole by themselves, with dip or hummus, or sliced or grated into salads.

Carrots can also be steamed, boiled, sauteed, and roasted. They can be used in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

If the root wilts a little, it's still fine to eat, but will be best in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

For the greens, tear the tender leaves off the tough center stalk and throw away the stalk (it won't cook down). Carrot greens can be used in salads, chilis, soups, and casseroles.

**Storage Once Cut:** For a carrot cut in half, store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the end may be dried out; just cut  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for up to a week. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Carrots are high in vitamin A, and a good source of vitamin C.

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## Cauliflower



**Selection:** Look for heads that are firm with densely packed florets (the flower clusters). The cauliflower should feel heavy for its size. Most heads have some slight brown spots, so just look for the ones with the fewest. Avoid cauliflower with browning stem ends, soft spots, or a ton of brown spots.

**Storage:** Refrigerate cauliflower in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper drawer if possible. Cauliflower will keep for 2 weeks, but eat within 1 week for best taste.

Cauliflower can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** When eaten raw, cauliflower is usually eaten in salads or with dip. When cooking, don't throw out the stalk; the stalk can be used in any recipe that calls for cauliflower and is good to eat (just trim a ½-inch off the end and peel any skin that's hard to cut through). Cauliflower can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in soups, chilis, and casseroles. It can also be thinly sliced and used as a topping for homemade pizza.

**Storage Once Cut:** Store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut ⅛-¼ inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

**Nutrition:** Cauliflower is high in vitamin C and a good source of folate.



## Celeriac (Celery Root)



**Selection:** Look for celeriac that is firm and heavy for its size. If any leaves or stalk are still on, they should be perky and bright green. Avoid roots that are soft or have soft spots, or have wilted leaves.

**Storage:** Remove any leaves or stalks before storing. If wilted, throw them away, but if not, store them as you would store celery. Refrigerate celeriac in a plastic or green bag in a high-humidity crisper for up to a month.

**How to Eat:** To prepare, soak the root in warm water to loosen dirt in the crevices. Do not peel (except bad spots), unless eating raw and the skin is tough to cut through. When peeled, celeriac will darken as it's exposed to the air, but it's still safe to eat.

Celeriac can be eaten raw with butter, dips, or sliced or grated into salads and wraps. It can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in soups and casseroles instead of celery for extra celery flavor. It can also be baked and mashed.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. Avoid leftover chopped up celeriac since it darkens when exposed to air. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-3 days. It is best to find a container you can pack almost full so there will be less air inside.

**Nutrition:** Celeriac is high in vitamins K and C, and a good source of vitamin B6, phosphorus, manganese, fiber, and potassium.

## Celery



**Selection:** Look for celery bunches with firm, bright green stalks. The best celery will have perky, bright green leaves (yellowing or wilted leaves are okay if the celery seems to be okay otherwise). If the cut ends of the stalks look a little dry, that's to be expected, but avoid celery with browning or shriveled stalk ends. Avoid celery that is flimsy or soft.

**Storage:** There are two options for storing celery. 1) Cut your celery bunch in half and stick both halves cut-side down in at least an inch of water in a tall container (make sure all ends are underwater). Refrigerate. The celery will remain firm without needing to be bagged (if the water becomes cloudy, that's fine; just change it). 2) Dry it off - shake it and let it drip-dry for about 15 min - and refrigerate in a plastic bag wrapped in a paper towel or a green bag (no towel). Either way, celery will keep for 2 weeks or more.

**How to Eat:** The yellow inner stalks are good to eat. Celery can be eaten raw with dips, in salads or as ants-on-a-log (see *Snacking*). It can be used in soups, chilis, and casseroles, and a head of celery can be used in place of broth for soups, chilis, and casseroles. The leaves, including the yellow inner ones, are good to eat. Unwilted, perky leaves are good for any recipes that call for celery, including salads.

**Storage Once Cut:** For individual stalks pulled off the main bunch, store as you would if whole. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Celery is a good source of vitamins A and C.

## Chard



**Selection:** Look for leaves that are shiny, crisp, and either bright or deep green. Both flat leaves and curled leaves are good. The stalks should be crisp and flexible, and can be white, yellow, red, purple, or pink (a white stalk is fine). A few brown spots and holes are fine if the leaves look good otherwise. Avoid limp, damaged, or discolored leaves.

**Storage:** Refrigerate in a high-humidity crisper in a loose plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). Keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). Chard will keep for a week or more, but is best if eaten within 4 days.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat raw. Use the stalks--they cook down well and can be used in any recipe that calls for chard. They are especially good sauteed.

Chard can be steamed, sauteed, and used in soups, chilis and casseroles. 2-3 leaves in a chili or casserole won't change the flavor at all, while a couple more will change it only slightly.

Wilted chard can be rehydrated by trimming a ½-inch off the ends and soaking the ends in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes. It is also fine cooked.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Use within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Chard is high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of manganese.

## Cherries



**Selection:** Look for plump, firm, shiny cherries that are dark for their variety with the greenest stems. Avoid cherries with cuts, bruises, or stale, dry stems.

**Storage:** Sort before storing. After you've discarded any bad ones, any stemless cherries should be eaten first, perhaps right away. Stemless cherries will spoil fastest. Refrigerate cherries in their original bag or in a green bag for 3-7 days. They may absorb the smells of other foods, so keep them stored separately if possible (storing in a green bag will also help with this).

Cherries can be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Cherry pits may be loose or cling to the flesh. Cherries are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves, or used in dessert recipes.

Frozen cherries are good for pies and with ice cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days or freeze for longer storage. If refrigerating, eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Cherries are a good source of potassium and vitamin C.

## Chickpeas



Also called garbanzo beans.

**Selection:** Look for chickpeas that are dry, firm, clean, plump, and uniform in color. Avoid shrivelled ones.

**Storage:** Dry chickpeas should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside. Keeping chickpeas away from light and air is important to keep them from going rancid. Stored this way, chickpeas can keep for many months, though for best results, they should be eaten within 6 months. The longer they're stored, the longer they'll take to cook and soften up.

**How to Eat:** Whereas canned chickpeas are precooked and can be used immediately (after draining and rinsing), dry chickpeas must be soaked and cooked before eating or using in other recipes (see *Protein* for instructions). If you've avoided using dry chickpeas because it seems like it would take too long, think again! The amount of hands-on time is just minutes.

After being cooked, dry chickpeas are interchangeable with canned chickpeas. They can be added to salads, chilis, and some soups. They can also be eaten as their own dish with salt & pepper and melted butter or cheese.

Hummus (which is made from chickpeas) is a great option for dipping vegetables, and goes especially well with carrots, cucumbers, and sugar peas. Hummus can also be lightly sauteed with other vegetables for a nutty twist on sauteed veggies.

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Chickpeas are high in fiber and folate, and a good source of protein, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamin E. When chickpeas are eaten with rice or other grains, you will get a complete protein (see *Glossary*).

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## Collard Greens



**Selection:** Look for crisp, dull-green leaves with stiff stalks. Both flat leaves and uneven leaves are good. A few brown spots and holes are fine if the leaves look good otherwise. Avoid limp, damaged, or yellowing leaves.

**Storage:** Refrigerate in your high-humidity crisper in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). Keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). Collards will keep for two weeks or more, but are best if eaten within four days.

**How to Eat:** Collards are not eaten raw. In general, throw away the stalk. Collards can be steamed, sauteed, and used in chilis, casseroles, and some soups. 2-3 leaves in a chili or casserole won't change the flavor at all, while a couple more will change it only slightly.

Use the stalk when eating collards in soups, chilis, and casseroles with cooking times of at least 30 minutes. Cut the stalk into pieces no longer than an inch and it'll cook down to a pleasant texture and provide high in fiber.

Wilted collards can be rehydrated by trimming a ½-inch off the ends and soaking the ends in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes. They are also fine cooked.

In many recipes, collards are interchangeable with kale. Collards take a little longer (~5 min) to cook down.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Collards are high in vitamin A, vitamin C, and folate, and a good source of calcium and fiber.

## Corn



**Selection:** Look for corn cobs with tight, bright-green husks. The silk tassels should be light-brown and turn moist and yellow where they meet the husk. Feel the cob through the husk to test for kernel plumpness--it's okay if cobs feel irregular with gaps, but look for cobs with no gaps. Avoid cobs with tassels that are very dark brown (almost black) and/or dry.

**Storage:** Refrigerate sweet corn with the husks on, unbagged. Keep near the front of the fridge, where they'll be kept cool but not so cold that they dry out. If your corn is already husked, wrap it loosely in a paper towel and place in an open plastic bag instead. Corn loses sweetness and flavor quickly; eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

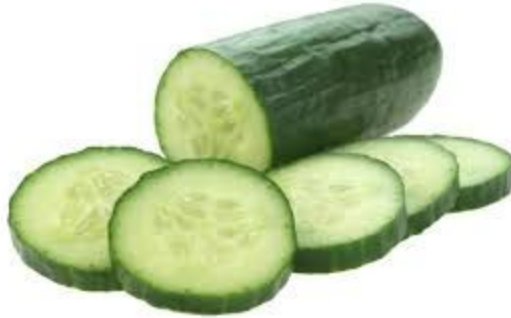
Corn can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Corn is generally not eaten raw. On the cob, it can be boiled or roasted (roast unhusked for 20 min). Off the cob, it can be steamed, sauteed, and used in salads, sandwiches, casseroles, soups, chilis, and wraps. It can also be used in cornbread and fried with rice. After 1-2 days, corn will taste best as part of casseroles, soups, chilis, and cornbread.

**Storage Once Cut:** Store as you would if whole and already husked.

**Nutrition:** Corn is a good source of vitamin C, and also contains protein, iron, and vitamin A. When corn is eaten with beans or other legumes, you will get a complete protein (see *Glossary*).

## Cucumber



**Selection:** Look for cucumbers that are relatively small and slender, firm all along, and dark green. Lighter green cucumbers tend to be older and somewhat less crunchy. Avoid spongy cucumbers and cucumbers with soft spots or wrinkly, dried-out ends.

**Storage:** Refrigerate cucumbers in a high-humidity crisper in a plastic or green bag. Keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). Cucumbers will keep for up to a week, but eat within 1-3 days for best taste.

**How to Eat:** When not eating the whole cucumber, cleanly cut off what you want so you only have to cut off a sliver from the end when you want the rest.

If your cucumber didn't come in a plastic bag, check with your nail to see if it's waxed. If any white bits chip up, it's waxed; scrub the skin with warm water or remove the peel. If unwaxed, don't peel it.

Sometimes, cucumbers can become bitter at the ends; if this happens, don't throw out the whole thing. Try a bite from the middle first.

Cucumbers are eaten raw. Eat them with dip, in salads and wraps, and on sandwiches. Sprinkle slices (any thickness) with salt for a nice snack. There are certain yogurt-based soups that use them too. Enjoy their crunch!

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole and eat within 1-3 days. When you go to eat it, the end may be dried out; just cut ¼-inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Cucumbers are a good source of vitamin C.



## Dates



**Selection:** Choose dates that are shiny, not broken, and one uniform color. Dates are only about 30% water and similar to dried fruit.

**Storage:** Dates can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container for several months or refrigerated for up to a year.

**How to Eat:** Dates are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves or alongside hot beverages like tea. They can also be used in oatmeal, dipped in nut butters, chopped on salads or pancakes, and many dessert recipes like sweet bread and muffins.

**Storage Once Cut:** Store as you would if whole.

**Nutrition:** Dates are a good source of fiber and also contain potassium and manganese.

# Eggplant



**Selection:** Look for eggplants with smooth, shiny skin that are heavy for their size. Test ripeness by lightly pressing your finger against the skin--if your finger leaves a shallow mark, it is ripe. If it is softer than that, it is too old and will be bitter. If you have choice, pick smaller eggplants, as they tend to be sweeter, more tender, have thinner skin, and have fewer seeds. Avoid eggplants with bruises, wrinkles or loose skin.

**Storage:** Do not refrigerate. Eggplant should be stored in a cool, dry place with circulating air, such as a countertop, for a week or more.

**How to Eat:** Eggplant is not eaten raw. Eggplant can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis and casseroles (such as the popular eggplant lasagna).

To roast whole: prick eggplant all over with a fork and roast in oven at 400° until flesh is tender, about 30-40 minutes.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, refrigerate in a plastic bag or green bag in a high-humidity crisper drawer. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container. Cut eggplant will brown slightly, but it is still good to eat within 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Eggplant is a good source of fiber and also contains vitamin C and iron.

## Fennel



**Selection:** Look for fennel with firm, tight bulbs that are white or pale green. If the fronds (leaves) are still attached, they should be bright green and perky with no signs of flower heads (no yellow). Avoid fennel with bulbs that are soft, bruised, or discolored.

**Storage:** Refrigerate fennel in a plastic bag or a green bag. If your fennel came with leaves, either use the fennel within 2-3 days or trim the leaves off, keep them wrapped in a damp (not wet) towel in the fridge, and use them within 2-3 days. The fennel bulb will keep for up to 2 weeks.

**How to Eat:** All parts of fennel can be eaten. The leaves generally have a stronger fennel flavor. Fennel can be eaten raw with dips and in salads and wraps. It can also be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in some soups. It goes very well with oil. Fennel can substitute for celery or onions in almost any recipe.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. For best taste, use within 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Fennel is a good source of fiber, potassium, and vitamin C.

## Figs



**Selection:** Look for figs that are clean and dry with a nice round shape and a firm stem. They should be soft and yield to gentle pressure, but not be mushy. If you have choice, choose figs with smooth, unbroken skin. Avoid figs that are rock-hard, wet, mushy, or bruised, smell sour, or have a wiggly, loose stem.

Figs can be purple, green, or brown, so you'll need to figure out what color to look for. Ask a grocer or farmer if unsure.

**Storage:** Figs are quite perishable. Refrigerate in a plastic bag or a green bag in the coldest corner of your fridge. Eat within 2-3 days or freeze for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Figs can be eaten raw or cooked. They can be eaten whole by themselves, diced into salads or oatmeal for a sweet twist, sliced and eaten with crackers, or cooked with rice. There are also many dessert recipes that figs can be used in, including fig cookies and baked figs over ice cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 1-2 days, or freeze.

**Nutrition:** Figs are a good source of potassium and fiber.

## Garbanzo Beans

See Chickpeas.

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## Garlic



**Selection:** Look for plump, firm garlic bulbs with taut, unbroken peels. (Multiple cloves make up a bulb.) The larger the bulbs, the less work you'll have to put into peeling it. Avoid garlic with loose peels, soft spots, or green sprouts coming out the top.

**Storage:** Don't peel garlic before storing; the peel is protective and without it the garlic will not store long at all.

Do not refrigerate. Store garlic in a cool, dark, dry, and well-ventilated place for 2-3 weeks or more. If garlic is exposed to light or heat for too long, it will start to sprout, so check on your garlic every so often and look for green sprouts coming out the top. If your garlic sprouts, it's still good to eat (though the sprout may be a bit bitter); just eat it within a week.

Do not store garlic in the same cabinet as onions, as they will affect each other's flavor.

**How to Eat:** Clove vs bulb: A garlic clove is one piece of a bulb. If you haven't cooked with garlic before, try using one clove to start (in a dish that could serve at least one person) and work upwards until you figure out how much you like; a small amount packs a ton of flavor.

Garlic can be eaten raw, but that might be too intense for some people. Before cooking, wait 10-15 minutes after cutting up your garlic or pressing it through a garlic press; the exposure to air will "activate" your garlic's healthful properties. After that, garlic can be sauteed, roasted, and used in casseroles, soups, and chilis. Once cooked, it can also be added to salads and sandwiches.

Garlic pressed through a garlic press is 10x as flavorful as chopped garlic! By using a garlic press, you can get way more flavor per clove.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once peeled and/or chopped, refrigerate in an airtight container for 1-2 days. *Important:* The airtight container is a must, or else garlic odor will spread to other foods (be aware: your container will probably now smell of garlic, and it does not wash out).

**Nutrition:** One clove of garlic has small amounts of fiber, calcium, iron, manganese, copper, selenium, and vitamins B1 and C.

# Ginger



**Selection:** Look for ginger with shiny, taut skin that is thin enough you can nick it with your nail. Ginger should smell strong and spicy. Avoid ginger with soft spots or wrinkled skin--grocery stores often leave ginger on display for too long, so soft/wrinkled ginger is a common sight in stores.

Ginger will typically be available only in large pieces. If you only want a little, it's perfectly fine to snap off a smaller piece! (If it doesn't snap off easily, it's not fresh.)

**Storage:** Keep ginger in a cool, dark, dry space for up to a couple weeks. If storing for longer, place in a zip-top bag with a dry paper towel, push all the air out and seal, and refrigerate (if possible, in a high-humidity crisper) for another week or two. Whenever a recipe will leave you with leftover ginger, cleanly cut off what you need rather than snapping the ginger into pieces; it keeps longer that way.

**How to Eat:** Ginger can be peeled, but doesn't have to be (besides bad spots). Ginger can be sauteed and used in some soups and most chilis. If you haven't had ginger before, try using one teaspoon to start (in a dish that could serve at least one person) and work upwards until you figure out how much you like; a small amount packs a ton of flavor. Mince your ginger for the same reason so you don't get too much in any one bite.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to a week. Eat within 1-3 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Ginger has only small amounts of vitamins and minerals per serving, but has been linked to health benefits such as anti-inflammation, boosting your immune system, improving digestion, and treating nausea.

Ginger can be very effective at calming an upset stomach, especially as ginger beer, ginger tea, or ginger candy. You can also mince two tablespoons of ginger, let it sit in a mug of boiling hot water for 10 minutes or until cool enough to drink, then sip. (Some lemon juice or a drop of honey will add extra flavor.)

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## Grapefruit



**Selection:** Look for grapefruits that are plump and heavy for their size. Choose fruit with finely textured peels over fruit with thick, heavily dimpled peels. The peel should be slightly red--the deeper red, the better. Avoid grapefruit with soft, tender spots or wrinkled skin.

**Storage:** Grapefruits can be kept on the kitchen counter for up to a week, or refrigerated in a green bag or low-humidity crisper for up to 2 weeks.

**How to Eat:** Don't eat the peel. Grapefruit is generally eaten raw, either by itself, diced into salads, or used in sauces and meat dishes for a tart twist. When eaten by itself, slice grapefruit in half, cut the juicy inside pieces away from the peel and from each other (a serrated knife works best), and scoop out with a spoon. Grapefruit can also be broiled (not boiled) with sugar sprinkled on top for a tart dessert.

**Storage Once Cut:** Wrap cut side in plastic wrap and refrigerate in a green bag or low-humidity crisper. Eat within 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Grapefruit is high in vitamins A and C.

## Grapes



**Selection:** Look for grapes that are firm, plump, and firmly attached to the vine. The best grapes will have green, flexible stems instead of dry, brittle ones. Avoid wet and shrivelled grapes. If you see a powdery-white coating on the grapes, don't worry; that's a naturally occurring substance the fruit produces to protect itself, and it's completely safe to eat. Red grapes should be nearly entirely red, green grapes should be a yellow-green, and black grapes should have a full, rich color.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for any with dents or wrinkles) right away so they don't spoil the whole bunch.

(Optional: cut bunches into snackable sizes so when you go to eat them, you can just grab one bunch and leave the rest in the fridge.)

Don't wash before storing. If the grapes are at all wet, let dry before storing--spread out the bunches on a plate or baking sheet so they get a little more air circulation, about 10-20 minutes. Grapes should be refrigerated in a plastic bag with a dry towel inside or a green bag (no towel) and eaten within a week.

Grapes freeze very well for longer storage or as a treat (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Grapes are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. They make a great snack and travel well in a rigid container, like a tupperware. They are also good in fruit salads and halved in regular salads. Frozen grapes are very refreshing eaten straight out of the freezer!

**Storage Once Cut:** Allow to air dry for 30-60 min, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Grapes are a good source of vitamin K, and contain trace amounts of vitamin C, phosphorus, and potassium.



## Green Beans



Also called string beans, snap beans, and bush beans.

**Selection:** Look for green beans that are crisp, firm, smooth, and a bright or dull green. If you have choice, pick straight ones since they're easier to cut. Avoid beans that are wrinkled, flimsy, lumpy, or yellowing.

**Storage:** Refrigerate green beans in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). They will keep for about a week.

Green beans can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Trim off a ¼ inch from the stem end; the other end can stay on. Leave whole for boiling and steaming for better nutrition (more nutrients will leech into the water when cut). Fresh green beans can be eaten raw, either whole by themselves or chopped into salads. Frozen or fresh, green beans can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in casseroles, chilis, wraps, and some soups.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. For best taste, eat within 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Green beans are a good source of fiber and vitamin C, and contain trace amounts of calcium, vitamin A, and iron.

## Green Onions



**Selection:** Look for green onions with bright, perky tops, and firm, crisp bulbs (the part just above the roots). Avoid ones with limp, withered, or discolored tops.

**Storage:** Green onions should be refrigerated in a plastic bag with a dry paper towel or green bag (no towel). They will keep for about a week.

**How to Eat:** Cut off whatever is dried out on the top. Cut off the roots at the bottom. Use all of the rest, green and white, interchangeably.

Green onions are milder than bulb onions and can be eaten raw in salads and sandwiches and on top of chili and soups, where they add a nice pop of color. They can also be sauteed and used in casseroles, omelets, and savory oatmeal.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Green onions are typically served in small portions. A  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup contains some vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

## Honeydews



**Selection:** Look for honeydews that are firm, heavy for their size, and a dull or pale yellow with not a hint of green. Shiny melons may look nicer but are actually underripe. Ripe-and-ready honeydews will give slightly when pressed on the stem end and smell faintly fragrant on the flower end (the brown circle). Avoid honeydews that are soft or have soft spots.

**Storage:** Store honeydews at room temperature until ripe, 1-2 days. Ripe honeydews will give slightly when pressed on the stem end and smell faintly fragrant on the flower end (the brown circle). Once ripe, refrigerate honeydews unbagged for up to 5 days. They may look hardy, but they are quite perishable, so make sure to keep them away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*).

If you cannot use all your honeydew before it would go bad, it can be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Remove the seeds right before eating. Leave the seeds in any part of the honeydew that you're going to store for later.

Honeydew is generally eaten raw by itself or as a side. It pairs well with ham, poultry, and seafood, and is great sprinkled with a little salt & pepper. Honeydew can also be used in salads, fruit salads, and smoothies.

**Storage Once Cut:** After cutting a honeydew, leave the seeds in and refrigerate it cut-side-down on a plate or with the cut side wrapped loosely in plastic wrap to prevent dehydration. Eat within 1-3 days. If cut into pieces, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days.

**Nutrition:** Honeydews are high in vitamin C.

## Kale



**Selection:** Look for crisp leaves with stiff stalks. A few brown spots and holes are okay if the leaves look good otherwise. Smaller leaves are better if you want leaves that are more tender and mild. Avoid limp, damaged, or yellowing leaves.

For green curly kale (see above left), look for leaves that are darker than a yellow-green.

**Storage:** Refrigerate leaves in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel) in a high-humidity crisper. Keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). Kale will keep for a week or more, but is best if eaten within 4 days.

**How to Eat:** In general, throw away the stalk.

Kale is generally not eaten raw, but if eaten raw, should be massaged (see *Appendix C*). Kale can be eaten steamed, sauteed, and used in chilis, casseroles, and some soups. 2-3 leaves in a chili or casserole won't change the flavor at all, while a couple more will change it only slightly.

Use the stalk whenever eating kale in soups, chilis, and casseroles with cooking times of at least 30 minutes. Cut the stalk into pieces no longer than an inch and it'll cook down to a pleasant texture and provide high in fiber.

Wilted kale can be rehydrated by trimming a ½-inch off the ends and soaking the ends in lukewarm water for 10-15 minutes. It is also fine cooked.

In many recipes, kale is interchangeable with collards. Collards take a little longer (~5 min) to cook down. Different kale varieties will taste slightly different but can be used interchangeably in recipes.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Use within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Kale is high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of calcium and potassium.

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## Kohlrabi



**Selection:** Look for kohlrabi that has a firm, smooth stem (the round bottom part). If the leaves are still attached, they should be perky. Kohlrabi may be green or purple (that is to say, if it's green, that doesn't mean it's immature). If eating raw, pick small- to medium-sized kohlrabi, as they are more tender; if cooking, pick larger ones, as they hold up better. Avoid kohlrabi that are soft or have soft spots, or have very wilted leaves.

**Storage:** Kohlrabi stem and leaves should be stored separately. Refrigerate the stem in a plastic bag or green bag for up to a month. Store the leaves like kale: refrigerate in a plastic bag wrapped in a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel) in a high-humidity crisper, and keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). Kohlrabi leaves will keep for a week or more, but are best if eaten within four days.

**How to Eat:** Peel the whole stem if eating raw, but only peel any woody or tough portions of skin if cooking (plus bad spots).

Kohlrabi stem can be eaten raw, either grated into salads or for a coleslaw, sliced thinly and eaten with dip, or munched like an apple. It can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in some soups.

Use kohlrabi leaves like you'd use kale (see *Kale*).

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole for 1-2 weeks. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste. For leaves, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Use within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Kohlrabi is high in vitamin C and a good source of fiber.

## Leeks



**Selection:** Look for leeks that are firm and crisp with the largest bottom portion (the white and light-green part). If the leaves haven't been cut off, they should be deep green and perky. If you have a choice, slimmer leeks will have a better flavor and texture. Avoid leeks that are limp, have withered tops, or bottoms that are beginning to round into bulb shapes.

**Storage:** Leeks should be refrigerated in a plastic bag or green bag with a dry towel. If the leek is longer than the bag, use a rubber band or twist tie to tighten the bag's opening around the root end of the leek (don't completely tighten it so it still gets a little airflow). If the leek is too long to fit in a crisper drawer, don't cut it to fit, just keep it elsewhere in the fridge. If possible, keep your leeks in a different corner of your fridge from your other vegetables, since they sometimes cause other vegetables to take on their flavor. Depending on how fresh they are, leeks can keep for 5 days to 2 weeks.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat raw. Cut off whatever is dried out on the top. Cut off the roots at the bottom. Use all of the rest, green and white, interchangeably. Leek leaves trap dirt and need a lot of rinsing.

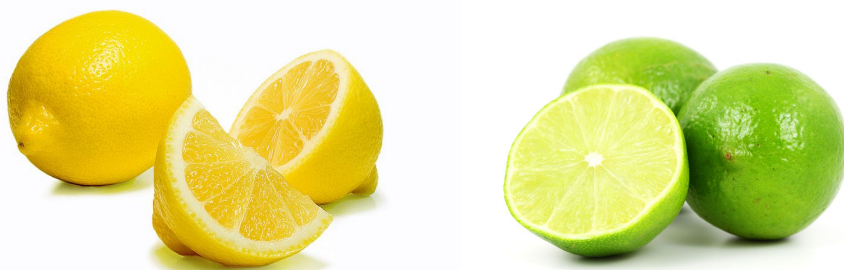
Leeks can be boiled, roasted, and used in casseroles, chilis, and some soups. When roasting, you can tell if your leeks are undercooked if they have an off-putting squeaky feeling on your teeth.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole and eat within 3-5 days. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and/or a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Leeks are high in vitamin A, and a good source of vitamin C and folate.

## Lemons and Limes



**Selection:** Look for fruits that are plump and heavy for their size and yield slightly to gentle pressure. Choose fruits with finely textured peels over fruits with thick, heavily dimpled peels. Avoid fruit with soft, tender spots, wrinkled skin, or loose peels.

**Storage:** Lemons and limes will keep on the kitchen counter for up to a week if kept out of bright sunlight. For longer storage, keep in a low-humidity crisper, unbagged, for up to a month before they really start drying out.

**How to Eat:** Lemons and limes are generally not eaten by themselves. Their juice is very useful for flavoring different dishes and drinks, and you can even use their rinds in certain dessert recipes.

Try sprinkling lemon and/or lime juice over/into:

- Meat dishes, including chicken and fish (lemon and lime)
- Wraps and tacos (lime)
- Boiled, steamed, or sauteed vegetables (lemon)
- Salads (lemon)
- Pasta dishes (lemon and lime)
- Vanilla ice cream (lemon and lime)
- Tea (lemon and lime)
- Iced Tea (lemon and lime)
- Drinking water (lemon and lime)

Lemons and limes can also be used in many dessert recipes like cookies, cupcakes, and tarts, or in icings and glazes.

**Storage Once Cut:** Cover the cut side with plastic wrap or keep in a sealed zip-top bag with all the air squeezed out to prevent dehydration. Refrigerate and use the rest within 1-2 weeks.

**Nutrition:** Lemons and limes are both high in vitamin C.

## Lentils



**Selection:** Select lentils that are dry, firm, and clean. Avoid shrivelled ones.

**Storage:** Lentils should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside. Stored this way, they will keep for many months, though for best results, they should be eaten within 6 months.

**How to Eat:** Unlike dry beans, lentils do not need to be soaked before being cooked (see *Protein* for instructions). If you've avoided using lentils because it seems like they would take too long, think again! The amount of hands-on time is just minutes.

After being cooked, lentils can be added to salads and wraps for extra protein, or eaten as their own dish with salt & pepper and melted butter or cheese. They can also be used in chilis and creamy soups (where they only need to be rinsed beforehand).

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Lentils are high in fiber and folate, and a good source of protein, iron, phosphorus, potassium, and vitamin B1.

**Trivia:** 18% of all lentils grown in the United States are grown on the Palouse. Given how affordable, nutritious, and long-storing they are, it's no wonder Pullman has a festival celebrating them each year!



## Lettuce



**Selection:** Look for heads with crisp, lively, bright leaves. The stem end should be relatively clean and either white or mostly white. If you have choice, look for heads with outer leaves in good condition; those are the most nutritious. Avoid heads that are wilted or dried out, have brown or yellow edges, have rusty-brown stem ends, or have dark and slimy spots.

Lettuce heads will often have a couple leaves or parts of leaves that look bad. Feel free to tear those leaves/parts of leaves off and take the rest.

**Storage:** Do not wash before storing. If still wet from the store, let drip dry upside-down 10-20 minutes before storing. Use any wilted leaves within 1-2 days.

Head lettuce should be refrigerated in a loose-fitting plastic bag or green bag in your vegetable crisper. Keep away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). It will keep for 4-7 days.

Salad mixes should be eaten within 1-3 days, as the small leaves are likely to stick together and rot after that point.

Head lettuce can also be kept just like cut flowers. Trim a ½-inch off the bottom of the stalk and immediately submerge in 1-2 inches of room-temperature water. Do not refrigerate. Replace the water every 2-3 days. Kept this way, head lettuce can last for over a week without wilting, even without being in the fridge.

**How to Eat:** Lettuce is eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, and wraps. In salads, wait until just before eating to add dressing so the leaves don't get soggy.

**Storage Once Cut:** For leaves that were just pulled off the head, store in the fridge as you would if whole. For cut up leaves, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** A good rule of thumb is that the darker the green in a lettuce leaf, the more nutritious it is. Outer leaves may contain a bit more vitamin A and C than inner leaves. While all types of lettuce can be a good source of nutrients, green leaf, red leaf, and romaine lettuce are generally higher in vitamin A and C than iceberg or butter lettuce.

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## Limes

See Lemons & Limes.

## Mangoes



**Selection:** Look for plump mangoes that are heavy for their size and smell fruity at the stem end. Mango ripeness is judged by feel, not color. Look for ripe or underripe mangoes; a ripe mango will yield only slightly to gentle pressure, while an underripe mango will be firm and won't yield to gentle pressure. Underripe mangoes are fine to ripen at home. Avoid flat mangoes if you don't like your mangoes to be stringy. Avoid all mushy mangoes.

**Storage:** Store mangoes at room temperature until fragrant and ripe. Gently squeeze your mango; under ripe mangoes will be firm, ripe mangoes will give slightly, and very ripe (but still passable) mangoes will give a little more but not be mushy (eat very ripe mangoes that day). For underripe mangoes, store them on the kitchen counter in a paper bag with an apple or banana for 1-2 days (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 1-2 days for best taste, or within 4 days before they get mushy. Avoid refrigerating mangoes, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and mangoes freeze well once ripe for long storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Peel off the skin. The inner flesh will be attached to the pit. Mangoes are generally eaten raw. They can be eaten by themselves or used in oatmeal, salads, wraps, and smoothies, or as a topping for fish, chicken, or pork. There are also many dessert recipes that mangoes can be used in, such as crisps and pies, or with vanilla ice cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, mangoes must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days, or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Mangoes are high in vitamin A and a good source of vitamin C.

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## Mushrooms



Including cremini, button/white, and portobello mushrooms.

**Selection:** Look for mushrooms that are firm and smooth with plump heads. You want mushrooms that are dry, but not dried out and wrinkled. The gills of the mushroom (like on the inner underside of portobellos) should be dry and undamaged; avoid mushrooms with wet, smeared gills. Don't worry if the mushrooms feel like they have a little dirt on them, but avoid ones that feel slimy.

**Storage:** Do not wash before storing. Do not scoop out portobello gills (on the underside) unless very wet. Do not store mushrooms in your crisper drawers; even low-humidity crispers are too humid.

If the mushrooms are in a plastic-wrapped container, remove them from the container and place in a paper bag with the top rolled up loosely (if you don't have a paper bag, wrap them in paper towels). The bag will absorb any excess moisture and allow for healthy airflow. If not used within 1-3 days, your mushrooms stored this way may dry out a little, but slightly dry mushrooms are perfectly fine to eat, whereas slimy mushrooms should be thrown out. Mushrooms will keep for up to a week.

**How to Eat:** Cremini and white/button mushrooms can be used interchangeably. They can be eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, and wraps. They can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in just about any soup, chili, casserole, and omelet. They also go well on a homemade pizza or tossed in a bowl of pasta.

For portobellos, don't throw away the whole stem; just trim a ½-inch off the end. Portobellos aren't eaten raw, but can be used in just about any other way that the smaller mushrooms can be. They are very good sauteed or roasted.

**Storage Once Cut:** If still dry and cut in half, store as you would if whole and use within 1-3 days. If still dry and chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 1-3 days. If wet (cut in half or chopped up), allow to air dry for 30-60 min, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Mushrooms vary in nutrient content based on the specific variety. Generally, mushrooms contain B vitamins, selenium, copper, potassium, and fiber. All mushrooms contain vitamin D, a nutrient rarely found in other forms of produce.

## Nectarines



**Selection:** Look for nectarines that have a rich, sweet smell and are firm to the touch but yield to gentle finger pressure. They should have a creamy yellow to orange-ish gold under-color; the red or “blush” of a nectarine is a sign of the variety, not ripeness. Look them over carefully and avoid nectarines that are mushy, have any soft spots, or have any hint of green.

**Storage:** Do not stack, they will bruise. Store nectarines at room temperature until ripe. Gently squeeze your nectarine to judge ripeness; underripe nectarines are still firm, ripe nectarines will give slightly, and very ripe (but still passable) nectarines will give a little more but not be mushy (eat very ripe ones that day). For underripe nectarines, store on the kitchen counter for 2-3 days, or place in a paper bag for 1-2 days (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 1-2 days for best taste, or within 3 days before they get mushy. Avoid refrigerating nectarines, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and nectarines freeze well once ripe for long storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). The inner flesh will be attached to the pit. Nectarines are generally eaten raw, either by themselves as a juicy snack or diced into oatmeal or salads. They can also be used in many dessert recipes, such as pies and crisps.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, nectarines must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days, or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Nectarines are a good source of vitamin C.

## Oats



**Selection:** Bulk oats should be dry, clean, and uniform in color. Avoid damp oats.

There are a few different methods to process oats that lead to textural differences when cooked. Rolled oats are the most common in the US, and what the cooking advice in this guide is based around. There are also steel-cut oats (chewier and less mushy in oatmeal, poor for baking) and stone-ground oats (mushier in oatmeal, excellent for baking). Choose the best one for your purposes (rolled oats are a safe bet).

**Storage:** Oats should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside for up to 3 months.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat raw. Old-fashioned oats and quick-cooking oats are interchangeable in most recipes, but not instant oats.

Oats make a very quick meal eaten as oatmeal, which you can flavor to be sweet or savory (see *Oatmeal*). Oats can be used in casseroles and meatloaf and to thicken soups. They can also be used in many dessert recipes including cookies, brownies, muffins, homemade granola and pie crumble.

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Oats are a whole grain, and contain fiber, protein, iron, B vitamins, and magnesium.

## Okra



**Selection:** Look for pods that are brightly colored and unblemished. They should be slightly firm to the touch, but not hard. If you have choice, the smallest pods (3-4 inches long) are the most tender. Avoid pods that are bruised, limp, hard, or longer than 6 inches.

Okra can be green or red, so you'll need to figure out what color to look for. Ask a grocer or farmer if unsure.

**Storage:** Okra is pretty perishable. Refrigerate in a paper bag or a green bag. Use within 2-3 days or freeze for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Larger okra should be cooked, but small okra (3-4 inches long) can be eaten raw or cooked. They can be eaten whole by themselves, with dip, or diced into salads for a nice crunch. Okra can be sauteed, roasted, fried, steamed, cooked with rice, and used in casseroles, chilis, and soups. It can also be pickled.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 1-2 days, or freeze.

**Nutrition:** Okra is an excellent source of vitamin C, and a good source of fiber, magnesium, and folate.

## Onions



This includes yellow, sweet, red, and white onions.

**Selection:** Look for onions that are firm and heavy for their size with dry, shiny skins. Pass on any onions you notice have dark powdery patches around the neck (on top), as this is a sign the onion may be spoiling beneath. Avoid onions with any soft or wet spots, strong smells, or green sprouts coming out the top. Make sure to test the top of the onion for firmness, as this is where you are most likely to miss soft spots on an onion that's firm otherwise.

**Storage:** Store onions in a cool, dark, dry place with good airflow, like a cabinet. Don't pack them tightly together. Don't keep in plastic bags. Handle gently, especially sweet onions, which bruise easily. Do not store onions in the same cabinet as garlic (they will affect each other's flavor) or potatoes (onions put off a gas that speeds up sprouting in potatoes). Yellow and red onions will store for a month or more; sweet and white onions, 3 weeks or more.

If you plan to use your onions within a week or so, they can be stored on a countertop if out of direct sunlight (sunlight will cause the onion to start to sprout).

**How to Eat:** Peel off the papery skin and cut off any green and brown in the outer fleshy layers. After peeling away the skin, if you don't plan to use all of your onion, either cleanly cut off the portion you want or peel off some outer rings; the rest will store best this way.

Sometimes, one lonely layer of an onion goes bad; when this happens, the rest is still fine to eat. If the bad layer is on the outside, pull it off and rinse off the rest. If the bad layer is on the inside, pull the onion apart, remove the bad layer, and rinse off the rest.

Yellow onions are the most common variety of onion for cooking. They are generally not eaten raw. Any recipe that calls for a sweet onion will be fine with a yellow onion. Yellow onions are better than sweet as a flavor base for soups, chilis, and sauces and for roasting alongside meat.



Sweet onions are milder than yellow onions, but they are also generally not eaten raw. They're the best onion for casseroles, onion rings, french onion soup, and roasting alongside vegetables.

Both yellow and sweet onions can be sauteed, roasted, boiled, and used in all manner of casseroles, soups, chilis, and omelets.

Red onions are relatively mild and best for eating raw in salads, sandwiches, burgers, and wraps. They can also be sauteed, roasted, steamed, and used in casseroles, chilis, and omelets.

White onions are relatively mild and can be eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, wraps, and salsas. They can also be sauteed, roasted, steamed, and used in casseroles, chilis, and omelets. They have the best crunch when raw or lightly cooked.

**Storage Once Cut:** After peeling away the skin, if you don't plan to use all of your onion, either cleanly cut off the portion you want or peel off some outer rings. Then refrigerate the rest in a loose plastic or green bag out of a crisper. Use within 2 weeks. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and/or a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 7-10 days (be aware: your container will probably now smell of onion, and it does not wash out easy. Lemon juice can sometimes help get the smell out). Use within 5 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Although the nutritional content varies between varieties of onion, onions are generally high in vitamin C and a good source of fiber and manganese.

## Oranges



**Selection:** Look for oranges that are plump and heavy for their size. Choose fruit with finely textured peels over fruit with thick, heavily dimpled peels. Don't judge based on color, it's actually not a good indicator of ripeness (a little green is perfectly okay if the orange seems good otherwise). Avoid oranges with soft, tender spots or wrinkled skin. Mandarin oranges (including "cuties") should have a slightly looser peel and are fine if their peels are a little more dimpled.

**Storage:** Oranges can be kept out on the kitchen counter for up to a week. For longer storage, refrigerate them away from ethylene-sensitive produce for up to 2 weeks (see *Ethylene*). Store in a green bag and/or a low-humidity crisper if possible.

**How to Eat:** The peel can be grated to make orange zest for desserts or salad dressings, but should not be eaten if the oranges aren't organic. If using the peel, wash it thoroughly. The pith (the white part on the inside of the peel and on/between the orange pieces) should be left on the pieces and can be eaten off the peel.

Depending on the variety, the inner pieces may cling to the peel and may cling to each other.

Oranges are generally eaten raw, either by themselves or diced into salads for a sweet twist. There are also many dessert recipes that oranges can be used in, such as cookies and brownies.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, cover the cut side with plastic wrap or keep in a sealed zip-top bag with all the air squeezed out to prevent dehydration. Refrigerate and eat within a week.

If completely peeled, refrigerate in a sealed container for up to a week. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Oranges are a good source of fiber and vitamin C. The pith is a particularly good source of fiber and vitamin C.

## Parsnips



**Selection:** Look for parsnips that are firm from top to bottom and have vibrant color. Parsnips can grow huge, but if you have choice, choose ones that are small or medium in size (the parsnips pictured above are large in size), as they're most tender. Avoid parsnips that are limp, soft, or have dark spots or lots of root-hairs.

**Storage:** Remove any greens from parsnips before storing to prevent dehydration of the root. Trim the stems down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch and toss the greens.

Refrigerate parsnips in a plastic bag with a damp (not wet) towel inside or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper if possible. The root will keep for 2-4 weeks.

Parsnips may be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots).

Parsnips can be eaten raw as a dipping vegetable or grated for salads (smaller parsnips are more tender, so are better raw). Parsnips are generally cooked. They can be steamed, boiled, sauteed, and roasted (roasted parsnips are particularly tasty), and used in casseroles, chilis, and some soups.

Wilted parsnips are still fine to eat, but will be best in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

**Storage Once Cut:** For a parsnip cut in half, store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the end may be dried out; just cut  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for up to a week. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Parsnips are a good source of fiber, folate, and vitamin C.

## Peaches



**Selection:** Look for peaches that have a rich, sweet smell and are firm to the touch but yield to gentle finger pressure. They should have a creamy gold to yellow under-color; the red or “blush” of a peach is a sign of the variety, not ripeness. Look them over carefully and avoid peaches that are mushy, have any soft spots, or have any hint of green.

**Storage:** Do not stack, they will bruise. Store peaches at room temperature until ripe. Gently squeeze your peach to judge ripeness; under ripe peaches are still firm, ripe peaches will give slightly, and very ripe (but still passable) peaches will give a little more but not be mushy (eat very ripe ones that day). For under ripe peaches, store on the kitchen counter for 2-3 days, or place in a paper bag for 1-2 days (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 1-2 days for best taste, or within 4 days before they get mushy.

Avoid refrigerating peaches, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and peaches freeze well once ripe for long storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). The pits may be loose or cling to the fruit flesh, depending on the variety.

Peaches are generally eaten raw, either by themselves as a juicy snack or diced into oatmeal or salads. They can also be used in many dessert recipes, such as pies and crisps.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, peaches must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days, or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Peaches are a good source of vitamins A and C, and contain trace amounts of potassium and vitamins E and K.

## Pears



**Selection:** Look for pears that yield slightly to gentle pressure. Avoid pears with bruises or torn skin, but scabs and variations in skin color are fine.

Different pear varieties have different colors, so you'll need to figure out what color to look for. Ask a grocer or farmer if unsure.

**Storage:** Store pears on the kitchen counter at room temperature until ripe, 2-3 days. Ripe pears are slightly soft and will yield slightly to gentle pressure. To ripen faster, place in a closed paper bag (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, move pears to the fridge in a low-humidity crisper and/or green bag and eat within 3-4 days.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Do not eat the seeds.

Pears are generally eaten raw, either whole by themselves, in oatmeal, or diced into salads for a sweet twist. They can also be used in many dessert recipes, such as pies and crisps, or simply frying them in butter.

**Storage Once Cut:** Wrap the cut end of the pear with plastic wrap and store in the fridge in a sealed container or green bag. Eat within 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Different pear varieties contain slightly different amounts of nutrients, but all are good sources of fiber and vitamin C.

## Peas



This includes sugar snap peas (pictured), snow peas, and frozen peas.

**Selection:** For sugar snap peas, look for pods that are firm, crisp, and a deep, dull green. Pods should be full and smooth but not bulging; bulging indicates that the peas will be starchier and less sweet. Look for petals at the stem end; pods with perky petals are the freshest. A little bit of white scarring from handling is okay. Avoid pods that are flimsy, dry, or discolored.

For snow peas, look for pods that are crisp, flat, and bright green, with tiny peas that you can barely feel through the pod. Look for petals at the stem end; pods with perky petals are the freshest. A little white scarring from handling is okay. Avoid lumpy pods with bulging peas and pods that are flimsy, dry, or discolored.

**Storage:** Peas are best eaten as soon as possible, as their sugars quickly turn to starch after harvest. Refrigerate raw peas in a green bag or plastic bag and they'll store for a week or more, but eat within 1-3 days for best taste. Keep near the front of the fridge, where they'll be kept cool but not so cold that they dry out.

**How to Eat:** Eat the pod. Trim or snap off a ¼ inch from the stem end; the other end can stay on, unless tough, then trim a ¼ inch off it too.

Sugar snap peas are best eaten raw, whether all by themselves, in a salad, or with dip or hummus.

Snow peas are great for sauteing and can also be eaten raw in salads.

Frozen peas are good in just about any soup or chili, and can also be steamed, sauteed, and used in casseroles.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container and eat within 5-7 days. For best taste, eat within 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Peas are high in vitamin C, and a good source of vitamin A, folate and fiber.

## Peppers - Sweet/Bell



**Selection:** Look for peppers that are firm and heavy for their size with tight skin. Whatever color they are, they should be bright and glossy. Avoid peppers that are a dull color, are soft or have soft spots, or have loose skin.

**Storage:** Refrigerate bell peppers in a plastic bag with a dry towel inside or a green bag and they should keep for 7-10 days.

Bell peppers can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Throw away the seeds and stem. Make clean cuts if not using the whole pepper; the rest will store better that way.

Bell peppers can be eaten raw, either by themselves, as a dipping vegetable, or in salads, sandwiches, and wraps. They can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis, omelets, casseroles, and some soups.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half or large pieces, store as you would if whole for 3-5 days. When you go to eat it, the cut ends may be a little dried out, but if they're not off-color at all, they're good to eat. If they are off-color, just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the cut end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 2-4 days.

**Nutrition:** Bell peppers are high in vitamin C and a good source of fiber, and also contain potassium, iron, vitamin A, and trace amounts of calcium.

## Peppers - Hot/Chili



**Selection:** In general, look for firm peppers and avoid shrivelled peppers and peppers with soft spots. Make sure not to buy peppers that will be too spicy for you; ask a grocer or farmer for recommendations.

**Jalapeños:** For more mild jalapeños, look for the smoothest peppers. If you want a spicier jalapeño, look for rough white lines and flecks running lengthwise on the pepper: the more, the spicier. Red jalapeños are hotter than green.

**Anaheims and Poblanos:** see selection advice for bell peppers.

**Cayenne and Serrano:** Look for peppers that are shiny and smooth. Peppers that are fully red are hotter than peppers that still have some green or yellow. The best peppers, no matter how small, will feel heavy for their size.

**Storage:** Refrigerate chili peppers in a plastic bag with a dry towel or in a green bag and they should store for 1-2 weeks or more. Be aware that after using a green bag to store a chili pepper, the bag will probably take on the smell of the pepper, and it may not wash out. You may want to designate one green bag as your “pepper bag.”

Chili peppers may also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Be careful when preparing chili peppers of any kind; the juices burn whatever they touch. DO NOT touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or other sensitive areas, and wash your hands thoroughly when finished handling. Optional: for greatest safety you can wear rubber gloves while handling.

Chili peppers are hot mostly because of a compound called capsaicin. Most of the capsaicin is in the inner ribs (the ridges on the inside of the pepper) and on the seeds, so remove those to bring down the heat, or leave them in for the full blast. Capsaicin does not dilute well with water, but it does with milk and alcohol, so if you get a bite that’s a bit too spicy, drink those instead.

The most common chili peppers include jalapeño, anaheim, poblano, cayenne, and serrano peppers. Make sure to look up how hot each one is before use.



Do not eat the stem. If you haven't had chili peppers before, try using one teaspoon to start (in a dish large enough to serve at least one person) and work upwards until you figure out how much you like. Chili peppers can be eaten raw in wraps, burgers, and some sandwiches. They can also be sauteed, roasted, and used in casseroles, chilis, and omelets.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half or large pieces, store as you would if whole for 3-5 days. When you go to eat it, the cut ends may be a little dried out, but if they're not off-color at all, they're good to eat. If they are off-color, just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the cut end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 2-4 days (be aware: your container will probably now smell of chili pepper, and it does not wash out).

**Nutrition:** Nutrition varies by type, but chili peppers are generally high in vitamins A, B6, and C, and a good source of vitamin K, potassium, and manganese. Capsaicin in chili peppers has been linked to a mild, temporary boost in metabolism and curbing appetite.

# Pineapple



**Selection:** Pick pineapples that are golden-brown, smell sweet, feel plump, and have green, fresh-looking leaves. Test the bottom; it should yield to medium pressure and be dry. Avoid pineapples that have browned leaves, bruises, or soft spots, are overly dry, or smell sour. Pineapples do not ripen after harvest, so don't pick an underripe pineapple and hope to ripen it at home.

**Storage:** Despite appearing hardy, pineapples are actually quite perishable. Keep the leaves on. Store on the counter for 2-3 days, or in the fridge in a green bag for up to five days. If the leaves poke out the top of the bag, use a rubber band to tighten the bag's opening (don't completely tighten it so the pineapple still gets a little airflow). Pineapple can also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Don't eat the rind or leaves.

Pineapple can be eaten raw. It's an acidic fruit, and if eaten by itself as a snack, don't eat too much all at once, or the acid will make your mouth sore. One cup per sitting is a good max to stay within, and any soreness should go away within a few hours.

Pineapple can also be eaten raw in salads and wraps for a sweet twist. It can be baked and roasted, and goes very well with meat dishes, especially pork, as it has a nice tenderizing effect on meat. It also has many uses in dessert recipes including sweet breads and cakes.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, cover the cut side with plastic wrap, refrigerate in a green bag, and use within 1-3 days. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within 3-5 days, or freeze for longer storage.

**Nutrition:** Pineapple is high in vitamin C, fiber, and manganese, and is a good source of iron and vitamin A. Bromelain, an enzyme found in pineapple, may be helpful in treating digestive issues.

## Plums



**Selection:** Look for plums that are plump, heavy for their size, smooth-skinned, and give slightly to gentle pressure, especially at the blossom end (opposite the stem end). If you see a whitish sheen on the plums, that's fine; it's a substance called "bloom" the fruit produces to protect itself, and it's completely safe to eat. Avoid plums that are wrinkled or bruised. Different plum varieties vary greatly in color, from purple to red to yellow to green, so you'll need to figure out what color to look for. Ask a grocer or farmer if unsure.

**Storage:** Do not stack more than two high, they crush easily. Store plums at room temperature until ripe. Check on them twice a day, as they are very perishable. Gently squeeze your plum to judge ripeness; under ripe plums are still firm, ripe plums with give slightly, and very ripe (but still passable) plums will give a little more but not be mushy (eat very ripe ones that day; plums are still very tasty when this ripe). For under ripe plums, store on the kitchen counter for 1-3 days, or place in a paper bag for 1-2 days (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 1-3 days before they get mushy.

Avoid refrigerating plums, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and plums freeze well once ripe for long storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). The pits may be loose or cling to the fruit flesh, depending on the variety.

Plums are generally eaten raw, either by themselves as a quick snack or diced into oatmeal or salads. They can also be used in many dessert recipes, including pies and crisps.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, plums must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days, or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Plums are high in vitamin A, and a good source of vitamin C.

## Potatoes



**Selection:** Look for potatoes that are firm and have no “eyes” (sprouts). If the potato has some scabs, minor cuts (no more than 1/8-inch deep), or small sprouts (no more than 1/8-inch long), that’s okay and sometimes can’t be avoided. Avoid potatoes that are soft or have soft spots, have deep cuts (over 1/4-inch deep), are turning green, or have any sprouts over 1-inch long.

**Storage:** Break off any sprouts over 1/8-inch and throw away. Potatoes with sprouts are okay to eat if those sprouts were no longer than an inch; once a potato has a sprout longer than 1/2-inch, use within 1-3 days.

Do not refrigerate. Store potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place for two weeks or more. Darkness and dryness are most important; potatoes will keep at room temperature for up to a week. Do not store in the same cabinet as onions; onions put off a gas that speeds up sprouting in potatoes.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat raw. Do not eat sprouts or green spots. For potatoes with light green patches of skin, cut out all the green and use the rest. Do not eat any part of the potato if the greening is deeper than a 1/4 inch, if it’s green all over, or if it’s dark green.

Do not peel (except bad spots). When the middle of the potato has bad spots, treat those like any other bad spot. Cut them out and the rest is good to eat.

Potatoes can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and put in soups, chilis, casseroles, and wraps. They can also be mashed, baked, and used in potato salads.

Different potatoes are better for different dishes. *Starchy* potatoes like the classic Idaho or Russet are great for boiling, baking and frying, but they don’t hold their shape well, so they’re not great for casseroles and potato salads. *Waxy* potatoes like common red and New potatoes hold their shape well after cooking and so are great for roasting, boiling, casseroles and potato salads. *All-purpose* potatoes like the Yukon Gold fall somewhere in between and can be used in just about any potato recipe.

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**Storage Once Cut:** Place in a bowl or sealed container and cover completely with cold water. Refrigerate and use within 24 hours.

**Nutrition:** With the skin, potatoes are a good source of potassium and fiber. Potatoes are also high in vitamin C and a good source of potassium.

## Pumpkin (& Pumpkin Seeds)



**Selection:** Look for pumpkins that are firm all the way around and heavy for their size with smooth skin. The pumpkins we typically use for jack-o-lantern's are pretty bad for eating; go for smaller pumpkins between 4-8 lbs instead (they'll usually be labelled sugar pumpkins or pie pumpkins). Stems should be intact, firm, and dry. Look for pumpkins that are dull, not shiny; shiny pumpkins may look nicer but are underripe. Scabs are okay, but avoid pumpkins with any soft spots or deep cracks.

**Storage:** Do not refrigerate unless cut. Store pumpkins in dry and cool (but not cold) conditions for up to a few months, or at room temperature for up to a month or more. Test your pumpkins twice a week for soft spots; when they develop, use the pumpkin within a few days to at most a week.

**How to Eat:** Save the seeds; they can be eaten roasted (see *Appendix D*). Pre-shelled pumpkin seeds from the store can be eaten by themselves as a snack or added to salads for some extra protein.

Pumpkin can be boiled, steamed, and used in casseroles, chilis, and creamy soups. It can also be baked, mashed, and used for pumpkin pie. Cooked pumpkin can go in wraps and salads. Once cooked, pumpkin skin can be eaten; it's up to personal preference.

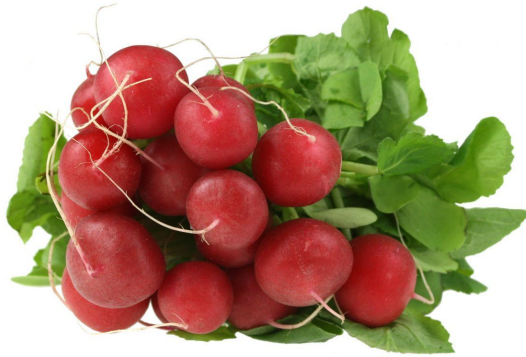
Canned pumpkin can be used in chilis, creamy soups, oatmeal, and pumpkin pie.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half or large pieces, wrap the cut side(s) with plastic wrap, put in a green bag if possible, and refrigerate for 3-5 days. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days.

**Nutrition:** Pumpkins are high in vitamin A and a good source of vitamin C. Canned pumpkin is about as nutritious as fresh, but may come with added sugar.

Pumpkin seeds contain iron, protein, magnesium, phosphorus, and heart-healthy fats.

## Radishes



**Selection:** Look for radishes that are firm, smooth, and colorful with bright green, perky leaves. Avoid radishes that feel soft, have wilted leaves, or have lots of cracks.

**Storage:** Remove any greens from radishes before storing to prevent dehydration of the root. Trim the stems down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. If wilted, throw away the greens, but if not, refrigerate the greens in a plastic bag with a dry towel inside or in a green bag (no towel) and use within 1-2 days.

Refrigerate the radish root in a plastic bag with a damp (not wet) towel inside or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper if possible. The root will keep for up to 2 weeks.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Some radishes have more bite than others (they're more spicy). Common red radishes are not too spicy. They can be eaten raw, either all by themselves, with dip, in salads, or on sandwiches. They can also be steamed, sauteed and used in chilis and some soups and casseroles.

Radish greens should not be eaten raw unless young and tender (if they're at all pokey, don't eat raw). They can be steamed, sauteed, and used in soups, chilis, casseroles, and omelets.

Wilted radish roots are still fine to eat, but will be best in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 5-7 days. Eat within 1-3 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Radishes contain modest amounts of many different minerals, including potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron. Radish greens are a good source of vitamins A and C.

# Raspberries



**Selection:** Look for berries that are plump with no dents and a dark red (but not purplish-red). Avoid soft, bruised, smeared, and watery berries. If the container is stained or leaking, that's a red flag that the berries are past their prime.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for any that have been somewhat flattened) right away so they don't spoil the whole container. Don't wash before storing. If the berries are at all wet, let dry before storing (spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 10-20 minutes), then put a dry paper towel in the bottom of the berry container (any container will do) and gently place the berries into that container. Store in the fridge with the lid open (unless the container has air holes). Keep the container in a green bag if possible. Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*). Eat within 2-3 days, or freeze them for longer storage (see *Freezing*). For a quick trick to make them last twice as long in the fridge, see *Appendix B*.

**How to Eat:** Raspberries are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. They are also good in oatmeal and salads for a sweet twist. There are also many dessert recipes that raspberries can be used in, such as crisps, muffins, and cakes, or with ice cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Allow to air dry for 30-60 min if wet, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Raspberries are high in fiber and vitamin C, and contain trace amounts of potassium and Vitamins A and K. Frozen berries are generally about as nutritious as fresh ones.



## Rhubarb



**Selection:** Look for rhubarb stalks that are firm, crisp, red-to-dark-pink and not very thick (up to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick). If the leaves are still attached, they should be perky. Avoid rhubarb that is limp, split, or a bit green and thick (over 1-inch thick).

**Storage:** Cut off any leaves down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Rhubarb should be refrigerated, either wrapped in a damp (not wet) towel or in a plastic or green bag in your vegetable crisper drawer for up to 5 days. It softens fairly quickly, but will still be fine to eat.

Rhubarb may be frozen for long-term storage, either cooked or raw (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not eat the leaves; they're toxic. Remove simply by cutting off any leaves where the veins of the leaf start (see photo). Everything below that (the stalk) is completely safe to eat.



Rhubarb is a tart (sour) vegetable. It is not eaten raw except when the stems are young; dice raw into salads or oatmeal. Stems of any age can be baked, used in soups, or used in desserts like pies or crisps. For use in soups, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long slices and add towards the end of cooking to preserve texture and flavor.

To bake: sprinkle with sugar and bake for 30 minutes at 375°.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-3 days.

**Nutrition:** Rhubarb is a good source of calcium and vitamins A, C, and K.

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## Rice



**Selection:** Bulk rice should be dry, clean, firm, and uniform in color.

**Storage:** Rice should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside. Keeping rice away from light and air is important to keep it from going rancid. Stored this way, rice can keep for many months, though for best results, they should be eaten within 6 months.

**How to Eat:** Rice is simple to prepare by itself; see *Protein* for our “Quick-and-Easy Rice in Oil” recipe. After being cooked, rice can be added to salads and wraps for extra protein, or eaten as its own dish with salt & pepper and melted butter or cheese. Rice can also be used in soups, chilis, and casseroles. Leftover rice can be sauteed.

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Rice is a great source of protein. Brown rice is naturally higher in fiber, magnesium, and zinc than white rice, though most of the nutrients (except fiber) are added back in enriched white rice. Give brown rice a try, but if you don’t like it, white rice is still a great option. When eaten with beans or other legumes, you get a complete protein (see *Glossary*).

## Rutabaga



**Selection:** Look for rutabagas that are firm, smooth, and heavy for their size. Avoid rutabagas that are soft or have soft spots, have loose skin, or have sprouts.

**Storage:** Rutabaga can be stored at room temperature for up to a week, or refrigerated in a plastic bag or green bag in a high-humidity crisper for a month or more.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Don't eat sprouts. Rutabaga is generally not eaten raw, except grated into salads. It can be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis and some casseroles. It can also be mashed.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Rutabagas are a good source of fiber, calcium, and vitamin C.

## Shallots



**Selection:** Look for shallots that are firm and heavy for their size with dry, shiny skins. Pass on any shallots you notice have dark powdery patches around the neck (on top), as this is a sign they may be spoiling beneath. Avoid shallots with any soft or wet spots, strong smells, or green sprouts coming out the top.

**Storage:** Store in a cool, dark, dry place with good airflow, like a cabinet. Don't pack them tightly together. Don't keep in plastic bags. They will keep for about a month.

If your shallots sprout, they're still good to eat, sprout and all (though the sprout may be a bit bitter); just eat them within 3-5 days.

**How to Eat:** Peel off the papery skin and cut off any green and brown in the outer fleshy layers. After peeling away the skin, if you don't plan to use all of your shallot, either cleanly cut off the portion you want or peel off some outer rings; the rest will store best this way.

Sometimes, one lonely layer of a shallot goes bad; when this happens, the rest is still fine to eat. If the bad layer is on the outside, pull it off and rinse off the rest. If the bad layer is on the inside, pull the shallot apart, remove the bad layer, and rinse off the rest.

Shallots can be eaten raw sliced into sandwiches, salads, and wraps. They can also be sauteed, roasted, and used in casseroles, chilis, omelets, and many soups.

**Storage Once Cut:** After peeling away the skin, if you don't plan to use all of your shallot, either cleanly cut off the portion you want or peel off some outer rings. Then refrigerate the rest in a loose plastic or green bag out of a crisper. Use within a week. When you go to eat it, the cut end may be dried out and/or a little brown; just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat.

If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container and use within a week (be aware: your container will probably now smell of shallot, and it does not wash out easy. Lemon juice can sometimes help get the smell out). Use within 4 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Shallots are a good source of fiber, folate, and vitamins A and C.

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## Spinach



**Selection:** Look for leaves that are perky, deep green, and dry. Wet spinach goes bad very quickly, so avoid wet leaves and packaged spinach with visible moisture on the inside. Avoid leaves that are limp, wilted or yellowing.

**Storage:** Do not wash before storing. If still wet from the store, let dry before storing (spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 10-20 minutes). Refrigerate in a loose plastic or green bag in a high-humidity crisper away from ethylene producers (see *Ethylene*). It will keep for a week or more, but eat within 3-5 days to avoid rot.

Spinach may also be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Spinach can be eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, wraps, and pasta dishes. It can also be sauteed and used in casseroles, chilis, and omelets. One cup of spinach in a chili or casserole won't change the flavor at all, while another will change it only slightly; same for a ¼-cup of spinach in an omelet.

**Storage Once Cut:** For cut up leaves, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-4 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste.

**Nutrition:** Spinach is high in fiber, iron, folate, and vitamins A and C, and is a good source of magnesium. It also contains trace amounts of calcium.

## Split Peas



**Selection:** Bulk split peas should be dry, clean, firm, and uniform in color. Avoid shrivelled ones.

**Storage:** Split peas should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container with no moisture inside. Stored properly, they can keep for many months, though for best results, they should be eaten within 6 months.

**How to Eat:** Split peas are typically eaten as a creamy soup (see *Protein*). You can also cook and season them into a savory spread or dip.

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Split peas are high in fiber and protein, and also contain iron, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus.

## Squash (Winter Squash)\*



\*Acorn, Butternut, Spaghetti, and Delicata squash are all winter squash. These squash are called “winter” squash because of how well they store during cold months. For information on squash with thin, delicate skin (summer squash), see *Zucchini & Summer Squash*.

**Selection:** Look for squash that are firm all the way around and heavy for their size. Stems should be intact, firm, and dry. Squash should have rich, deep colors for their variety. If they have a pale spot where they sat on the ground, that’s okay so long as the spot isn’t green (if it’s green, the squash was harvested underripe). Look for squash that are dull, not shiny; shiny squash may look nicer but are underripe. Scabs are okay, but avoid squash with any soft spots or deep cracks.

**Acorn:** Look for squash with some orange: too little orange (almost none) means it was harvested too early, too much orange (over half orange) means it was harvested too late. Acorn squash should be small, only 1-3 pounds: any larger and it may be dry and stringy.

**Butternut:** Look for squash with an even tan color. Avoid squashes with green streaks. Look for squash that have a long neck; that’s the part of the squash with the most “meat”.

**Spaghetti:** Look for an even, pale-yellow color. Avoid any with a hint of green. If you have choice, pick a medium-sized squash to get the best flavor and texture.

**Delicata:** Look for squash that are a pale yellow with green (sometimes orange) lines and dots. Avoid squash that are light green.

**Storage:** Do not refrigerate. Winter squash will store at room temperature for at least a month, and in dry and cool (but not cold) conditions for a few months. Test your squash twice a week for soft spots; when they develop, use the squash within a few days to at most a week.

**How to Eat:** Winter squash are not eaten raw. They can be steamed, boiled, baked, mashed and used in casseroles, chilis, and creamy soups. Leftover squash can go in wraps and salads. Once cooked, squash skin can be eaten; it's up to personal preference.

Most winter squash are interchangeable in recipes. Spaghetti squash is the primary exception, since its insides are a different texture. Acorn squash goes very well baked face-up with melted butter and brown sugar (white sugar will also do). Baked spaghetti squash is excellent with butter or cheese and tomato sauce. Butternut is fantastic roasted.

1 lb of winter squash equals roughly 2 cups cooked squash.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half or large pieces, wrap the cut side(s) with plastic wrap, put in a green bag if possible, and refrigerate for 3-5 days. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days.

**Nutrition:** Although the nutrition varies between varieties of winter squash, winter squash are generally high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of fiber, potassium, and magnesium.



## Strawberries



**Selection:** Color is more important than size. Look for firm, bright-red berries with no white around the stem. Avoid soft, bruised, and watery berries. If the container is stained or leaking, that's a red flag that the berries are past their prime.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for wrinkled ones) right away so they don't spoil the whole container.

Don't wash before storing. If the berries are at all wet, let dry before storing (spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 10-20 minutes), then put a dry paper towel in the bottom of the berry container (any container will do) and gently place the berries into that container.

Store in the fridge with the lid open (unless the container has air holes). Keep the container in a green bag if possible. Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*).

Eat within 3-4 days, or freeze them for longer storage (see *Freezing*). For a quick trick to make them last twice as long in the fridge, see *Appendix B*.

**How to Eat:** Strawberries are generally eaten raw and whole by themselves. They are also good in oatmeal and diced into salads for a sweet twist. There are also many dessert recipes that strawberries can be used in, such as crisps and cakes, or with ice cream or whipped cream.

**Storage Once Cut:** Allow to air dry for 30-60 min if wet, then refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-2 days.

**Nutrition:** Strawberries are high in vitamin C and folate, and a good source of fiber. Frozen berries are generally about as nutritious as fresh ones.

## Sunflower Seeds



**Selection:** Bulk sunflower seeds should be dry, clean, firm, and uniform in color. Avoid shrivelled ones.

**Storage:** Sunflower seeds should be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place like a pantry for 2-3 months, or in your fridge for up to 6 months.

**How to Eat:** Sunflower seeds are good on salads, in oatmeal, or in trail mix.

**Storage Once Cut:** not applicable

**Nutrition:** Sunflower seeds are high in vitamin E and phosphorus, and a good source of protein, fiber, folate, zinc, and healthy fats. For those with nut allergies, sunflower seed butter is a good alternative to peanut butter.

## Sweet Potatoes



**Selection:** Look for sweet potatoes that are firm and have smooth skin. If you have choice, pick relatively small- to medium-sized ones, as they are less starchy. Avoid sweet potatoes with wrinkles, soft spots, or sprouts.

**Storage:** Do not refrigerate. Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place for 2-3 weeks. Sweet potatoes with sprouts are okay to eat if the sweet potato is still firm. Once a sweet potato has a sprout longer than ½-inch, use within 1-3 days.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat raw. Do not eat sprouts.

Do not peel (except bad spots). Sweet potato can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis, oatmeal, and some casseroles and creamy soups. They can also be baked and mashed. When cut and exposed to the air, sweet potatoes may brown; this is still safe to eat.

**Storage Once Cut:** Place in a bowl or sealed container and cover completely with cold water. Refrigerate and use within 24 hours.

**Nutrition:** Sweet potatoes are high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of fiber and potassium.

# Tomatoes



For cherry tomatoes, see *Tomatoes - Cherry*.

**Selection:** Look for tomatoes that are plump and heavy for their size with smooth, tight skin and a fresh tomato-y smell. For red varieties, avoid any with yellow or green patches; this indicates they were ripened off the vine and won't be as flavorful. Avoid tomatoes that are mushy or bruised, have shrivelled skin, or have a weak tomato smell.

Different tomato varieties vary greatly in color, from purple to red to yellow to green, so you'll need to figure out what color to look for. Some are even multicolored. Ask a grocer or farmer if unsure.

**Storage:** Store tomatoes at room temperature until ripe and fragrant. To judge ripeness, sniff your tomato (it should have a fresh tomato-y smell) and very gently squeeze it. Underripe tomatoes will give only slightly and feel as though firm beneath. Ripe tomatoes will be soft and give easily, but the skin will still be taut and unwrinkled; very ripe (but still passable) tomatoes will have looser, slightly wrinkled or dented skin (eat very ripe tomatoes within 1-2 days). For under ripe tomatoes, store on the kitchen counter for a few days to a week, or place in a paper bag with other ethylene-producers to ripen faster (see *Ethylene*). Once ripe, separate from other fruit and eat within 5-7 days before they get mushy.

Store tomatoes stem-side down if off the vine to reduce moisture loss.

Avoid refrigerating tomatoes, since cool temperatures destroy their flavor. However, freezing temperatures do not destroy their flavor, and tomatoes freeze well once ripe for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Do not eat the stems.

Tomatoes can be eaten raw in sandwiches, wraps, pasta dishes, and some salads. They can be sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis, casseroles, and some soups. They can also be grilled.

Different types of tomatoes are better for different dishes. Slicers (the classic tomato) have higher water content and are great for sandwiches, or all by themselves with oil and salt, while roma (also called plum or paste) tomatoes are best for sauces and chilis.

**Storage Once Cut:** Once cut, tomatoes must be refrigerated or frozen for storage. Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days (eat within 1-2 days for best taste), or freeze to preserve flavor.

**Nutrition:** Tomatoes are high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of potassium.

## Tomatoes - Cherry



**Selection:** Look for cherry tomatoes that are plump and smooth with firm, bright skins and a fresh tomato-y smell. If the container is stained or leaking, that's a sign of squashed tomatoes. Avoid cherry tomatoes that are bruised, wrinkled, or have a weak tomato smell.

**Storage:** Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones (look for wrinkled ones) right away so they don't spoil the whole container. Don't wash before storing. If the tomatoes are at all wet, let dry before storing--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet for better air circulation, about 10-20 minutes. For best taste, eat within 2-3 days and store at room temperature. If storing for longer, put the container in a plastic bag with a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel) and refrigerate. Store away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*). Eat within a week.

**How to Eat:** Do not eat the stem.

Cherry tomatoes can be eaten raw, either as a snack, in salads and wraps, or on sandwiches. They can also be sauteed (lightly), and used in casseroles, chilis, and omelets. When cutting up, slice slowly or else the seeds will burst out.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container and eat within 2-4 days.

**Nutrition:** Cherry tomatoes are high in vitamins A and C, and a good source of vitamin K and potassium.

# Turnips



**Selection:** Look for turnips that are firm, smooth, and heavy for their size. If the greens are still on, they should be bright green and perky. If you have choice, pick small to medium turnips for the best flavor and texture. Avoid turnips that are soft or have soft spots, or have wilted leaves.

The white Hakurei turnip (pictured right) is sweet and much less spicy than the common purple turnip.

**Storage:** Remove any greens from turnips before storing to prevent dehydration of the root. Trim the stems down to  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. If wilted, throw away the greens, but if not, refrigerate the greens in a plastic bag with a dry towel inside or in a green bag (no towel) and use within 1-2 days.

Refrigerate the turnip root in a plastic bag with a damp (not wet) towel inside or in a green bag (no towel). Store in a high-humidity crisper if possible. The root will keep for up to 2 weeks.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots).

Turnips can be eaten raw, either whole by themselves, with dip, in salads, or on sandwiches. They can also be boiled, steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in chilis, casseroles, and creamy soups. Cooking a turnip mellows its bite (spiciness) a lot.

Wilted turnip roots are still fine to eat, but will be best in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

For turnip greens, save the stalks; they cook down quickly. Turnip greens are generally not eaten raw, unless young and tender. They can be steamed, sauteed, and used in soups, chilis, and casseroles.

**Storage Once Cut:** Refrigerate in a sealed container for 3-5 days. Eat within 1-2 days for best taste. When you go to eat it, the cut ends may be a little dried out, but if they're not off-color at all, they're good to eat. If they are off-color, just cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off the cut end and the rest is good to eat.

**Nutrition:** Turnips are high in vitamin C and also contain potassium, calcium, and fiber. Turnip greens are high in folate and vitamins A, C, and K.

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## Watermelons



**Selection:** Look for watermelons that are firm, uniform in shape, heavy for their size, and a dull color. Shiny melons may look nicer but are actually underripe. Look for a yellow patch from where it sat on the ground in the field; if the patch is white, it was picked too early, and watermelons don't ripen further after being harvested (unlike cantaloupes), so don't bother with those. Avoid watermelons that are soft or have soft spots.

**Storage:** Refrigerate watermelons unbagged for up to two weeks, sometimes three. If you cannot use all your watermelon before it would go bad, it can be frozen for longer storage (see *Freezing*).

**How to Eat:** Watermelon is generally eaten raw by itself or as a side. It is great sprinkled with a little salt & pepper. Watermelon can also be used in salads, fruit salads, and smoothies.

**Storage Once Cut:** After cutting a watermelon, refrigerate it cut side down on a plate or with the cut side wrapped loosely in plastic wrap to prevent dehydration. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container. Either way, it will keep for up to 3 more days.

**Nutrition:** Watermelons are a good source of vitamins A and C, and also contain potassium and trace amounts of calcium and iron.



## Zucchini & Summer Squash



Zucchini is the most common summer squash. They are called “summer” squash because they’re only grown in the hot weather of summer.

**Selection:** Look for summer squash that are firm and shiny with a deep, vibrant color. If you have choice, smaller squash typically are more tender and have fewer seeds. A few nicks and scratches on a summer squash’s thin skin are to be expected. Avoid summer squash that are limp or wrinkled, or have soft/wet spots.

For zucchini, look for fruits that are no longer than 9 inches and relatively thin. If you have choice, pick ones with an inch of stem still attached, as they will store somewhat longer.

**Storage:** Refrigerate zucchini and other summer squash in a loose plastic bag with a dry towel or in a green bag (no towel). Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*). Use within a week.

Limp zucchini is still okay to eat if it otherwise looks okay, but it will be best cooked.

**How to Eat:** Do not peel (except bad spots). Summer squash is generally only eaten raw as part of a larger dish, either grated or finely sliced raw for salads, sandwiches, wraps, and pasta dishes. It can be steamed, sauteed, roasted, and used in casseroles and omelets.

Zucchini can also be used in many dessert recipes like sweet breads, muffins, and cakes. Zucchini’s flavor completely disappears in desserts and it makes them wonderfully moist.

**Storage Once Cut:** If cut in half, store as you would if whole and eat within 1-3 days. When you go to eat it, the end may be dried out; just cut ¼-inch off the dried end and the rest is good to eat. If chopped up, refrigerate in a sealed container for 1-3 days.

For broad summer squash (like Patty Pan’s), if cut in half, store as you would if chopped up.

**Nutrition:** Zucchini and other summer squash are high in vitamin C, and also contain potassium, calcium, fiber, and vitamin A.

# Storing Produce

You can't keep fruits and veggies from spoiling forever, but you *can* learn how to slow the process down and keep your produce fresh longer with just a few simple tips:

## *Most of the time, keep it cold.*

The warmer it is, the faster foods spoil. In most cases, keeping produce in your fridge at or just below 40° will prolong its lifespan the most. But some types of produce don't like to be refrigerated--they become less flavorful or poor in texture. Be sure to check the page for each individual produce item to see whether they should be kept in the fridge.

## *Don't get it wet before storage.*

Only wash your produce right before you're ready to use it, not before storing it, even if it's dirty. Wet produce is spoilage-prone produce. Now, you may be thinking, "then why do vegetables get sprayed with mist at the supermarket?" It's a trade-off. Those vegetables like it humid, and open-air refrigeration dries them out quickly otherwise. Whenever you have produce you need to refrigerate that is already wet, either pat it dry with a towel or let it drip-dry for 15-30 min before storing it. But don't worry about washing off any dirt until you're about to eat and/or prepare it.

## *Store with towels when called for.*

Where **Storage** sections call for a dry towel, you can use a cloth towel or a paper towel. They will absorb moisture to keep the humidity at the right level. When a damp (not wet) towel is called for, cloth towels will work better (since it's hard to get a paper towel damp but not wet). Soak the towel under running water and then wring it out so it's not dripping at all (so it doesn't get the produce wet). This will keep the humidity higher for produce that stores longer in humid conditions.

When using cloth towels, avoid using any towel that smells strongly of laundry detergent or your food may smell like it too.

## *Use your crisper drawers.*

Crisper drawers give you the ability to control humidity by adjusting airflow. If they have a small toggle, or a small vent with a sliding door, you can tailor the settings to the type of produce you're storing (more airflow = lower humidity, less airflow = higher humidity). Many crispers will have the words "fruits" at the lower humidity side and "vegetables" at the higher humidity side--in general, that's how they like to be stored. If your crispers don't have any controls, that just means they're high-humidity by default, which is great for any vegetable that gets misted at the supermarket.

### *Let it breathe...a little.*

When produce gets some air circulation, it won't spoil as quickly. This means that, while you *do* want to bag your produce when you keep it in the fridge, you don't want the bag to be airtight, or to have produce squished up against the sides of the bag. Tucking the open end of the bag under the piece of produce works well to achieve the right amount of air circulation.

This also means you don't want to cram your crisper drawers full if that means your produce is getting squished.

### *Avoid damaging it.*

Bruised, pierced, and torn produce doesn't last as long. It is more vulnerable to microorganisms, which speed up spoilage.

Stacking produce can lead to bruising what's on the bottom. Store heavier and sturdier produce on the bottom and avoid stacking higher than 2 or at most 3 items high.

### *If it has a bad spot, the rest of it is fine.*

This one is more of a usage tip than a storage tip, but whenever you have produce with a slightly bad spot, the rest of it is safe to eat. Just cut out the bad spot and a ¼-inch around it and use the rest. (See the *Judging Bad Spots* section under *Preparing Produce* for more details.)

This means that if you only want to use part of a vegetable like a carrot or a zucchini, you can feel free to cut off however much you want and store the rest for later, knowing you'll only have to cut off a sliver from the end where it dried out when you want the rest.

### *Eat it as soon as you can.*

Unlike pantry goods that can keep for ages, fruits and veggies get worse with age fairly quickly after harvest. This can be frustrating to have to work around, but we find it helps to know that the reason fruits and veggies go bad fastest is that they have the most valuable vitamins and nutrients. Those vitamins and nutrients break down the fastest, but that is precisely what makes them so hard to come by and therefore valuable for our health.

## **Leftovers**

Leftover cooked produce is generally good for about 3-5 days when kept refrigerated in a sealed container. See the bottom of instructions for specific cooking technique sections (like *Boiling* or *Omelets*) for more specific instructions.

## Ethylene

Many fruits give off ethylene, an odorless, colorless gas, as they ripen. This gas speeds up the ripening of any nearby ethylene-sensitive vegetables, which leads them to spoil faster. Avoid storing the following ethylene producers nearby ethylene-sensitive vegetables:

Ethylene-Producing Fruit	Ethylene-Sensitive Vegetables
Apples, Apricots, Avocados, Bananas, Cantaloupes (uncut), Figs, Honeydew (uncut), Nectarines, Peaches, Pears, Plums, Tomatoes, Zucchini	Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cucumbers, Eggplant, any Leafy Greens, Peas

You can use your crisper drawers to block ethylene from getting to ethylene-sensitive produce by setting them to high humidity (which cuts off airflow). Otherwise, when storing in the fridge, just keep ethylene producers as far away as you can from ethylene-sensitive produce.

On the other hand, sometimes fruit isn't ripe enough... when that's the case, ethylene can be used to your advantage! Ethylene-producing fruits can be stored near other fruits to make them ripen faster. (Fruits may not be as sensitive to ethylene as the vegetables above, but they will still be affected.) Apples and bananas work well for this purpose. Put them in a paper bag with your unripe fruit - even other apples and bananas - and check on your fruit every day or so.

When ethylene-producing fruit (see above) is bruised or ripe, it will release even more ethylene. This can cause an entire basket of fruit to spoil faster, so separate these fruits if bruised or ripe from other fruit by at least 3 feet.

## Green Bags

We recommend investing in green bags. "Green bags" are plastic bags engineered for storing produce. They contain a compound which absorbs ethylene, so your produce lasts much longer in the fridge. Packs of 8-20 bags cost anywhere from \$6-20, but they can save you much more than that over time. Plus, they give you peace of mind that your produce won't spoil before you can use it. Just tuck the open end of the bag under the piece of produce like with any other bag.

Green bags are advertised as being good for 8-10 uses, but we've found that they continue to work for well over a year of routine use, making them an even better investment.

Green bags are available online. We recommend buying ones with a "Made in the USA" seal, as those brands were held to the food-grade standard for plastic.

## Freezing

Freezing fruits and vegetables is one of the easiest ways to preserve them if you have extras you can't use in time or want to buy a lot of something while it's on sale at the supermarket. It will keep your veggies nutritious and flavorful while also keeping them from spoiling for several months. Freezing doesn't work with all fruits and veggies (for some, the texture will become unpleasant when they thaw) but it does work for many:

### Fruits and Vegetables that Freeze Well

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apricots</li><li>• Bananas</li><li>• Blackberries</li><li>• Blueberries</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Brussels sprouts</li><li>• Cantaloupe</li><li>• Carrots</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Cherries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corn</li><li>• Figs</li><li>• Grapes</li><li>• Green beans</li><li>• Honeydew</li><li>• Mangoes</li><li>• Nectarines</li><li>• Okra</li><li>• Parsnips</li><li>• Peaches</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peas</li><li>• Peppers</li><li>• Pineapple</li><li>• Plums</li><li>• Raspberries</li><li>• Rhubarb</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Strawberries</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Watermelon</li></ul>
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After preparing your produce to be frozen, pack them into an airtight container designed for freezer storage, like a zip-top bag or a plastic tupperware. Make sure to secure the zip-top or lid well. The idea is to keep moisture in and air out. Squeeze as much air out of your zip-top bags as possible, and if using a rigid container like a tupperware, it is best to fill it almost full to reduce the amount of air inside. When freezing foods that contain liquids (or have a high water content), leave a little room at the top of your container for expansion as the food freezes, at least ½ inch. Once fully frozen (2-3 hours), check to make sure the lid/bag seal is secure.

Don't freeze fruit before it's ripe, as it will not ripen further once frozen.

*Freezing Apricots - See Freezing Stone Fruit.*

#### *Freezing Bananas*

Bananas can be left whole, sliced up, or mashed before freezing. Slicing is best for smoothies. Mashing is good for banana ice cream or for use in a baked dessert. If left whole, the banana can be sliced or mashed once thawed.

If freezing whole, either:

- Place in the freezer, unpeeled (when you want to use it, let thaw for an hour before peeling and using); Or

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- Peel it. Put in an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer.

If freezing sliced:

- Peel it. Slice it (for smoothies, slice ½-1 in thick; for anything else, slice as large as halves). Place in an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer.

If freezing mashed:

- Peel it. Mash it and scoop into an airtight freezer container or bag. Squeeze out extra air and seal. Label, and place flat in the freezer.

Bananas can be frozen for up to 6 months. It's normal for banana peels to turn dark in the freezer; the fruit inside will still be good to eat when this happens.

### *Freezing Berries*

This includes blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries.

1. Rinse, then let dry completely--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation for 30-60 minutes. The drier they are when frozen, the less ice will be mixed in with them in the container/bag.
2. Pack loosely into an airtight freezer container or bag and stop filling ½-in below the rim/seal. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. They will last for up to a year, but eat within 6 months for best taste.

*Freezing Blackberries - See Freezing Berries.*

*Freezing Blueberries - See Freezing Berries.*

*Freezing Broccoli - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Brussels Sprouts - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Cantaloupes - See Freezing Melons.*

*Freezing Carrots - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Cauliflower - See Freezing Vegetables.*

### *Freezing Cherries*

1. Remove the stems, rinse, and let dry completely--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation for 30-60 minutes. The drier they are when frozen, the less ice will be mixed in with them in the container/bag.
2. Place in an airtight freezer container or bag, and stop filling ½-in below the rim/seal. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. Eat within 12 months.

*Freezing Corn - See Freezing Vegetables.*

### *Freezing Figs*

1. Cut off stems, rinse, and let dry completely--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation for 30-60 minutes.
2. Chop up how you plan to use them after thawing, or leave whole.

3. Place in an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. Frozen figs will last for up to a year, but eat within 6 months for best taste.

#### *Freezing Grapes*

1. Remove any stems, rinse, and let dry completely--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation for 30-60 minutes. The drier they are when frozen, the less ice will be mixed in with them in the container/bag.
2. Place in an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. Eat within 9-12 months for best taste. They taste great eaten cold like popsicles.

*Freezing Green Beans - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Honeydews - See Freezing Melons.*

#### *Freezing Mangoes*

Rinse. Peel off the skin and cut the flesh away from the pit. Pack loosely into an airtight freezer container or bag and stop filling ½-in below the rim/seal. Seal, label, and place in freezer. Mangoes can be frozen for up to 6 months.

#### *Freezing Melons*

Cut into cubes and place in an airtight freezer container or bag. (Optional: toss cubes with ¼ cup sugar for every 2 cups of melon before freezing.) Seal, label, and place in freezer. They will last for up to a year or more, but eat within 6 months for best taste.

When they thaw, cantaloupe and honeydew will be softer and watermelon not as crisp, but they are still great for smoothies or fruit salads.

*Freezing Nectarines - See Freezing Stone Fruit.*

*Freezing Okra - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Parsnips - See Freezing Vegetables.*

*Freezing Peaches - See Freezing Stone Fruit.*

*Freezing Peas - See Freezing Vegetables.*

#### *Freezing Peppers*

Rinse and dry, then cut into bite-size pieces. Pack into an airtight freezer container or bag and stop filling ½-in below the rim/seal. Seal, label, and place in the freezer.

Peppers soften when thawed. When you go to use them, only remove as many as you need at a time so none thaw and have to be refrozen. Eat within 8 months for best taste.

#### *Freezing Pineapple*

Cut into chunks of any size, saving as much juice as possible. Place chunks in an airtight freezer container or bag and pour the saved juice over top. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. Use within 3-5 months.

*Freezing Plums - See Freezing Stone Fruit.*

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### *Freezing Rhubarb*

Rinse and slice with a thick-cut. Put in an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in freezer. When it thaws, it will be soft, so best for cooking. Eat within 8-12 months for best taste.

*Freezing Spinach - See Freezing Vegetables.*

### *Freezing Stone Fruit*

This includes apricots, nectarines, peaches, and plums (cherries are stone fruit, but frozen slightly differently).

Equipment needed: something to grab the fruit out of boiling water with, like tongs or a soup spoon.

1. Rinse the fruit.
2. Fill a bowl with cool or cold water, enough to completely cover your fruit, in preparation for step 4.
3. Fill a pot with enough water to completely cover your fruit, but not higher than 1 inch from the top of the pot. Cover with lid and bring to a rolling boil on high heat.
4. Remove lid and place the fruit into the boiling water for 30 seconds, then immediately take it out and place it in the cool/cold water for 2-3 minutes. This will keep the skins from toughening during freezing.
5. Cut into quarters and remove the pits, as otherwise the bitterness of the pit may affect the fruit during freezing.
  - a. Note: for apricots and plums, the pits will be loose or barely attached and easy to remove. For peaches and nectarines, the pits will be attached and have to be cut free.
6. Optional: Gently roll fruit pieces in sugar. This will help preserve their shape. Allow fruit to sit for 10 minutes or until sugar dissolves.
7. Pack fruit into an airtight freezer container or bag and stop filling ½-in below the rim/seal. Seal, label, and place in the freezer.

Eat within 12 months. They may brown (like an apple exposed to air), but if that happens they're still safe to eat.

### *Freezing Tomatoes*

Rinse. Remove stems and cut out the tough core, keeping the rest of the tomato in one piece. Pack into an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer. Use within 8 months for best taste.

When you go to use them, only remove as many as you need at a time so none thaw and have to be refrozen. Thawed tomatoes are good for cooking or pureeing. Let thaw for 1 hour before cutting.



### *Freezing Vegetables*

With only a few exceptions (tomatoes, peppers, and rhubarb), vegetables should be blanched before freezing. Blanching is the act of briefly heating a vegetable in boiling water. This puts a complete stop to any ripening or other growth processes in the vegetable, so it won't become discolored, tough, or off-flavor while in your freezer.

1. Wash your vegetable and chop it up (see list below for what size).
2. Fill a bowl with enough ice-cold water to completely cover all your vegetable pieces in preparation for step 5. Use either cold tap water or cold tap water plus ice cubes.
3. Fill a pot with enough water to completely cover all your vegetable pieces, but not higher than 1 inch from the top of the pot. Cover with lid and bring to a rolling boil on high heat.
4. Once pot has a rolling boil, add your vegetable pieces to the pot. Put the lid back on and boil for the recommended amount of time (see list below).
5. When done boiling, the vegetables need to be cooled off immediately so they stop cooking. Drain the hot water and plunge the vegetables into the bowl of ice-cold water for the same amount of time as they were blanched.
6. Drain and let dry well--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation for 30-60 minutes.
7. Pack into an airtight freezer container or bag. Seal, label, and place in the freezer.

Eat within 8 months for best taste.

Blanching times vary depending on the size and kind of vegetable, between 1-6 minutes. A good rule of thumb is that when your vegetable brightens in color, it has been blanched long enough. See below for how long to boil each kind of vegetable (starting from the time you add them to the water) and how to cut it up (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes).

- Broccoli, 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 3-4 min
- Brussels Sprouts, whole: 3-5 min
- Carrots, 1-inch chunks: 3 minutes
- Cauliflower, 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 2-4 min
- Corn, on or off the cob: 4-6 min
- Green beans, whole: 2-3 min
- Okra, whole: 3-4 min
- Parsnips, 1-inch chunks: 2-3 min
- Spinach, whole: 1-2 min

*Freezing Watermelon - See Freezing melons.*

# Preparing Produce

## *Allow it to warm up.*

For any produce item that is usually stored outside of the fridge but has been kept in the fridge (for example, apricots or tomatoes), give it an hour to warm up outside of the fridge before preparing. This will give it a chance to “wake up” and start producing more of its special smells and tastes.

## *Very ripe fruit is fine to eat.*

Overripe (but not spoiled) fruit is safe to eat, it will just be a bit past its prime in terms of texture or flavor. Turn to each fruit’s page to see how to tell when they are overripe. Smoothies, fruit salads, and any dessert recipes are great uses for overripe fruit.

## *Always rinse.*

Even with organic produce, it is best to rinse your produce with drinkable water. This does a good job of washing away dirt and pesticide residue.

## *In general, don’t peel it.*

Produce with thin skin (like an apple or a beet) should only be peeled where the skin has bad spots, since the skins are where many of the most valuable nutrients are found. Now, you may have heard otherwise; a lot of cooking websites recommend peeling, even for common vegetables like carrots. However, this is only because restaurant chefs prize consistent texture. There’s nothing unsafe about eating your fruits and vegetables unpeeled (see list below for exceptions); just make sure to rinse and scrub them well to get any dirt off and cut out any bad spots. Plus, not peeling is a lot less work!

### Exceptions:

- For citrus fruit (grapefruit, lemons, limes, oranges), the peel should not be eaten, but the pith (the white inside part) is nutritious and safe to eat.
- For tropical non-citrus fruit (avocados, bananas, mangoes, pineapple), the peel should not be eaten.
- For melons (cantaloupes, honeydews, watermelons), the skin should not be eaten, though the tougher white part of a watermelon (next to the skin) is safe to eat.
- For broccoli, cauliflower, celeriac, and kohlrabi, if eaten raw, any skin that’s too tough to cut through easily should be removed for ease of chewing.
- For garlic, onions, and shallots, the papery skins should not be eaten.

## *Judging Bad Spots*

Most pieces of produce won't be perfect. Some are scuffed up, some are bruised, and others are overripe. Different bad spots should be treated differently.

### **Not concerning, but may be removed if preferred:**

- Rough patches on the skin (like on apples and potatoes). They're like scars--the plant got damaged while it was still growing, but it healed itself.
- Nicks and scratches on the skin, if they are dry. The produce item just got roughhoused a little bit after being harvested, but it's holding up.
- Wilted or shrivelled parts. The plant has become dehydrated, but this will only affect texture and/or sometimes taste. Safe to eat, though you may prefer not to.
- Soft spots that haven't gotten darker yet. They might not be as good in texture, but are fine to eat (many apples and pears have spots like this).
- Bug damage on a leaf. When the edge of a leaf appears gnawed on by bugs, or the leaf has a hole in the middle, but the edge/hole is dry and good otherwise, it's good to eat and doesn't need to be torn off/out.

### **Remove these:**

- Darker discoloration. Underripe spots will generally be lighter, while overripe produce will be darker. When in doubt, remove it.
- Soft spots that have gotten darker. Whether from bruises or age, these spots are spoiling.
- Wet spots. These spots will probably also be soft and darker, but even if not, remove them.
- Rot on a leaf. Brown and black parts of the leaf should be removed, but the rest is still safe to eat if good otherwise.
- Rotting leaves on a head of leaves. That leaf should be removed, but the rest of the head is safe to eat if good otherwise.
- Slimy root vegetables. Peel and rinse the rest thoroughly.
- Light green patches of skin on potatoes. Cut out all the green and use the rest.
- Small patch of mold on a dry piece of fruit. If there is a bruise less than an inch in diameter or a cut that has a thin layer of mold growing on/in it, but the rest of the fruit looks good when you cut it open, remove the mold and a ½-inch around it and rinse the rest thoroughly.

### **Throw out the whole thing:**

- Large patch of mold. (Mold is puffy, rot is slimy.) If it's more than an inch in diameter, toss the whole thing.
- Rot on a fruit. A mushy, brown or black patch more than 2 inches in diameter is a sign the rest of the fruit shouldn't be eaten either.
- Greening deeper than a ¼ inch, green all over, or dark green on a potato.

# Eating Produce Raw

*A quick note for anyone who doesn't feel at home in the kitchen:*

We know cooking can be intimidating, even the simplest stuff. There's nothing wrong with that--we all have to learn at some point, and it just takes practice. Start with what looks easiest and work your way up. We've got your back--if you don't recognize a term, just check out the *Glossary*.

## Snacking

### Fruits

All of the fruits featured in this guide are excellent snacks eaten whole by themselves. They can all also be eaten as part of recipes, of course, but nothing beats their convenience when you're looking for a healthy snack!

Best for eating on-the-go: apples, pears, bananas, oranges, grapes

The best fruits to eat on-the-go are apples and pears--they don't get crushed as easily, there's no peel to pull off, and they won't get your hands as sticky. Anything that gets crushed easily will travel fine in a rigid container, like a tupperware.

### Vegetables

Many vegetables make a great snack eaten raw and all by themselves.

- Carrots, cucumbers, and fresh snap peas can be eaten whole by themselves, or they pair well with hummus.
- Cucumber slices add extra crunch to cheese-and-cracker sandwiches.
- Ants-on-a-log: this snacking classic brings together the fiber and crunch of celery, the protein of peanut butter, and the sweetness of raisins. Spread peanut butter in the groove of the celery stalk to make the log, and then stick some raisins in the peanut butter for your ants.
- The type of turnip called "Hakurei" (white in color) makes a satisfying snack--sweet, juicy, and crunchy.
- Cherry tomatoes: pop them in your mouth and enjoy feeling them burst as you bite down. Best in summer.
- Fresh green beans and sliced bell peppers can be eaten by themselves.
- Okra: slice ½-1 in thick, drizzle with oil and sprinkle with salt and/or pepper.

Leftover cut-up raw vegetables should be refrigerated in a sealed container. Eat within 4-6 days.

## Sandwiches

Plenty of vegetables make a great addition to a sandwich. They can provide crunch and bursts of flavor to liven up a standard meat-based lunch sandwich!

### Good Vegetables for Sandwiches

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cabbage (raw or as sauerkraut)</li><li>● Cucumber</li><li>● Green Onion</li><li>● Lettuce</li><li>● Onion (red)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Peppers (sweet)</li><li>● Radishes</li><li>● Shallots</li><li>● Spinach</li><li>● Tomatoes (regular and cherry)</li></ul>
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How to prepare vegetables for sandwiches (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes):

- Cabbage, shredded or torn up
- Cucumber, thinly sliced ( $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  in thick)
- Green onion, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in thick)
- Lettuce, shredded or torn up
- Red onion, small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- Peppers (sweet), finely-thinly slivered (up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in thick) or small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- Radishes, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in thick)
- Shallots, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in thick)
- Spinach, whole or torn up
- Tomatoes (regular), sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in thick
- Tomatoes (cherry), halved

Example Sandwiches:

- Roast beef with cucumber slices, radish slices, and lettuce
- Roast beef with cherry tomatoes, either red onion or green onion, and lettuce
- Deli turkey with cucumber slices, either cabbage or sauerkraut, and optional tomato slices
- Deli turkey with a handful of spinach
- Deli ham with melted cheese, red or green onion, and lettuce or sauerkraut
- Shredded chicken with bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, and green onion

Example Dinner Sandwiches:

- Grilled cheese with slicing tomatoes, bell peppers, and/or red onion in the sandwich
- Grilled cheese with radish slices in the sandwich and sauerkraut on the side
- Sloppy Joe with red onions and cherry tomatoes

Leftover vegetable sandwiches should be refrigerated in a sealed container. Eat within 3-5 days.

## Salads

Salads don't require any cooking, which makes them a great option for when you just want something simple. Our salad template gives you a good starting point for a basic salad. As you get more comfortable, feel free to mix-and-match and change amounts of ingredients to fit your tastes.

### Vegetables that can be used in salads

Asparagus	Kohlrabi	Beans
Avocado	Mushrooms (button/white or cremini)	Chickpeas
Beets	Okra	Lentils
Broccoli	Onion (red or white)	Pumpkin seeds
Cabbage (red or green)	Parsnip	Rice
Carrots	Peas (fresh)	Sunflower seeds
Carrot greens	Peppers (sweet)	
Cauliflower	Radishes	
Celeriac	Rhubarb	
Celery	Rutabaga	
Cucumber	Salad Mix	
Corn (fresh)	Shallots	
Fennel	Spinach	
Green beans	Tomatoes (regular & cherry)	
Green onion	Turnips (sweet)	
Lettuce	Turnip greens (young)	
Kale (massaged)	Zucchini	

## Salad template

Makes 1 meal or 3 side-dishes

Prep time: 5-10 minutes

### Ingredients:

2 cups Head lettuce or salad mix

+

1-2 chopped cups of 2 or more of: broccoli, cabbage (red or green), carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, green beans, peas, sweet peppers, radishes, turnips

+

1-2 chopped cups of 1 or 2: asparagus, carrot greens, cucumber, fennel, green onion, kale (massaged), mushroom (button/white or cremini), okra, onion (red or white), shallots, spinach, cherry tomatoes, turnip greens (young)

+

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Protein: 1-2 cups of 1 or 2 of: beans, chickpeas, lentils, pumpkin seeds, rice, sunflower seeds  
AND/OR bacon, cheese, chicken, egg, nuts

+

Optional: ¼-½ grated cups of 1 of: beets, celeriac, kohlrabi, parsnip, rutabaga, zucchini

+

Optional: 1 or more: 1 Avocado, 6 Olives, 2 tsp olive oil, 1 tsp lemon juice

1. If using rice, beans, lentils, or chickpeas, get those cooking first (see *Protein*). (This will add at least 30 min to prep time.)
2. Tear up head lettuce leaves. Chop up your chosen veggies into your preferred size pieces, no bigger than bite-size. (Green onion, onion, and shallots should be sliced up to ¼-in thick or diced ¼-in.) Toss together.
3. Add protein on top. Grate your chosen veggie on top, if applicable.
4. Sprinkle salt & pepper. Drizzle lemon juice and olive oil, if applicable.

Leftover salad should be refrigerated in a sealed container. Eat within 3-5 days.

Once you get more familiar with what you like in a salad, try slicing up 1 cup of one of the following for a sweet twist:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Apple</li><li>● Blueberries</li><li>● Cantaloupe</li><li>● Figs</li><li>● Grapes</li><li>● Grapefruit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Honeydew</li><li>● Nectarines</li><li>● Orange</li><li>● Peaches</li><li>● Pears</li><li>● Pineapple</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Plums</li><li>● Raspberries</li><li>● Rhubarb</li><li>● Strawberries</li><li>● Watermelon</li></ul>
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Salads can be taken in many different directions, flavor-wise. Here are some ideas:

Garden salad--lettuce, carrot, celery, sugar peas, cucumber, radish, green onion, and your favorite dressings

Hearty cold-weather salad--lettuce, carrots, red onion, rice, grated beets, grated kohlrabi, pumpkin seeds

Southwest salad--lettuce, tomatoes (regular or cherry), sweet peppers, onion (red or white) fresh corn, black beans, chicken, avocado

# Cooking Produce

*A quick note for anyone who doesn't feel at home in the kitchen:*

We know cooking can be intimidating, even the simplest stuff. There's nothing wrong with that--we all have to learn at some point, and it just takes practice. Start with what looks easiest and work your way up. We've got your back--if you don't recognize a term, just check out the *Glossary*.

## Boiling

Boiling is probably the easiest cooking technique to learn. It's very quick, too--just minutes from raw to cooked. Boiled vegetables make a great side dish, or can be eaten as a snack.

Vegetables that can be Boiled

Broccoli	Cauliflower	Leeks	Pumpkin
Brussels sprouts	Celeriac	Onions	Rutabaga
Cabbage	Corn	Parsnip	Squash
Carrot	Green beans	Potatoes	Turnips

Total time: 5-10 minutes prep time + cooking time (see next page for cooking times)

1. Cut up your vegetable into evenly sized pieces (see next page for what size pieces).
2. Fill your pot nearly full with water, up to 1-1½ inches from the top. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat.
3. Add your vegetable pieces and about 1 tsp salt to the pot.
4. Put the lid back on and boil for the recommended minimum amount of time (see below), then check on your veggies. If they are not yet tender, continue cooking, checking each minute.
5. When ready, drain immediately and serve. Enjoy with ground pepper and some melted butter or cheese.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.



Each vegetable boils at a different rate. See below for how long to boil each kind of vegetable (starting from the time you add them to the water) and how to cut it up (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes).

- Broccoli, 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 3-4 min
- Brussels sprouts, whole: 5-8 minutes
- Cabbage head 1/8's (for 5-6 inch-diameter heads): 5 min
- Carrot, diced into 1-inch chunks: 6 min
- Cauliflower, 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 5 min
- Celeriac: 20-30 minutes whole, 5-8 min for 1/2-inch to 1/4-inch slices (after boiling, can be mashed with potatoes)
- Corn on the cob: 3-6 min
- Green beans, whole: 5-10 min
- Leeks, whole or cut in halves/thirds to fit in pot: 10-12 min
- Onions, whole: 15 min for small onions (2-3 in diameter), 30 min for large (3-4+ in diameter)
- Parsnip, diced into 1-inch chunks: 8-10 min
- Potatoes: 20-30 min for whole potatoes (width + length = 5-6 in, height = 1.5-2 in)
- Pumpkin, diced into 1- to 2-inch chunks: 8-10 min
- Rutabaga, diced into 1-inch chunks: 20-25 min
- Squash: 15-20 min for 1 1/2- to 2-inch chunks (you can peel the squash before or after, but it is easier to peel before, since it must cool first if peeled after)
- Turnip: 8-10 min for 1/2- to 1-inch-thick turnip slices or cubes, 15-20 min for whole small turnips (1-2 in diameter)

## Steaming

Steaming vegetables means cooking them with steam. The goal of steaming is to very lightly cook vegetables just until they lose their raw taste and turn soft, but not until they begin to turn mushy. This process turns many vegetables from tough to tasty. Steaming can be done in a microwave or with a steamer basket and a pot.

Many vegetables can be steamed:

Steam well both in microwave or with pot and steamer basket	Steam best with pot and steamer basket
Broccoli Cabbage Carrots Cauliflower Corn Green Beans Parsnips Peas Sweet Peppers Spinach Zucchini	Beets Beet Greens Carrot Greens Chard Collards Eggplant Kale Leeks Mushrooms Okra Potatoes Pumpkin Radish greens Rutabaga Sweet Potatoes Turnip Turnip greens Winter Squash

If you don't have a steamer basket, you can use a metal colander or strainer instead. Your makeshift basket must fit in the pot such that it hangs suspended above the water by at least 1.5 inches from the bottom of the pot.

If you want to microwave the veggies in the second column, they'll still turn out okay, but you'll probably want to find a recipe online rather than using the instructions below since most of those veggies take longer to steam in the microwave (and some of them are steamed whole).

## Steaming with a Microwave

The time needed to fully steam vegetables depends on two things: the power of your microwave and the kind of vegetable. You will have to play with times to figure out what works best in your microwave for different vegetables, but it's pretty easy (see instructions).

Equipment needed: microwave-safe bowl, microwave-safe bowl cover or wide plate

Cooking time: less than 10 minutes

Instructions:

1. Wash your vegetable and shake dry. Cut it into evenly sized, bite-size pieces (the exact size doesn't matter so long as they're evenly sized so they cook at the same rate).
2. Place those pieces in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover the bowl with a microwave-safe cover (or a plate wide enough to cover the top).
3. Set your microwave to full power and pop the bowl of veggies in for 30 seconds.
4. Test the veggies for softness with a fork--they're ready when they can easily be pierced. If not ready, rotate or flip them if necessary, and continue microwaving them on high for 30 seconds at a time until they are the desired texture. This may take 2-8 minutes. Smaller amounts of vegetables in the bowl will steam faster than larger amounts.
  - a. As you get more experienced, you'll be able to better guess how much time your veggies need, and won't need to check as much.
5. Season the veggies to your liking with salt and pepper. Butter and grated cheese will melt nicely on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

## Steaming with a Steamer Basket and a Pot

Microwaves work well for steaming many vegetables, but for some, steaming with a steamer basket and a pot is better. This steaming method works for any vegetable that a microwave could steam.

If you don't have a steamer basket, you can use a metal colander or strainer instead. Your makeshift basket must fit in the pot such that it hangs suspended above the water by at least 1.5 inches from the bottom of the pot.

Though vegetables steam at different rates, some different ones may be steamed together and will still finish cooking at about the same time. See the list below:

Cook quickest (5 minutes): Chard, Kale, Collards, Turnip Greens, Beet Greens
Cook quickly (5-10 minutes): Button Mushrooms, Bell Peppers, Zucchini, Carrots, Peas, Corn, Green Beans, Okra
Cook slowly (10-15 minutes): Sweet Potatoes, Turnips, Parsnips, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Leek, Eggplant
Cook slowest (15 minutes): Beets, Potatoes, Rutabaga, Winter Squash, Pumpkin

Equipment needed: steamer basket or metal strainer/colander that fits the pot

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 5-15 minutes

Instructions:

1. Fill your pot with 1-3 inches of water and put the basket in the top.
  - a. If your pot is shallow, make sure not to put so much water in that you submerge any vegetables in the basket.
2. Cut up your vegetables (see next page for what size) and put them in the basket.
3. Put a lid on the pot and bring the water to a boil over high heat, then immediately turn it down to low heat. Keep the lid on.
4. Check on the veggies after 5-15 minutes (see list above). If they can be pierced with a fork, they're ready. If not, check again every 1-2 minutes. (If the strainer/colander is packed, it may take a little longer to cook than expected.) Take care not to overcook.
5. When veggies are ready, remove basket from pot. Dish up and season to taste with salt and pepper and some butter or grated cheese melted on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

How to cut up vegetables for this recipe (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes):

- **Quickest** group: tear up leaves into pieces no larger than a playing card. For chard, beet greens, and turnip greens, cut up stalk into inch-long pieces. For kale and collards, throw away stems.
- **Quickly** group: Leave green beans whole. Slice peppers into slivers  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide. Thinly slice mushrooms. Slice zucchini and carrots  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 inch thick. Slice okra 1 inch thick or leave whole. Add corn and peas whole.
- **Slowly** group: Dice sweet potatoes and parsnips into pieces the size of a 6-sided die ( $\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  inch), and turnips and eggplant 1.5x that size. Cut broccoli and cauliflower florets (flower clusters) into 1-2 inch diameter pieces and slice stalks into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick slices. Cut leeks into  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick slices.
- **Slowest** group: Dice into pieces the size of a 6-sided die ( $\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  inch).

## Sauteing

To saute vegetables, you cut them up according to the recipe, then cook them in a frying pan with salt and oil or butter on medium-low heat. If the vegetables become fragrant and soft, they are generally ready even if you haven't cooked them for the full time in the instructions.

Vegetables That Can Be Sauteed

Artichoke (heart and baby)	Corn	Peppers (sweet and spicy)
Asparagus	Eggplant	Potatoes
Beet greens	Fennel	Radishes
Bok Choy	Garlic	Radish greens
Broccoli	Ginger	Rice (leftovers)
Brussels Sprouts	Green Beans	Rutabaga
Cabbage	Green Onions	Shallots
Carrots	Kale	Spinach
Cauliflower	Kohlrabi	Sweet Potatoes
Celeriac	Mushrooms	Tomatoes (regular & cherry)
Celery	Okra	Turnips
Chard	Onions	Turnip greens
Chickpeas (hummus)	Parsnips	Zucchini
Collards	Peas (snow and frozen)	

Cooking Time: Up to 25 minutes

### Instructions:

Think about how much you can fit in a single layer in your pan. You don't want to overfill it, or the food won't cook evenly.

1. Chop up your veggies (see list on next page for what size).
2. Add 1-2 Tbsps of butter or oil to your pan. Put on medium-low heat and spread it all around the pan.
3. Wait 1-2 minutes to allow pan to warm up, then add veggies in an even layer. Sprinkle lightly with ½-1 tsp salt.
4. Stir every minute or so, flipping and rotating pieces so they're cooking evenly. Add any extra oil or butter as needed to keep food from sticking.
5. When veggies are fragrant or after the specified amount of time (see list below), give them a taste-test. If not yet tender, check every minute or so.
6. When tender, remove from heat. Enjoy topped with ground pepper and cheese melted on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

Each vegetable sautes at a different rate. See below for how long to saute each kind of vegetable (starting from the time you add them to the pan) and how to cut it up (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes).

- Artichoke (heart and baby): 5-6 min for artichoke hearts and baby artichoke halves (tops and outer leaves removed)
- Asparagus, thinly or thickly sliced ( $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in): 10 min
- Beet Greens: 7-10 min for stalks cut into 1-in pieces, 2-4 min for leafy part torn up into pieces the size of a playing card or smaller
- Bok Choy: 5-7 min for stalks cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in pieces, 2-4 min for leafy parts torn up into pieces the size of a playing card or smaller
- Broccoli: 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 3-5 min
- Brussels Sprouts: 10-15 minutes for halved brussel sprouts
- Cabbage, shredded: 10-15 min
- Carrots, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in thick: 7-8 min
- Cauliflower: 1-2 inch florets (the flower clusters): 5-7 min
- Celery, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in): 8-10 min
- Celery, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in thick: 5-7 min
- Chard: 7-10 min for stalks cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in pieces, 2-4 min for leafy part torn up into pieces the size of a playing card or smaller
- Chickpeas (hummus): 30-90 seconds
- Collards, torn into pieces the size of a playing card or smaller (throw away stalk): 10 min
- Corn, off the cob: 6-10 min
- Eggplant: 7 min each side sliced  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in thick (14 min total), 10 min for 1-inch cubes
- Fennel: small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in): 5-10 min
- Garlic: 1-3 min minced or 5-10 min diced small ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Ginger: 5 min minced or 7-10 min cut into matchsticks ( $\frac{1}{8}$ "x $\frac{1}{8}$ "x1-2")
- Green Beans, whole or inch-long pieces: 7-10 min
- Green Onions, thinly sliced ( $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  in): 2-4 min
- Kale, torn up into pieces the size of a playing card or smaller (throw away stalk): 10 min
- Kohlrabi, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in): 8-10 min
- Mushrooms, thinly sliced or diced into chunks half the size of a 6-sided die ( $\frac{3}{8}$  in): 10 min
- Okra: 8 min if whole, 4-6 min sliced into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in chunks

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- Onions, small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in): 5-10 min
- Parsnips, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in thick: 8-10 min
- Peas (snow), whole or cut in half: 5 min
- Peas (frozen): 6-10 min
- Peppers (sweet), small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in): 5-10 min
- Peppers (hot), minced: 5-10 min
- Potatoes: 10 min finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in), or 20 min diced into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in chunks
- Radishes, thinly sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in): 4-6 min
- Radish greens: 4-5 min for stalks cut into 1-in pieces, 2-3 min for leafy part whole or torn in half
- Rice (leftovers): 2-4 min
- Rutabaga, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in): 8-10 min
- Shallots, small-medium dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  in): 5-10 min
- Spinach, whole or torn in half: 1-3 min
- Sweet Potatoes: 10 min finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in), 10-15 min diced into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in chunks
- Tomatoes (regular), sliced with a thick-cut (1 in): 5-7 min
- Tomatoes (cherry), halved: 2 min
- Turnips, thinly sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in): 6-8 min
- Turnip Greens: 4-5 min for stalks cut into 1-in pieces, 2 min for leafy part whole or torn in half
- Zucchini, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in): 5-10 min



# Roasting

To roast veggies, chop them up, put them in a pan, sprinkle with salt and oil, and pop them in the oven. The hands-on time for roasting is just minutes.

Vegetables good for roasting:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Asparagus</li><li>● Beets</li><li>● Broccoli</li><li>● Brussels Sprouts</li><li>● Cabbage</li><li>● Carrots</li><li>● Cauliflower</li><li>● Celeriac</li><li>● Eggplant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fennel</li><li>● Garlic</li><li>● Green Beans</li><li>● Kohlrabi</li><li>● Leeks</li><li>● Mushrooms</li><li>● Okra</li><li>● Onions</li><li>● Parsnips</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Peppers (sweet)</li><li>● Potatoes</li><li>● Rutabagas</li><li>● Shallots</li><li>● Sweet potatoes</li><li>● Tomatoes (regular &amp; cherry)</li><li>● Turnips</li><li>● Zucchini</li></ul>
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Equipment: Baking dish with a lid or aluminum foil, or a baking sheet in a pinch

Prep time: 10-15 minutes

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

Instructions:

Think about how much you can fit in your baking dish. You don't want to crowd the pan, or it won't cook as quickly or evenly. Pack it about an inch high and stop filling at least ½-inch below the rim.

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Grease the baking dish with 2-3 tsps oil.
2. Chop up veggies (see next page for what size) and place in the baking dish. Place garlic and mushrooms on top of other veggies. Sprinkle with salt (1-1½ tsps for a full pan) and drizzle evenly with oil (~2-3 Tbsps for a full pan). An even coating of oil will help it cook evenly.
  - a. Alternative: toss veggies in oil by hand before putting in pan. Use just enough oil to coat the veggies on all sides. If you do this, don't worry about oiling the pan.
  - b. Optional: sprinkle a tablespoon of a favorite dried seasoning like black pepper or Italian seasoning on top.
3. Cover with either a lid or aluminum foil and pop in the oven once preheated. Check after 40 minutes. (If your pan isn't completely full, check at 30 min.) Veggies should be easily pierced with a fork and should have only a slight crunch or no crunch (depending on what you prefer for crunchiness). If they're not ready, put them back in and check after 5-7 minutes.
4. When ready, remove from oven. Enjoy with cheese melted on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

What size to cut vegetables for this recipe (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes):

- **Beets, celeriac, kohlrabi, rutabagas, sweet potatoes:** dice into medium chunks ( $\frac{1}{2}$  in)
- **Potatoes, parsnips, and carrots:** dice into medium chunks ( $\frac{1}{2}$  in) or slice finely (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in thick)
- **Eggplant and turnips:** dice about the size of a 6-sided die ( $\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in)
- **Zucchini:** slice about  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick
- **Leeks:** slice about  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick
- **Cabbage, fennel, onions, peppers, shallots:** dice large ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in). For cabbage, onions, and shallots, their layers can be left together or pulled apart, either way will be fine.
- **Broccoli and cauliflower:** cut florets (flower clusters) into 1-2 in diameter pieces, slice stalks  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in thick
- **Brussels sprouts:** halve small ones, cut larger ones into the size of half a small one
- **Green beans and cherry tomatoes:** leave whole
- **Tomatoes:** slice with a thick-cut
- **Garlic and button mushrooms:** Dice any size between large ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in) and small ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- **Mushrooms (portobello):** Dice any size between large ( $\frac{3}{4}$  in) and small ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in), or sliver finely-thinly (up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in thick)
- **Asparagus:** leave spears whole or cut in half
- **Okra:** leave whole or slice 1-in thick

## Protein

Did you know that many plants contain significant amounts of protein? In fact, it's possible to meet all your daily protein needs just by eating a couple servings of rice and beans. Any grain (like rice, wheat, and corn) matched with any legume (like beans, lentils, and peanuts) will combine to form a "complete protein" (check out the *Glossary* for more about what this term means). What's more, many of these foods are extremely easy to prepare, are very filling, and go with a large variety of meals. See below for basic recipes.

### Sources of Protein

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beans</li><li>• Chickpeas</li><li>• Lentils</li><li>• Oats</li><li>• Rice</li><li>• Split Peas</li><li>• Sunflower Seeds</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Kale</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Potatoes</li><li>• Pumpkin Seeds</li></ul>
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"Pulses" are what the dried seeds of legumes are called, including beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas. When cooking pulses, use unsalted water; salt toughens pulses during cooking. Also, add any acidic ingredients like tomatoes late in the cooking process; they slow down cooking.

Recipes:

*Quick-and-Easy Rice in Oil*

Goes great alongside a main course

3-4 servings as side dish

Cooking time: 40-50 min

Hands-on time: 5-10 min

1. Pour 1 Tbsp or so of cooking oil into your pot. Turn on low heat.
2. When oil is shiny (moves around freely in bottom of pot), add one cup rice. Stir until rice is evenly and lightly coated in oil.
3. Add 2 cups water. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat, then immediately turn heat to low. Let simmer for 30 minutes, covered.
  - a. Optional: add 1 Tbsp preferred dried seasoning like black pepper right after turning down heat, and/or add ½-cup chopped red onion (any size pieces up to 1.5-in diameter) when rice has 10 minutes left.
4. Check on rice. Tilt pot to check if all the water has cooked off yet; wait until no water appears at the bottom when you tilt the pot, or only a very small amount. Check again every 3-5 minutes.
5. When ready, remove from heat. Spoon them over salads or into wraps, or eat as a side dish with salt & pepper and/or melted butter or cheese on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

To prepare a larger amount of rice, use the following ratio: for every 1 cup rice, use 1 Tbsp oil, 2 cups water, 1 Tbsp seasoning, and ½-cup onion (if not using onion, the other ratios stay the same). Remember that rice absorbs water and will double in size when deciding how much to make.

Different types of rice cook differently, and you may need to slightly adjust the cooking time when you're cooking a new type of rice.

*Basic Dry Bean Prep* (for pinto, black and kidney beans)

If you've avoided cooking dry beans from scratch because it seems like it would take too long, think again! The amount of hands-on time is just minutes.

3-4 servings as side dish or in salads

Cooking time: 30-40 min

Hands-on time: 10 min

Equipment needed: colander

Soak your beans:

1. Add one cup dry beans to a large pot or bowl. Fill with at least 5 cups water. Toss any that float to the top.
2. Leave to soak for 4-8 hours or overnight, uncovered. The beans will triple in size and need the extra water to stay submerged.

After soaking:

3. Drain your beans into a colander. Sift under running water to rinse off gas-causing compounds, 20-30 seconds. Place beans in a pot. Add 3 cups of fresh water.
4. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat, then immediately turn heat to low. Let simmer for 20 minutes, covered. (Beans that have been soaking longer will take less time to cook; beans that have only been soaking for 4 hours will usually take at least 30 minutes.) Stir every 10 minutes to keep beans from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
5. Taste-test your beans--they should be soft enough to chew easily, but not totally mushy. Ideally, the skins won't have split, but sometimes that can't be avoided. Keep cooking until done, checking every 3-5 minutes.
6. Drain. Spoon them over salads or into wraps, or eat as a side dish with salt & pepper and melted butter or cheese on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

To prepare a larger amount of beans, use the following ratio: for every 1 cup beans, use 5 cups water to soak and 3 cups water to cook. Remember that beans absorb water and will triple in size when deciding how much to make.

Different types of beans cook differently, and you may need to slightly adjust the cooking time or soaking time when you're cooking a new type of bean.

### *Lentils, garlic and onions*

(Garlic and onions are optional, but go well with lentils.)

3-4 servings as side dish or in salads

Cooking time: 25-50 min depending on type of lentil (see below)

Hands-on time: 10 min

Equipment needed: colander

1. Lentils don't need to be soaked. Rinse one cup in a water-filled bowl or under running water in a strainer, sifting with your hands to wash off any dirt. Drain.
2. Chop up 1 cup red or yellow onion (any size pieces up to 1.5-in diameter) and mince 1 clove garlic.
3. Combine lentils, onion and garlic in a pot. Add 2.5 cups water for each cup of lentils. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat, then immediately turn heat to low. Let simmer, covered.
4. Depending on the type of lentil, check after 15, 20, or 30 minutes.
  - a. Red, orange, and yellow split lentils take the least amount of time, 15-25 minutes. These lentils will break up like split peas into a creamy mash when ready.
  - b. Black lentils take 20-25 minutes and remain firmer after cooking. They are ready when tender but not mushy.
  - c. The most common kinds of lentils, brown and green, take 30-40 minutes. When ready, they will be tender but not mushy.
5. Check again every 2-4 minutes until ready.
6. When ready, remove from heat. Spoon them over salads or into wraps, or eat as a side dish with salt & pepper and/or melted butter or cheese on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

To prepare a larger amount of lentils, use the following ratio: for every 1 cup lentils, use 2.5 cups water, 1 cup onion, and 1 clove garlic (if not using onion and/or garlic, the other ratios stay the same). Remember that lentils absorb water and will double in size when deciding how much to make.

## *Chickpeas*

2-3 servings as side dish or in salads

Cooking time: 1.5-2 hrs

Hands-on time: 10 min

Soak your chickpeas one of two ways:

- Overnight soak: Add one cup dry chickpeas to a pot or bowl. Fill with at least 4 cups cold water. The beans will more than double in size and need the extra water to stay submerged. Let stand for 8-24 hours, covered. Drain.
- Quick soak: Add one cup dry chickpeas and at least 4 cups water to a pot. Cover with lid and bring to boil on high heat, let boil 2 minutes, then remove pot from heat. Keep covered and let stand in hot water for one hour, then drain.

After soaking:

1. Add chickpeas to pot with 2 cups water.
2. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat, then let simmer on low heat for 1.5-2 hours, covered. When ready, chickpeas will be soft but not mushy.
3. Remove from heat. Spoon them over salads or into wraps or chilis, or eat as a side dish with salt & pepper and/or melted butter or cheese on top.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

To prepare a larger amount of chickpeas, use the following ratio: for every 1 cup chickpeas, use 4 cups water to soak and 2 cups water to cook. Remember that chickpeas absorb water and will more than double in size when deciding how much to make.

Hummus is made from chickpeas and goes great with raw carrots, cucumbers, celery, and sugar snap peas for an easy and protein-packed snack.

## *Split Peas*

Equipment needed: strainer

1. Measure out how many cups of split peas you want to use before rinsing.
2. Rinse your peas with water in a strainer, sifting with your hands--no need to soak!
3. Add peas to pot, add 2 cups water for every cup of peas.
4. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat, then immediately turn heat to low. Let simmer for 30 minutes, covered.
5. Add salt, butter and pepper then enjoy!

## Oatmeal

Oatmeal has a bad reputation for being bland, but that doesn't have to be the case: with a couple extra ingredients, oatmeal can become creamy and sweet or savory and salty.

Fruits and vegetables that go well with oatmeal:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Apples</li><li>● Apricots</li><li>● Bananas</li><li>● Berries</li><li>● Dates</li><li>● Figs</li><li>● Mangoes</li><li>● Nectarines</li><li>● Peaches</li><li>● Pears</li><li>● Plums</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Green onions/scallions</li><li>● Pumpkin, pureed</li><li>● Rhubarb</li><li>● Sweet potato, pureed</li><li>● Sunflower seeds</li></ul>
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Savory oatmeal idea:

Oatmeal with fried egg(s), cheddar cheese, and sliced green onion

Sweet oatmeal ideas:

Oatmeal with pureed pumpkin or sweet potato, milk, and sugar

Oatmeal with berries, apricot, peach or plum, and a tablespoon of sugar

Oatmeal with apple or pear and a helping of butter

Oatmeal with banana, milk and sugar

### Basic Quick-and-Easy Oatmeal

Serves 1-2 people

Recipe outline:

1. Add 1 cup rolled oats, 2 cups water, and ¼ teaspoon salt to a small pot. More water will make it soupier, while less will make it thick and creamy.
2. Cover with lid and bring to a boil over medium heat, then immediately turn the heat to low.
3. Cook for 5 minutes or until the oats are soft and tender and most of the water has evaporated.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 2-4 days.



## Omelets

Vegetables that are good in omelets include any onion as well as zucchini, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, peppers, and tender greens like spinach, bok choy, and young radish greens. All of these vegetables cook about as fast as your eggs, so you can just throw them in fresh.

Leftovers of broccoli, cauliflower, potato and diced winter squash can all be used too--just don't use them raw so they won't be undercooked in your omelet.

Vegetables:

- Bok choy, white stalk thinly sliced ( $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  in) and green leaf torn up
- Green onion, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in) or small dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Mushrooms, finely or thinly sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Onion (any kind), finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in) or small dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Peppers (sweet or hot), finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in) or small dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Radish greens (young), torn up
- Shallots, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in) or small dice ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in)
- Spinach, either torn up or left whole
- Tomatoes (cherry), halved
- Zucchini, finely sliced (up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  in) or grated
- Leftovers of broccoli, cauliflower, potato, or winter squash (perhaps from steaming or roasting)

Equipment needed: skillet/frying pan (lid optional)

Cooking Time: 20-25 minutes

Recipe outline:

1. Prepare your veggies.
2. Grease the pan and saute veggies lightly for 5-7 minutes on medium-low heat (see *Sauteing*).
3. Crack your eggs into a bowl and break up the yolks with a fork (use at least about as much egg as vegetable, if not more if preferred). Mix some shredded cheese into the bowl and then pour your mixture over your veggies. Mix it all up.
4. Keep on medium-low heat and wait until the egg at the bottom has solidified, about 2-3 minutes, then flip. Wait another 2-3 minutes, then flip again.
5. When ready, remove from heat. Enjoy with salt and pepper.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

## Wraps

Wraps can be made with most anything you have on hand and are a great option for leftovers.

Vegetable ideas for wraps:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beans</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Lettuce</li><li>• Mushrooms</li><li>• Onions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peppers</li><li>• Potatoes</li><li>• Rice</li><li>• Shallots</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sweet Potatoes</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Winter Squash</li><li>• Zucchini</li></ul>
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Wrap combo ideas:

- Sausage, potato, corn, and onion
- Rice and beans, onion, olives, mushrooms, and cheddar
- Rice, sweet potato/winter squash, zucchini and onion
- Eggs, red onion, tomato, spicy peppers, and shredded lettuce
- Chicken, tomato, and lettuce
- Use large lettuce or cabbage leaves in place of tortillas

### Basic Wrap Template

- Cook up any sausage, other meat, or eggs you want in your wrap.
- Steam or roast any potatoes, sweet potatoes, or winter squash (see *Steaming* and *Roasting*).
- Prepare any rice and dry beans (see *Protein*).
- Chop up your vegetables. Keep them in separate bowls/plates if cooking for a group.
  - Optional: saute your vegetables, like peppers, onions, shallots, and zucchini (see *Sauteing*).
- Gather other ingredients, like shredded cheese, sour cream, or leftovers from another meal, like potatoes or squash.
- Optional: warm the tortillas in the oven.
- Roll it all up in your tortilla and enjoy!

Making the wraps can be turned into a fun activity for kids. Prepare all the individual ingredients, then call them over so they can put together whatever they want.

## Casseroles

Casseroles can be made with a lot of different combinations of ingredients, making them convenient for whatever you have on hand. For example, you can substitute broccoli, cauliflower, peas or corn for some or all of the green beans in a green bean casserole. Spinach takes up hardly any space, so it can easily be added to many casserole recipes without making them overflow the baking dish. Zucchini's flavor is easily overwhelmed, so it too can be added into many different recipes.

If you or your family don't like the flavor of hardy greens (collards, chard, and kale) but you've got some to use up, casseroles are a great option. The greens' flavor is overpowered by the other flavors so you don't taste it at all.

Casseroles usually consist of meat, various chopped vegetables, a starch (such as rice, potato or pasta), a sauce, and often a crunchy or cheesy topping. Using our casserole template, you can mix-and-match whatever ingredients, including vegetables, you have on hand to put together a filling and tasty meal.

Casseroles are complemented well with a side of separately prepared vegetables - steamed, boiled, sauteed, roasted, or raw.

### Good Vegetables for Casseroles

Raw, frozen, canned, or precooked	Only canned or precooked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beet greens</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Carrots</li><li>• Carrot greens</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Chard</li><li>• Collards</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Green Beans</li><li>• Kale</li><li>• Mushrooms</li><li>• Okra</li><li>• Onions</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Peppers (sweet or spicy)</li><li>• Radish greens</li><li>• Shallots</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Turnip greens</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brussels Sprouts</li><li>• Eggplant</li><li>• Leeks</li><li>• Potatoes</li><li>• Spaghetti Squash</li><li>• Sweet Potatoes</li></ul>

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zucchini</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|

## Basic Casserole Template

(Makes an 8x8-inch pan of casserole)

Equipment needed: casserole/baking dish with lid

Prep time: 15 minutes (more if preparing uncooked meat or starches beforehand)

### Ingredients:

- 2-3 cups cooked noodles, rice, or potatoes, or cubed bread
- ½-1 cup cooked shredded, ground, or cubed meat (chicken, fish, beef, meatballs, etc)
- 1½ cup vegetables (see list above)
- ½-1 cup grated cheese
- ½-1 cup sauce (white sauce, creamy or “cream of” soups, gravy, salad dressing, etc)
- Optional: ¼ cup crumbs for sprinkling (bread crumbs, crushed-up crackers, chips, or croutons)
- Optional: 2-3 tsp seasoning (black pepper, Italian seasoning, etc)

### Instructions:

1. Gather all ingredients.
2. Cook any uncooked noodles, rice or potatoes. (For rice, see *Protein*. For potatoes, see *Boiling* or *Steaming*.)
3. Brown any uncooked meat in 1-2 Tbsps oil over medium heat.
4. Preheat the oven to 400°.
5. Chop up any fresh vegetables (chop up as you would if roasting--see *Roasting*; for greens, tear up as you would if steaming--see *Steaming*; for peas and corn, leave whole)
6. Combine all ingredients besides cheese and crumbs in your casserole pan and mix them up. Sprinkle the cheese and crumbs on top.
  - a. Alternative: mix some or all of the cheese in with the other ingredients.
7. Put a lid on the pan if you want to trap moisture inside, or leave the lid off if you want the top to crisp or for more of the moisture to evaporate (you may want this if the casserole looks soupy).
8. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the edges are browning and possibly bubbling just a bit.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 3-5 days.

### Ideas for classic casseroles to add vegetables into:

- Green bean casserole
- Tuna casserole
- Shepherd's Pie
- Baked Ziti

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## Chilis

Chilis are packed with protein and flavor, and are convenient to cook large amounts of at once and eat over time.

Chilis pretty much all use corn, garlic, onions, peppers, and tomatoes. They also use beans, which may be substituted for with lentils or chickpeas.

If you or your family don't like the flavor of hardy greens (collards, chard, and kale) but you've got some to use up, chilis are a great option. The greens' flavor is overpowered by the other flavors so you don't taste it at all.

Vegetables for Chili

Essentials	Chopped Veggies	Greens	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beans</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Garlic</li><li>• Onions</li><li>• Peppers</li><li>• Tomatoes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Carrots</li><li>• Cauliflower</li><li>• Celery</li><li>• Eggplant</li><li>• Ginger</li><li>• Green Beans</li><li>• Okra</li><li>• Parsnips</li><li>• Peas (shelled)</li><li>• Potatoes</li><li>• Shallots</li><li>• Squash (winter)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beet Greens</li><li>• Carrot Greens</li><li>• Chard</li><li>• Collards</li><li>• Kale</li><li>• Radish Greens</li><li>• Spinach</li><li>• Turnip Greens</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chickpeas</li><li>• Lentils</li></ul>

## Simple Chili Template

Equipment needed: large pot (or smaller pot with ½ the ingredients)

Prep Time: 30 min

Cooking Time: 30 min

Makes 8 servings

Base ingredients:

- 1 lb ground meat (beef, turkey, venison or other)
- 3 cups (2 16-oz cans) cooked kidney beans, black beans, pinto beans, and/or chickpeas
- 1 28-oz can of diced tomatoes or 3½ cups fresh tomatoes
- 1 large onion (3-4 in diameter)
- 1-2 sweet peppers

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- 1 cup corn (fresh or frozen)
- 2-3 cloves garlic
- 2 tsps salt, plus more to taste
- 3 cups chicken, vegetable, or beef broth (replaces 3 cups water)

Add More Vegetables

- 1-2 other vegetables (see list of Chopped Veggies above)
- Up to 1 bunch of hardy greens or 2 cups other greens (see list of Greens above)

Instructions (read to the end before starting to cook):

1. Prepare all vegetables (see list below for what size to chop). Set them aside.
2. Brown the meat in 1-2 Tbsps oil over medium heat.
3. Add onions and peppers, sprinkle with salt, and continue sauteing for 5 min on medium heat, stirring occasionally. Add more oil if needed.
4. Add any carrots, parsnips, potatoes, squash, and kale/collard stalks. Add 3-5 cups water (or 3 cups broth + 0-2 cups water), or however much you need to completely submerge what's in the pot. Cover with lid and bring to a boil on high heat.
5. Stir in any broccoli, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, green beans, okra, hardy greens, and tender greens. Turn heat to low and let simmer for 20 min, covered.
6. Stir in garlic, corn, tomatoes, beans, salt, and any peas and ginger and simmer on low heat for 5-10 more minutes, covered.
7. Give chili a taste-test. If any ingredient seems slightly underdone, give it more time, checking every 2-3 minutes. When ready, remove from heat and enjoy topped with shredded cheese.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and eaten within 5-7 days. Chili makes for very tasty leftovers.

\*What size to cut vegetables for this recipe (see the *Glossary* for descriptions of chopping words and sizes):

**Carrots, celery, eggplant, okra, onions, parsnips, peppers, potatoes, shallots, squash and tomatoes:** dice them medium ( $\frac{1}{2}$ -in) if you would like them to break down, dice them large ( $\frac{3}{4}$ -in) if you would like them to somewhat hold their shape.

**Broccoli and cauliflower:** cut florets (flower clusters) into 1-2 in diameter pieces, slice stalks  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in thick

**Garlic and ginger:** mince

**Green bean:** cut into 1-inch-long pieces

**Peas and corn:** leave whole

**Tender greens (beet greens, carrot greens, radish greens, spinach, turnip greens):** tear up leaves into pieces no larger than a playing card. For beet greens, cut up stalks into inch-long pieces.

**Hardy greens (chard, collards, kale):** tear up leaves into pieces no larger than a playing card. The stalks are good to use too--cut them into inch-long pieces (even kale and collard stalks will soften in the chili).

## Soups

If you have canned soups, you can add extra vegetables to them! Just cook the vegetables first, since the soups will cook way faster than raw vegetables. Boiled, steamed, and sauteed vegetables work well added to a canned soup. See *Boiling, Steaming, and Sauteing* to see how to prepare the following vegetables before adding them to a soup:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Beet greens</li><li>● Broccoli</li><li>● Carrots</li><li>● Carrot greens</li><li>● Celery</li><li>● Cauliflower</li><li>● Collards</li><li>● Corn</li><li>● Chard</li><li>● Green beans</li><li>● Green onion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Mushrooms</li><li>● Okra</li><li>● Onions (yellow or sweet)</li><li>● Parsnips</li><li>● Peas</li><li>● Potatoes</li><li>● Radish greens</li><li>● Shallots</li><li>● Turnips greens</li><li>● Zucchini</li></ul>
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You can also toss any leftover rice, lentils or beans into canned soups for some extra protein.

### *Cooking Soups from Scratch: Ideas*

It's impossible to make a template for soups--there are just so many kinds out there. We've highlighted a handful of easy-to-make and tasty soups that use a variety of vegetables. Specific instructions can be found in common cookbooks and online.

Leftovers should be refrigerated in a sealed container and generally be eaten within 5-7 days.

#### **Chicken noodle**

Really, the only irreplaceable ingredients are the chicken and pasta. Aside from that, you can mix and match any of the ingredients and end up with a delicious soup. Even broth can be substituted with half a bunch of celery--give it a try!

Options - chicken, pasta, broth, carrots, celery, potatoes, onions, white beans (great northern, small navy, or cannellini), cauliflower, green onions, leeks, corn, green beans, mushrooms, cabbage, tiny bit of ginger

#### **French peasant**

Pick a meat or two, which beans to use, and whatever veggies you want, and you've got French Peasant Soup! Just make sure to use plenty of cabbage no matter what.



Options - bacon, ham, chicken, white beans (great northern, small navy, or cannellini) or red/orange/yellow split lentils, lots of cabbage, carrots, onions, celery, mushrooms, garlic, broth, ground pepper, herbs

### **Brown windsor**

If you have all 4 of these ingredients, you can make this soup!

Ingredients: beef, carrots, leeks, parsnips

### **Minestrone**

To have a complete minestrone, the more of these ingredients you have the better. But if you have over half of them on hand, give it a try! Ingredients are listed roughly in order from most important to the soup to least important.

Options - kidney beans, tomatoes, pasta, broth, onion, carrot, celery, green beans, parmesan cheese, garlic, salt, pepper, olive oil, oregano, basil, chicken, sausage

### **Sausage, kale, and potato**

Ingredients: sausage (seasoned or unseasoned), kale, potato, onion, diced tomatoes, garlic, broth, salt, olive oil, thyme

### **Corn soup**

Check out <https://goodandcheap.website/soup/corn-soup/steps> for this recipe.

Ingredients: corn, potato, onion, celery, bell pepper, butter, garlic, hot pepper (optional), cornmeal or flour, broth, salt and pepper

### **Spicy lentil soup**

If you like the taste of beets and lentils, this one's for you.

Ingredients: lentils, onions, potatoes, beets, celery, kale/collards and/or tender greens, mushroom, rice (optional), garlic, ginger, pepper, salt, milk/half&half, curry powder (optional)

# Glossary

**Airtight:** Sealed containers and zip-top bags are airtight when sealed properly and undamaged (no cracks or holes). When instructions call for an “airtight container”, that means it’s especially important to seal your container/bag completely.

**Bad Spot:** See *Judging Bad Spots*.

**Bite-size:** About 1-2 inches in diameter.

**Boil:** A pot is boiling when large bubbles come from the bottom of the pot and quickly rise to the surface. There is constant steam.

**Rolling Boil:** When bubbles erupt continuously and cannot be stopped by stirring or adding ingredients. There are clouds of steam, and you can hear the boil. A rolling boil is used for cooking pasta and blanching vegetables.

**Chop:** For this guide, “chopped” just means ‘cut up in some way’ (like diced or sliced). It either refers to a list that includes multiple ways of cutting up vegetables, or indicates that you can cut it up however you like (like under *Salads* or in many cases with onions or peppers).

**Complete Protein** (also called whole protein): A source of protein that has enough of all nine essential amino acids, which are compounds our bodies need but can’t make, so we must get them from food.

**Dice:** To dice is to cut into cubes. When the guide says “dice” without other clarification, that means cubes the size of a 6-sided-die ( $\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in cubes). Don’t worry about getting every piece exactly the *shape* of a cube. (With onions, dice sizes have been adjusted to make up for how the layers will separate. With peppers, dice sizes have been adjusted to make up for how the pieces will be flat, not cubes.)

**Small:**  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in cubes

**Medium:**  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in cubes

**Large:**  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in cubes

**Good Source:** If a produce item is a “good source” of a nutrient, that means it has at least 10% of the daily value of the nutrient per serving.

**Heat:** For definitions of “low heat”, “high heat”, etc, see Appendix F.

**High In:** If a produce item is “high in” a nutrient, that means it has at least 20% of the daily value of the nutrient per serving.

**Mince:** To mince is to chop very finely, with pieces no larger than  $\frac{1}{8}$ -in cubes. For garlic, any time a recipe calls for mincing it, a garlic press may be used instead.

**Rinse:** Rinse with any drinkable water while scrubbing with your hand for 5-15 seconds.

**Rinse Thoroughly:** Rinse with any drinkable water while scrubbing with either your hand or a scrub brush for 15-30 seconds.

**Rolling Boil:** See **Boil** above.

**Room Temperature:** 65-75°F

**Root Vegetables:** This includes beets, carrots, celeriac, parsnips, radishes, rutabaga, and turnips.

**Sealed Container:** a container like a tupperware, a pyrex, or a glass jar with an airtight lid. Also a zip-top bag if sealed properly and it has no holes.

**Shred:** Leaves are sometimes available pre-shredded. To shred whole leaves, roll up or fold up your leaf and slice thinly or thickly, then cut slices in halves or thirds.

**Simmer:** To cook just below the boiling point. A pot is simmering when the water's bubbling a little bit, but not all over and only tiny bubbles about  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$  in diameter. There are wisps of steam instead of constant steam. A vigorous simmer may have slightly larger bubbles or bubbles all over.

**Slice:** To slice is to cut into flat discs.

**Finely:** no thicker than  $\frac{1}{8}$ -in

**Thinly:**  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  in thick

**Thickly:**  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in thick

**Sliver:** To sliver is like slicing, but the pieces are long instead of discs.

**Finely:** no thicker than  $\frac{1}{8}$ -in

**Thinly:**  $\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$  in thick

**Thickly:**  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$  in thick

**Steamer basket:** A perforated basket used to hold vegetables and other foods over boiling water so that they can be cooked by the steam. Also called a "steamer insert". Looks a lot like a colander, but plastic colanders should never be used as steamer baskets (unless specifically advertised as safe for steaming).

**Tear Up or Torn Up:** Pieces should be no larger than a playing card, and no smaller than half that size.

**Thick-cut:** About 1 inch wide

**Trace Amount:** If a produce item has a "trace" amount of a nutrient, that means it has a small amount of the nutrient, but not enough to consider the produce item a "good source" of that nutrient.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Cooking Asparagus

For boiling:

- Leave asparagus whole, but trim off the bottom inch.
- Use a pan instead of a pot. Fill it up with 1 inch of water.
- Bring the water to a simmer, then add 1 tsp salt, then add the asparagus loosely around the pan (make sure it's all underwater).
- Simmer for 3-5 minutes or until bright green and tender, but not mushy. Drain and serve immediately with butter or shredded cheese melted on top.

For steaming, you want to get the tougher bottom parts to cook faster than the tender top parts so they'll be ready at the same time. You have three options:

- Microwave like normal (see *Steaming*), but cut the tougher parts into larger pieces than the tender parts (about twice as big). The bigger the piece, the more microwaves will hit it, cooking it faster.
- Use a tall pot with a deep steamer basket so you can steam your asparagus upright. The bottom parts will get more steam and cook faster. Steam for about 10 minutes.
- If you don't have a tall pot and deep steamer basket, cut the asparagus into tougher and tenderer pieces of equal size. Layer them with other vegetables so the tougher parts are further down and the tenderer parts are toward the top.

## Appendix B: Washing Berries for Longer Fridge Storage

1. Sort first. Toss any moldy ones and eat the softest good ones right away so they don't spoil the whole container.
2. Wash the rest in a bath of white vinegar and water (3x as much water as vinegar) for 30 seconds--this will kill microorganisms that would cause the berries to spoil at their normal rate.
3. Let completely dry before storing--spread them out on a plate or baking sheet so they get some air circulation, about 20-30 minutes.
4. Put a dry paper towel in the bottom of the berry container (any container will do) and gently place the berries into that container.
5. Store in the fridge with the lid open (unless the container has air holes). Keep the container in a green bag if possible. Keep away from ethylene-sensitive produce (see *Ethylene*).
6. Your berries will keep for twice as long!

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## Appendix C: Massaging Kale

Massaging kale involves cutting up the leaves and then physically rubbing them together for a few minutes, ideally with some oil and salt. The salt will assist your rubbing in breaking the cell walls that we can't digest. Massaging the kale will turn it from tough to soft--perfect for a variety of salads!

## Appendix D: Roasting pumpkin seeds

Pumpkin seeds taste great roasted with some salt and oil. Roast at 250°F for 50-60 min, shell and all.

For each cup of pumpkin seeds, use 1-1½ tsp salt and 1-1½ Tbsp oil.

## Appendix E: Benefits of Greens

All leaves - lettuce, kale, spinach, cabbage, etc - are a good source of omega-3 essential fatty acids, a nutrient that just about every person in the U.S. doesn't get enough of. Omega-3's serve many important roles in our bodies, such as reducing inflammation and helping with brain development and function. What's more, our bodies can't produce them, so we must get them from our food.

If you would like to eat more greens but don't enjoy them so much, try adding them to dishes with strong flavors. For example, add kale or collards to a chili or casserole, or add lettuce or spinach to wraps. Find what works for you!

## Appendix F: Heat

Stove dials have a few different appearances, so describing “low heat” or “high heat” with numbers doesn’t always translate perfectly. When a recipe calls for a specific amount of heat with a stove burner, turn your stove dial to somewhere in the ranges highlighted below in red. (If you’re unsure where in the range would be best, turn the dial to the middle of the range. As you cook more and more, you’ll get a better sense of where in the range is best. It just takes practice.)

All recipes involving pots and pans assume that the pots and pans are being placed on burners roughly the size of the bottom of the pot/pan. When burners smaller than the bottom of the pot/pan are used, cooking time may be slightly longer.

**Low heat**



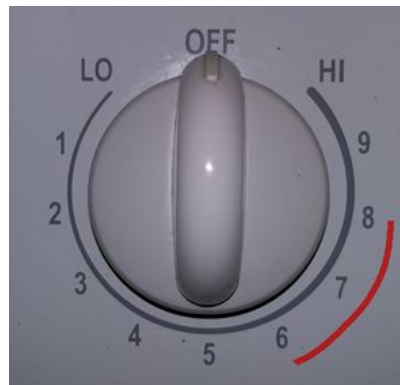
**Medium-low heat**



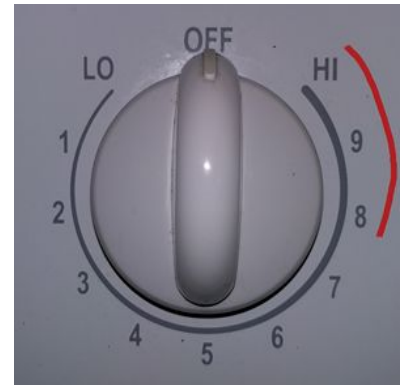
**Medium heat**



**Medium-high heat**



**High heat**



## Appendix G: Sources of Fiber

For fiber, nothing beats foods that come from plants. If you have a lot of plants in your diet, fiber shouldn't be something you have to worry about, but if you don't eat many plants and are looking to get more fiber in your diet, look no further than the following list!

With any fruit or vegetable, make sure to eat the skin as often as you can (whenever appropriate--see *Fruits and Vegetables*). That's where most of the insoluble fiber is located. Both insoluble and soluble fiber are important.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Apples, with skin</li><li>● Apricot</li><li>● Bananas</li><li>● Blackberries</li><li>● Blueberries</li><li>● Mango</li><li>● Oranges</li><li>● Pears, with skin</li><li>● Raspberries</li><li>● Strawberries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Beets</li><li>● Broccoli</li><li>● Carrots</li><li>● Corn</li><li>● Garlic</li><li>● Green Beans</li><li>● Parsnips</li><li>● Peas</li><li>● Potato</li><li>● Sweet Potato</li><li>● Turnip Greens</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Black beans</li><li>● Baked beans</li><li>● Refried beans</li><li>● Lentils</li><li>● Oats</li><li>● Pumpkin Seeds</li><li>● Rice (brown)</li><li>● Split peas</li></ul>	