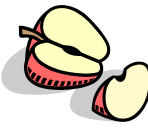









# Calendar of best buys in Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Eat well for health and pleasure by including plenty of fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks. Choose fresh produce in season for highest quality, best flavor and lowest prices. This calendar of best buys shows when fresh fruits and vegetables from all over the country are most available.

<p><b>January</b></p> <p>Apples Grapefruit Lemons Limes Oranges</p> <p>Parsnips Rutabagas Tangerines Turnips</p> 	<p><b>July</b></p> <p>Apricots Beans Blueberries Broccoli Cherries Corn</p> <p>Cucumbers Grapes Green beans Melons Nectarines Peaches</p> <p>Pears Plums Radishes Strawberries Summer squash Tomatoes</p> 
<p><b>February</b></p> <p>Apples Broccoli Grapefruit Oranges Parsnips</p> <p>Peas Rutabagas Tangerines Turnips</p> 	<p><b>August</b></p> <p>Blueberries Broccoli Corn Eggplant</p> <p>Grapes Melons Nectarines Okra</p> <p>Peaches Pears Summer squash Tomatoes</p>
<p><b>March</b></p> <p>Apples Broccoli Grapefruit Oranges</p> <p>Parsnips Spinach Tangerines</p> 	<p><b>September</b></p> <p>Apples Blueberries Broccoli Cauliflower Eggplant</p> <p>Grapes Green pepper Melons Okra Peaches</p> <p>Pears Tomatoes Winter squash</p> 
<p><b>April</b></p> <p>Artichokes Asparagus Broccoli Grapefruit Oranges</p> <p>Pineapple Rhubarb Spinach Strawberries</p> 	<p><b>October</b></p> <p>Apples Beets Broccoli Brussels sprouts Cauliflower</p> <p>Cranberries Grapes Pears Pumpkins Sweet potatoes</p> <p>Turnips Rutabagas Winter squash</p>
<p><b>May</b></p> <p>Artichokes Blueberries Grapefruit Melons Oranges Pineapple</p> <p>Radishes Rhubarb Spinach Strawberries Tomatoes</p> 	<p><b>November</b></p> <p>Apples Broccoli Cauliflower Cranberries Grapefruit</p> <p>Lemons Limes Pears Pumpkins Rutabagas</p> <p>Sweet potatoes Tangerines Turnips Winter squash</p> 
<p><b>June</b></p> <p>Apricots Beans Blueberries Cherries Corn</p> <p>Grapes Lettuce Melons Nectarines Oranges</p> <p>Peaches Plums Radishes Strawberries Tomatoes</p>	<p><b>December</b></p> <p>Apples Cranberries Grapefruit Grapes Lemons</p> <p>Limes Oranges Pears Rutabagas Sweet potatoes</p> <p>Tangerines Turnips Winter squash</p>

## Available in good quality and quantity all year

Avocados	Carrots	Lettuce (try different varieties)
Bananas	Celery	Mushrooms
Cabbage	Greens (different varieties available each season)	

Adapted from: United States Department of Agriculture Home and Garden Bulletin Numbers 258 and 260.

# Fresh Produce Primer

## Buying

- Buy only the amount you are sure to eat in a few days, unless buying in bulk to preserve by canning or freezing.
- Look for signs of freshness such as bright color, firmness, plumpness, glossy skins. Avoid produce that is wilted, bruised, or moldy, or that shows significant insect damage. Check berry containers carefully for juice stains, mold or other signs of decay.
- Most produce does not ripen after it is picked. Bananas and pears are the most notable exceptions. Some, like tomatoes, peaches, plums, will get softer and juicier if picked when mature and left on the counter for a few days.
- Citrus fruits should be heavy for their size and smooth-skinned.
- A pleasant aroma characteristic of the fruit is a guide to ripeness for melons, peaches and pineapples.
- Sometimes size matters. Large summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, and eggplant have big seeds, tend to be tough and bitter.

## Green Bean Potato Salad

- 1 pound (3 ½ cups) fresh green beans
- 2 pounds (2 ½ cups) red potatoes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 cup diced red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped red onion



Steam green beans for 5 to 8 minutes. Dice potatoes into bite-size pieces. Cook in boiling water until tender.

Prepare dressing by mixing dill, vinegar, oil, and mustard. Add onion and bell pepper to cooled beans and potatoes; top with dressing and mix.

*Makes 8 servings. Nutrition information per serving: 160 Calories, 4g protein, 26g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 5g fat, 35mg sodium, 1000 IU Vitamin A, 65mg vitamin C.*

## Storing

- Keep most fresh produce in the refrigerator. Tomatoes, potatoes, onion, hard-shelled winter squash, sweet potatoes and avocados, though, keep best at room temperature.
- Store fruits and vegetables in separate bins in the refrigerator. Fruits tend to give off ethylene gas that makes vegetables start to decay faster.
- Look over produce before storing to be sure it is free of decay or damage. If the damage is small, trim it away and use the item right away. If the item is moldy or heavily damaged, throw it away.
- Wash produce just before eating by rinsing under running water. Do not use soaps, detergent or bleach solutions. Scrub tougher-skinned produce like melons, potatoes, carrots and citrus fruit with a vegetable brush under running water.

## Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers

- 4 red or green bell peppers
- 2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper



Preheat oven to 425°F. Lightly oil a large shallow baking pan.

Cut peppers in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Arrange peppers cut side up in baking pan and lightly oil cut edges. In a bowl, toss tomatoes, onion, basil, garlic, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Spoon equal portions of mixture into peppers and roast in upper third of oven until peppers are tender, about 20 minutes.

*Makes 8 servings. Nutrition information per serving: 40 Calories, 2g protein, 7g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 2g fat, 80mg sodium, 72mg vitamin C, 4000 IU Vitamin A.*