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# Tips for Finding the Best Produce

## A Fine Line

Have you ever bought a delicious-looking container of strawberries only to find mold on them the next day? Do you have trouble identifying which pineapples or watermelons are ripe and ready for eating? Picking the best produce is harder than it looks, and the last thing you want to do is throw your purchase in the trash because it's either rotten or underripe.

If you need a little cheat sheet on choosing quality produce for your kitchen, consider a few of these tried-and-true tips:

## Shop Locally

Commercial produce is harvested when it is ripe and fresh, but then it often has to travel hundreds of miles to get to the store. The transport process can result in broken skin, bruises, or overripe products. By the time it gets to your house, produce might end up rotting within a few days. In contrast, shopping at local farmers' markets will ensure you get the top selection of in-season fruits and vegetables from people you trust.

Organic in-season produce has better flavor and fewer preservatives, which means you're getting the most nutrients possible. For example, in the grocery store, fruits like apples are often treated with methylcyclopropene, a gas that slows ripening and extends shelf life by three to six months. However, purchasing in-season fruits and vegetables at your local farmers' market can help you incorporate healthy, natural produce into your diet without as much worry about preservatives.

## Buy Less

When you see fruits or vegetables on sale, you might be tempted to buy several packages to save yourself time and money later. However, while shopping in bulk is great for certain canned items that don't rapidly spoil, fresh produce is different. Nothing is more annoying than having delicious, ripe produce that goes bad seemingly overnight.

Fruits and vegetables often only last for a week after their purchase dates. Unless you plan to flash-freeze the extras immediately, only buy what you know your family will eat. Some experts suggest going to the store twice per week to buy fresh produce in smaller quantities, rather than buying everything at the beginning of the week and hoping it lasts.<sup>2</sup>

## Look for Key Identifiers

The two qualities to look for when you're shopping are firmness and color. The best produce will be vibrant in color and somewhat firm to the touch when ripe. Don't be afraid to compare your options by holding them up to the light or squeezing them gently.

Unfortunately, not all fruits and vegetables can be selected solely based on how they look or feel, so use these suggestions to gauge the freshness of other produce:

**Pineapples:** When they're ripe, pineapples will be heavier than they look, and you'll be able to smell a sweet aroma coming off of them. When you're in the supermarket, turn them upside-down to smell the bottom. If it's fragrant, you've found a fresh one.

**Leafy Greens:** Avoid kale, lettuce, or cabbage that is wilting and brown. Fresh greens will be crisp and have minimal tears.

**Melons:** Similar to pineapples, melons will feel heavier than they appear, which indicates juiciness. Additionally, don't worry if the outside has some minor scarring; this is not indicative of internal damage.

Sometimes the process of choosing fruits and vegetables requires a little trial and error. As you get more comfortable selecting produce, the freshest and ripest foods will stand out almost automatically. Remember, practice makes perfect.

## Start Your Own Garden

Taking up gardening allows you to save money and control exactly what goes into your recipes. Because you're growing your own produce, you'll ensure that only the best foods get incorporated into your family's diet.

If you have a yard, it's easy to set aside some space for planting your garden. Cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are great for beginners who want to test out their green thumbs. If you're living in a condo or apartment, it might be slightly more complicated. Try putting a large pot on the deck to grow small peppers or tomatoes. If you only have space indoors, you can plant herbs inside your home near a window.

## Conclusion: Freshen Up Your Diet

Ultimately, what matters most when selecting produce is your family's health. Focus on making decisions that will support your wellness, whether that means choosing different fruits and vegetables based on the season or planting your own garden and starting everything from scratch.

Nutrition is a cornerstone of your wellbeing, and it is important to be educated and informed on the best practices that will support your body and mind. By becoming a [Certified Nutritional Consultant](#), you can gain a deeper understanding of which foods are right for you and your family and learn nutrition-based protocols that can help you reach your optimum.

Our team at Trinity School of Natural Health would love to come alongside you on your journey toward holistic wellness. To learn more about becoming a Certified Nutritional Consultant, call 800-428-0408, option 2 to speak to an enrollment specialist.

REFERENCES

1. <https://agresearchmag.ars.usda.gov/2007/oct/apples>
2. <https://www.eatthis.com/how-to-buy-fruits-and-vegetables/>



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