

Choosing the Best Produce: Fruit

- ✚ **Apples:** Choose fruits that are deeply colored, firm, naturally shiny, and heavy for their size.
- ✚ **Apricots:** Choose fruits that are fragrant and slightly soft but not mushy.
- ✚ **Bananas:** Choose bright yellow bananas to eat right away or green bananas to ripen at home. Avoid fruits that are bruised or split.
- ✚ **Blackberries:** Look for color ranging from deep purple/black to deep blue/purple. They should be plump and firm to the touch, not wrinkled or dried out.
- ✚ **Blueberries:** Choose berries that are firm, dry, and blue (not red or green). Also check the bottom of the container to make sure there aren't any crushed or spoiled berries.
- ✚ **Cantaloupes:** Choose fruits that are fragrant and cream or golden in color (not green). Avoid fruits with soft spots, although the end opposite the stem should be slightly soft.
- ✚ **Cherries:** Choose berries that are plump, shiny, and darker in color. Cherries with intact stems have a longer shelf life.
- ✚ **Figs:** Choose soft, plump fruits with intact, bent stems. Minor bruises or tears are okay, but avoid buying dry, cracked figs.
- ✚ **Grapefruits:** Choose fruits that have smooth, thin skins and are heavy for their size. They should feel firm but slightly springy to the touch.
- ✚ **Grapes:** Choose fruits that are firm, plump, and heavy for their size. They should be firmly attached to the stems without wrinkles or brown spots.
- ✚ **Honeydew:** Choose melons that have a white or creamy color, and feel tacky, kind of like a basketball. Slight scarring around the stem can indicate sweetness, as can a strong scent in the same spot.
- ✚ **Kiwi Fruits:** Choose fruits that give slightly when pressed. Avoid fruits that are either rock hard or mushy.
- ✚ **Lemons and Limes:** Choose fruits that are fragrant and heavy for their size. Avoid fruits that are shriveled.
- ✚ **Mangoes:** Choose fruits that are slightly soft to the touch and fragrant near the stem end.
- ✚ **Oranges:** Choose fruits that are heavy for their size and have firm, smooth skins. For Mandarin oranges, make sure skins are firm, not shriveled.
- ✚ **Peaches:** Choose fragrant, deeply colored (not green) fruits that are firm but slightly soft to the touch.
- ✚ **Pears:** Choose fruits that are free of bruises and look for any that are getting soft just below the stem. Ripen them at room temperature; placing them in a paper bag speeds up the process.
- ✚ **Pineapples:** Choose fruits that smell sweet at the stem end, have fresh looking leaves, and are heavy for their size. Avoid fruits with soft spots or dry, brown leaves.
- ✚ **Plums:** Choose fruits that are deeply colored, shiny, and firm but not rock hard. A white or gray sheen is natural.
- ✚ **Pomegranates:** Choose fruits that are heavy for their size. Cracks are a good sign that the fruits are bursting with plump seeds; just make sure there isn't any mold in the cracks.
- ✚ **Raspberries:** Choose a brightly colored, plump berry. Avoid ones with dents or bruises.
- ✚ **Strawberries:** Choose berries that are fragrant, uniformly red, and shiny with fresh green tops. Also check the bottom of the container to make sure there aren't any crushed or spoiled berries.
- ✚ **Watermelons:** Choose fruits that are firm and heavy and sound hollow when thumped. A properly ripened watermelon should have a yellow spot on one side where it sat on the ground.





Choosing the Best Produce: Vegetables

- ✦ **Artichokes:** Choose globes that have tight leaves and feel heavy for their size. The leaves should squeak when pressed against each other.
- ✦ **Asparagus:** Choose firm, smooth, and brightly-colored stalks with compact tips. Avoid limp stalks. Choose stalks of equal thickness to ensure even cooking times.
- ✦ **Avocados:** Choose avocados that feel slightly soft to the touch. Firmer avocados may be ripened at home. Avoid rock hard avocados, as well as those with cracks or dents.
- ✦ **Beets:** Choose firm beets with fresh stems and slender taproots. Avoid beets with wilted leaves, scaly tops, or large, hairy taproots as they may be older.
- ✦ **Bok Choy:** For mature bok choy, look for dark green leaves and bright white stalks. Baby bok choy should be light green in color.
- ✦ **Broccoli:** Choose broccoli with firm stalks, tight florets, and crisp green leaves. Avoid yellowed or flowering florets.
- ✦ **Brussels Sprouts:** Choose firm, compact, bright green heads. Avoid sprouts with wilted or loose outer leaves.
- ✦ **Cabbages:** Choose firm, compact heads that feel heavy for their size. Check that the stems are also fresh and compact.
- ✦ **Carrots:** Choose firm, smooth carrots without rootlets. Avoid carrots that are slimy or too dry.
- ✦ **Cauliflower:** Choose heads with tightly packed, creamy white florets. Avoid yellowed, spotted, or flowering florets.
- ✦ **Celery:** Choose firm, unblemished stalks. The stalks and leaves should be green, not yellow.
- ✦ **Celery Root:** Choose firm, hard roots that feel heavy for their size. Any attached leaves should be fresh and green.
- ✦ **Corn:** Choose corn with bright green husks and moist but not slimy silk. Peel back the husk to ensure the kernels are plump and not dry.
- ✦ **Cucumbers:** Choose cucumbers that are uniformly green.
- ✦ **Eggplants:** Choose eggplants that have smooth, naturally shiny skin and feel heavy for their size. When gently pressed, flesh that gives slightly and bounces back indicates ripeness. Unripe flesh will not give, while overripe flesh will remain indented. Also, smaller eggplants tend to have fewer seeds and be less bitter.
- ✦ **Fennel:** Choose fennel with white, firm, unblemished bulbs as well as firm stems and fresh leaves.
- ✦ **Garlic:** Choose firm, plump heads. Avoid heads with soft spots or green sprouts.
- ✦ **Green Beans:** Choose slender beans that snap rather than bend. Avoid bulging or dried pods.
- ✦ **Kale:** Choose crisp, deeply-colored leaves. Avoid yellowed leaves. Smaller leaves tend to be more tender.
- ✦ **Leeks:** Choose firm leeks with tightly-rolled tops. Slender leeks tend to be younger and more tender, while larger ones with rounded bulbs tend to be older.
- ✦ **Lettuce, Spinach, and Other Leafy Greens:** Choose greens with fresh, crisp leaves. Avoid any that are wilted or slimy.
- ✦ **Onions and Shallots:** Choose dry, firm bulbs that feel heavy for their size. Avoid any with soft spots or green sprouts.
- ✦ **Parsnips:** Choose firm, ivory-colored roots. Large roots may be fibrous, so choose small and medium ones for better texture and flavor.
- ✦ **Peas:** Choose crisp, green pods. Avoid bulging, dried, yellow, or white pods.
- ✦ **Peppers:** Choose firm, naturally shiny peppers that feel heavy for their size.





- ✦ **Potatoes:** Choose firm, smooth potatoes. Avoid those with bruises, green spots, or sprouts.
- ✦ **Radishes:** Choose radishes with fresh, green tops and firm, unblemished roots.
- ✦ **Rhubarb:** Choose firm pink or red stalks. Green stalks tend to be stringy and sour.
- ✦ **Rutabagas:** Choose rutabagas that feel firm and heavy for their size. Avoid any with holes or bruises.
- ✦ **Scallions:** Choose scallions with crisp, green tops and firm, white bulbs. Avoid wilted or browned scallions.
- ✦ **Summer Squash:** Choose squash with naturally shiny, taut, unblemished skin. Avoid squash that appear dull or have soft spots.
- ✦ **Sweet Potatoes and Yams:** Choose potatoes with firm, unwrinkled skins and no bruises or cuts, as they are highly perishable.
- ✦ **Swiss Chard:** Choose chard with crisp stalks and shiny, bright, unwilted leaves.
- ✦ **Tomatillos:** Choose green tomatillos with green husks. Avoid yellow fruits with brown husks.
- ✦ **Tomatoes:** Choose tomatoes that are fragrant, smell earthy at the stem end, and feel heavy for their size. Avoid tomatoes with wrinkled skins.
- ✦ **Turnips:** Choose turnips that feel firm and heavy for their size. Smaller turnips tend to be sweeter and more tender than larger ones.
- ✦ **Winter Squash:** Choose squash that have stems intact and feel heavy for their size. Avoid squash with dents or soft spots.

