

SHOPPING FOR FRESH PRODUCE

Your guide to selecting fruits and vegetables!



Produce	Qualities to Look For	Things to Avoid
Broccoli	Firm compact cluster of small flower buds, with none opened enough to show the bright-yellow flower. Buds should be dark or sage green.	Spread bud clusters, enlarged or open buds yellow-green color-indicators of over maturity. Also soft, slippery spots on buds.
Cabbage	Firm or hard heads of cabbage heavy for their size Leaves should be free from blemishes.	Wilted or decayed leaves. Worm-eaten outer leaves.
Carrots	Well-formed, smooth, well-colored and firm.	Large green “sunburned” areas and flabby roots.
Celery	Freshness and crispness.	Wilted and flabby upper branches of leaf stems.
Corn	Fresh husks with good green color, silk-ends free from decay or worm injury and stem ends that are not too discolored or dried.	Underdeveloped kernels which lack yellow color and old ears with very large kernels. Yellowed, wilted or dried husks.
Cauliflower	Heads that are white or creamy white, firm, compact, and heavy for their size.	Avoid cauliflower with brown patches or speckling or discoloration on the head or leaves.
Cucumbers	Good green color. No shriveled ends.	Overgrown cucumbers large in diameter.
Lettuce	Romaine and iceberg-look for crispness. Other varieties - look for non-wilted leaves.	Heads that are very hard and lack green color. Also, heads with irregular shapes and hard bumps.
Potatoes	Firm, free of blemishes, sunburn, and decay.	Green coloring, large cuts, bruises or decay or shriveled potatoes.
Squash-Summer	Tender, well-developed, firm, glossy skin.	Dull appearance, discoloring, soft spots.
Squash-Winter	Hard, tough rind, heavy for size. Slight variations in skin color are okay.	Cuts, punctures, sunken or moldy spots - these indicate decay.
Tomatoes	Smooth, well ripened and free from blemish.	Soft, bruised, green/yellow areas, cracks.

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Apples	Firm, crisp, well-colored.	Overripe (soft flesh), scald on skin (browning)
Bananas	Firm, bright, free from bruises. Best eaten quality when yellow with brown speckles.	Bruising, discoloring, dull grayish appearance.
Cantaloupe	Slightly soft, free of cracks, or extra soft spots. Select a melon that is fragrant -this is a clue to its ripeness.	A slight softness is a good sign, but should not be spongy.
Grapefruit	Firm fruits, heavy for size, thin-skinned for more juice. Rough, wrinkled skin indicates thick skin. Scale, scars and scratches are okay.	Soft, water-soaked areas, dull color, soft, tender peel that breaks easy with finger pressure-signs of decay.
Grapes	Well-colored, plump, firmly attached to stem.	Soft, wrinkled grapes, brown or brittle bunches.
Lemons	Rich yellow color, smooth texture, firm, heavy.	Darker yellow, hardened or shriveled skin, soft spots, mold and punctures on skin.
Oranges	Firm, heavy, bright, smooth.	Light-weight-likely to lack flesh and juice. Rough, dull dry skin.
Peaches	Fairly firm, becoming a little soft.	Very firm, hard with green color which are probably immature. Soft fruits which are usually overripe.
Pears	Firmness. Hard pears will ripen if kept at room temperature, but it's better to select pears that have already begun to soften for better quality.	Wilted or shriveled pears, dull appearance. Also, slight weakening of the flesh near the stem indicating immaturity. These will not ripen.
Strawberries and other berries	Rich color, bright luster, firm flesh and for strawberries - attached cap stem. Medium to small strawberries usually have better eating quality than large ones.	Large, uncolored areas, shriveled appearance or softness. Also, those with mold which can easily spread from one berry to another.
Tangerines	Deep yellow or orange color, bright luster for best sign of freshness and maturity. They typically won't feel firm.	Very pale yellow or greenish color, which are likely to be lacking flavor. Also, cut or punctured skin with soft spots.
Watermelons	Firm and heavy with a smooth skin. Watermelon should have a yellow area on one side, from where it rested while ripening.	If it doesn't have a well-defined yellow side, it may have been harvested too soon.