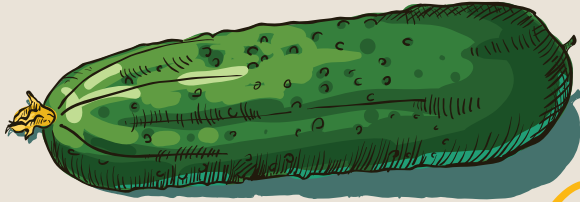


Seasonal Produce

February

Peppers



Eggplant



Cucumbers

Collards

Chinese Cabbage

Cabbage

Celery

Turnip Greens



Cauliflower

Avocado

Onions

Kumquats



Grapefruit

English Peas

Bananas

Okra



Carrots

Papaya

Scallions

Turnips

Broccoli

Strawberries

Choosing the best quality and most flavorful produce can sometimes be a guessing game! Here are tips on choosing some of the most common produce available now.

Chinese Cabbage

When selecting a head of cabbage at the grocery store or farmstand, look for compact ribs and intact leaves. It should have some heft in the hand. There should be no sign of yellowing or wilting, and no slimy or brown spots. Look for bright vibrant leaves.

Turnips

When shopping for turnips, look for those with unblemished skin that are no more than three inches in diameter. If you want sweet, tender turnips, select smaller roots. Turnip greens contain high volumes of calcium, which contributes to their bitter flavor. For maximum nutrition and flavor, steam the greens.

Scallions

Select clean, uniform, firm, crispy, pencil-thin stalks featuring well-formed, green tubules. Avoid over-mature, withered, yellow, discolored or dry leaves.

Cucumbers

For both regular cucumbers and smaller, bumpier Kirbys (often used for pickles), choose firm, dark green ones with no wrinkles or spongy spots. No matter the variety, smaller cucumbers contain fewer and tinier seeds. The skins contain vitamin A, so try to buy unwaxed cucumbers, whose skin you can eat.

Eggplant

Look for eggplants that are heavy for their size and without cracks or discoloration.

Cauliflower

Choose cauliflower with compact, creamy white florets and bright green leaves. Old cauliflower has a yellowish tinge and tiny black mold spots. Before cooking, remove the core and separate the cauliflower into florets. Cauliflower can be blanched, steamed or roasted. Served raw, it is a lively addition to a platter of crudités.

English Peas

Look for pods that are full but not bulging -- overly mature peas are tough and starchy and not nearly as sweet as smaller ones. If you buy peas in the morning and don't plan on cooking them until evening, leave them in their pods and store them in the refrigerator; this will help retain their sugar and flavor. One pound of peas in their pods yields about one cup of shelled peas.

Peppers

Look for peppers that are firm, deeply colored and glossy. Peppers that have the straightest sides will be the easiest to peel. Bell peppers should feel heavy for their size, indicating fully developed walls.

Carrots

The best carrots are those that are well-formed, smooth and firm, and blemish-free. Smaller types are more tender and a deep color indicates more vitamin A.



It's good to be Blue.