

# July Seasonal Produce

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Field peas



Pole Beans

Eggplants



Plums

Tomatoes



Potatoes

Okra

Blackberries

Cantaloupes

Cabbages



Nectarines

Apples



Snap Beans

Lima Beans



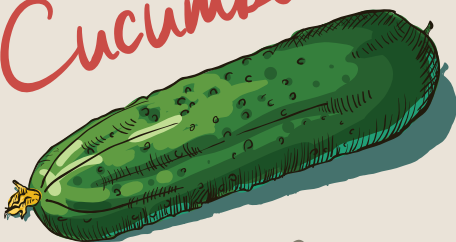
Muscadines

Blueberries

Grapes

Peaches

Cucumbers



Bell Peppers



Watermelon



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**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.**

## Apples

An apple is nature's perfect treat, especially when you're lucky enough to pick them straight off the tree. Plus, you can feel good about eating them—apples are low in calories and are a good source of fiber, particularly the soluble kind linked with heart health. Apples are great for snacking, but they are also versatile in the kitchen.

## Blueberries

Blueberries should have a slight frosty-white hue. Check all fruit for mold, and inspect containers for stickiness or stains.

## Blackberries

Blackberries should be deeply colored. Pass by blackberries with hulls attached, a sign of premature picking.

## Squash

Select yellow squash and zucchini less than eight inches long; the vegetables can become bitter the larger the plants grow. Make sure the squash are firm, particularly at the stems, and have bright skins.

## Peaches

Select fruits that yield to slight pressure and check carefully for bruises and soft spots. Select fruits with rich yellow background color. If fruit is green, especially near the stem, it is not ripe. To ripen peaches and nectarines, let them sit at room temperature for 2-3 days. Peaches may be placed in a paper bag with an apple to enhance ripening. Refrigerate only after ripe. Refrigerated peaches and nectarines will not ripen further.

## Watermelon

Look for a watermelon that has bright skin, is firm, symmetrical, and free of cuts. Find one that feels heavy for its size since "water" melons contain more than 90 percent water and the ripest ones have the most water. It should not be narrower on one end or misshapen; this could mean it grew in fits and starts. The underside should have a creamy yellow spot from where it sat on the ground and ripened in the sun – rather than being picked early. Position the melon two inches from your ear, thump or tap it with your free hand. If not ripe enough, it will sound solid. If too ripe, it will sound thick. If perfect, it will sound hollow.

## Cantaloupe

When choosing cantaloupe, you first want to pick it up and look at the color. The lighter the color the better — a nice beige color is good.

## Tomatoes

Select tomatoes that are deeply colored and firm, with a little give. Sniff all tomatoes if you can—you're looking for a sweet, woody smell. Check grape tomatoes for wrinkles, which are a sign of age.



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