

October Seasonal Produce



Pumpkins

Sweet Potatoes
Muscadines



Pecans

Onions

Tomatoes
Bell Peppers

Pole Beans
Eggplant



Collards

Turnips

Green Corn

Peanuts



Ginger

Apples
Grapes

Snap Beans

Pears

Lima Beans



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.

Lima Beans

Also known as butter beans, lima beans are a nutritious vegetable, high in protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, potassium and the vitamins thiamine and niacin. Fresh butter bean pods should be nicely filled out and still green. When buying shelled fresh beans, look for small, well formed beans without brown spots. Large white beans aren't as tasty.

Turnips

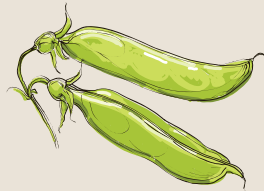
When shopping for turnips, look for those with unblemished skin that are no more than three inches in diameter. If you want sweet, tender turnips, select smaller roots. Turnip greens contain high volumes of calcium, which contributes to their bitter flavor. For maximum nutrition and flavor, steam the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



Pole Beans

Choose freshly harvested green beans with young tender pods.

Freshness is evidenced by a distinct, audible snap when the bean is broken. Beans that are over-matured will be tough and stringy. Immature beans will wilt and soften quickly after harvesting.



Pecans

For the freshest and most flavorful pecans, choose whole ones in the shell; look for nuts that are heavy for their size and don't rattle when shaken.

Pecans can be stored in a freezer for up to two years in a moisture-proof bag.

Pumpkins

When selecting a pumpkin for cooking, the best selection is a "pie pumpkin" or "sweet pumpkin." These are smaller than the large jack-o-lantern pumpkins and the flesh is sweeter and less watery. However, you can substitute the jack-o-lantern variety with fairly good results. Look for a pumpkin with 1 to 2 inches of stem left. If the stem is cut down too low the pumpkin will decay quickly or may be decaying at the time of purchase. Avoid pumpkins with blemishes and soft spots. It should be heavy, shape is unimportant. A lopsided pumpkin is not necessarily a bad pumpkin. Figure one pound of raw, untrimmed pumpkin for each cup of finished pumpkin puree.



Muscadines

Choose grapes that are uniform in shape and color. Muscadines have a sweet fragrance and fall easily from the stem when ripe. After purchasing or picking, muscadines can be stored in a shallow container in the refrigerator.

Inspect stored grapes regularly and remove any that are becoming soft or showing signs of decay.

Sweet Potatoes

When selecting sweet potatoes, it is important that they are firm to the touch and show no signs of decay. For even cooking, choose sweet potatoes that are uniform in shape. Look for small to medium sweet potatoes, which are sweet and creamy. (The larger ones tend to be starchier.)



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