



How to Select and Store Fruit

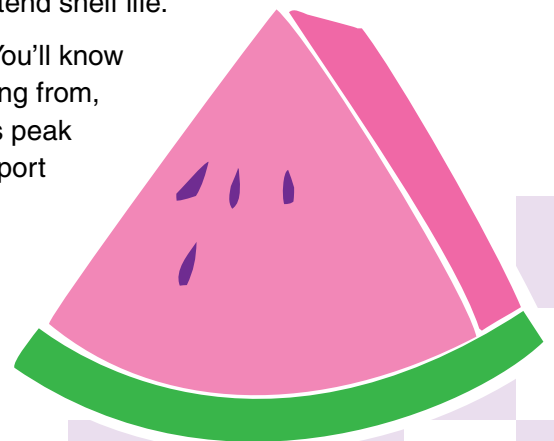
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What fruits are in your refrigerator, freezer or pantry?

Enjoy fruit at its best with these tips.

How to select fruit:

- Keep it simple. Prewashed, precut and ready-to-eat fruit provides convenience, but if you're trying to save money, whole fruit will cost less.
- Remember variety. Buy fruit that is fresh, frozen and dried. If you purchase canned fruit, choose fruit packed in water or 100 percent juice.
- Purchase in season. Fruit is most flavorful and nutritious when purchased in season. It also usually will give you the best value for your money.
- Consider storage and time. Purchase only what you have room to store and can use within the recommended time.
- Stock up on canned fruit when it is on sale. Canned lasts much longer than fresh or frozen varieties. Choose cans free from sharp dents.
- Pick up frozen fruit just before checking out at the grocery store. Get it into your freezer as quickly as possible. When using frozen fruit, remove what you need and return the rest to the freezer quickly to extend shelf life.
- Visit a farmers market. You'll know where your food is coming from, the produce will be at its peak quality and you can support local growers.



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How to store fruit:

- Store fruits and vegetables in separate produce drawers in the refrigerator to minimize the effects on the vegetables of the ethylene that fruit produces. For example, apples may release ethylene gas that causes vegetables to brown.
- To maintain flavor, color and texture, store fruit properly. Some fruits should be stored at room temperature, some ripen at room temperature and then are refrigerated, and others always should be refrigerated. If you plan to store apples longer than seven days, store them refrigerated to maintain quality.
- Do not refrigerate bananas, citrus fruits, mangoes, melons, papayas, persimmons, pineapple, plantains and pomegranates. Refrigeration can cause cold damage or prevent them from ripening to good flavor and texture.
- Sort fruit before storing and remove any with bruises or soft spots.
- Store fruit that needs to ripen on the counter in a paper bag, perforated plastic bag or ripening bowl on the counter away from sunlight to prevent moisture loss. These include avocados, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears and plums.
- Store frozen fruit at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. It can be stored for eight to 12 months.
- Store canned fruit in a cool, dry place and use within one year for top quality.
- Store dried fruit in an airtight container in a cool, dry place. Use within a few months.

See the following information for storage tips specific to various fresh fruits. For best quality, choose fresh produce “in season.”



Fruit Storage

Fruit	What to Look For	What to Avoid or Use First	How to Store	How Long
Apples	Choose apples that are firm to the touch and free from bruising or signs of decay. They should be naturally shiny and heavy for their size. Color, size, shape and overall appearance will differ for each variety.	Apples with bruises, cuts or punctures	At room temperature (less than seven days); in the refrigerator (more than seven days); away from foods with strong aromas	Few weeks
Apricots	Ripe apricots are orange-gold with hints of redness. They should have smooth and unwrinkled skin and be firm to the touch.	Apricots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With cuts or dents • That are pale yellow or greenish yellow • With shriveled skin or soft and mushy texture (usually indicates the apricot is overripe) • A hard apricot with green flecks (it likely never will develop its full flavor) 	In the refrigerator in a plastic bag	3 to 5 days
Asian pears	Asian pears should be crisp, with smooth skin and few to no brown spots, and feel hard as a rock.	Bruised pears or those with cuts or large indentations.	In the refrigerator	1 to 3 days
Avocados	Ripe avocados will be darker in color than the others, similar to a deep purple. They should yield to firm, gentle pressure when squeezed. Unripe, firm, green avocados can be purchased 4 to 5 days before you want to use them.	Avocados with any large indentations, which may be a sign that the fruit has been bruised	Ripen on the counter; check every 2 to 3 days while ripening; after ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1 to 3 days	Few days
Bananas	Choose an evenly yellow banana. Bananas will taste best when the first brown flecks start to appear. Select green bananas that are unripe if you want them to ripen at home for a few days. A brown banana is overripe and will have a mushy texture.	Bruised bananas that have visible damage	At room temperature, in a cool, dry place	Few days up to 1 week
Berries	Berries should be firm and dry with a uniform, bright color.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crushed or spoiled berries • Discard produce with mold growth 	In the refrigerator	1 to 3 days
Cherries	Select cherries that are plump, shiny and darker. Keeping the stems intact increases shelf life.	Soft, shriveled or blemished cherries	In the refrigerator	10 days
Citrus	Citrus fruits should be fragrant, have smooth skin and be heaviest for their size.	Shriveled fruits	At room temperature	Few days
Figs	Choose soft, plump fruit with intact, bent stems. Minor bruises or tears typically are harmless.	Dry, cracked or mushy figs	In the refrigerator	1 to 3 days
Grapes	Choose fruits that are firm, plump and heavy for their size. They should be firmly attached to the stems.	Wrinkled grapes or brown spots	In the refrigerator	1 week

*Bruised or otherwise damaged fruit is most likely to spoil first. At home, cut away the bruised part and use first.

Fruit Storage

Fruit	What to Look For	What to Avoid or Use First	How to Store	How Long
Kiwi	Kiwis should release gently to pressure.	Mushy or overly hard fruits	Ripen on the counter; after ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1 to 3 days	Few days
Mangoes	Ripe mangoes should be soft to the touch and fragrant near the stem end.	Avoid those with sap on the skin	Store whole fruit at room temperature; store cut, peeled fruit in the refrigerator	Few days
Melons	Choose fruits that are symmetrical, fragrant and heavy for their size. Watermelons and cantaloupe should have a dull appearance. A shiny outside is an indicator of an underripe melon. Honeydew should be pale yellow to light lemon, with little green. A watermelon should sound hollow when thumped.	Fruits with soft spots, cracks or bruises	Store whole fruit at room temperature; store cut, peeled fruit in the refrigerator	Few days
Papaya	The color can range from yellow to orange red. A few green spots are fine. A ripe papaya should yield to firm gentle pressure when squeezed, similar to how a ripe avocado would. Papaya should have a faint, sweet smell near the stem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft flesh or mold near the stem end • Unpleasant or strong smell 	At room temperature	Few days
Peaches	Choose deeply colored fruits that are firm but slightly soft to the touch.	Avoid overripe, bruised or wrinkled peaches	Ripen on the counter; after ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1 to 3 days	Few days
Pears	Pears often are picked before they are fully ripe. Look for ones that are free from bruises or soft spots.	Avoid pears that are bruised	Ripen on the counter; after ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1 to 3 days.	Few days
Persimmons	Persimmons should be deep red or orange. Fuyu types should be firm. Hachiya types should be soft and squishy when ripe.	Avoid persimmons with yellow patches	At room temperature	Few days
Pineapple	Pineapple should have a sweet smell at the stem end and fresh-looking leaves, and be heavy for its size.	Soft spots or dry, brown leaves	Store whole fruit at room temperature; store cut fruit in the refrigerator	Few days
Plums	Choose deeply colored fruits that are shiny and firm but not rock hard. A white or gray sheen is natural.	Bruised or soft fruit	Ripen on the counter; after ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1 to 3 days.	Few days
Pomegranates	Pomegranates should be heavy for their size. Cracks are a good sign that the fruit is bursting with plump seeds.	Mold growing in the cracks	At room temperature	Few days

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For more information about nutrition, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/fieldtofork.

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