



A TO Z

OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



LIVELIGHTER

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INTRODUCTION

Fruit and veggies add flavour, colour, texture and variety to meals and snacks. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating shows the variety of foods to eat each day.

There are compelling reasons to eat more fruit and veggies. Health authorities agree that eating more fruit and veggies may be the single most important dietary change needed to improve health and reduce the risk of disease. A diet high in fruit and veggies can help prevent heart disease, some cancers, overweight, obesity and constipation. It can also reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels and improve control of diabetes.

As a food group, fruit and veggies are rich in important nutrients such as antioxidants (vitamins A, E, C, and carotenoids such as beta-carotene), phytochemicals, folate, dietary fibre and potassium. They are also low in fat and kilojoules.

For good health, adults and teenagers should eat at least two serves of fruit and five serves of veggies each day. Variety is important. Include some raw, some dark green, yellow and orange, and some cruciferous veggies (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, swede and turnips) each day. Children should also eat a variety of fruit and veggies, the amount depends on their appetite and age.

What is a serve?

Veggies



½ cup cooked vegetable or cooked legume

½ medium potato

1 cup salad vegetables

One serve of veggies is 75g or half a medium potato, or half a cup of cooked vegetables, or one cup of salad vegetables, or half a cup cooked legumes (dried beans, peas or lentils).

Fruit

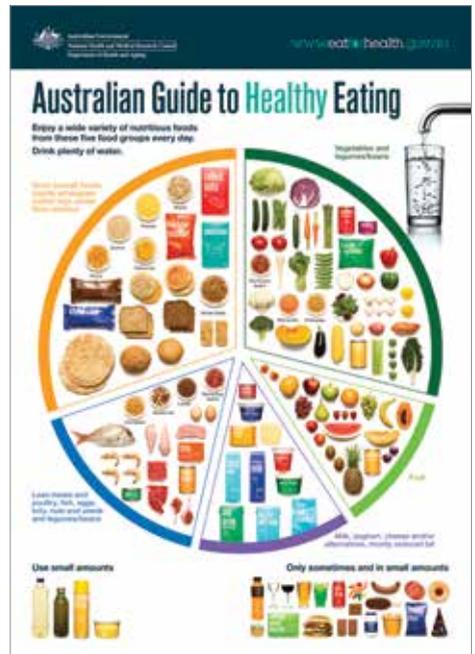


1 medium piece (e.g. apple)

2 small pieces (e.g. apricots)

1 cup chopped or canned fruit

One serve of fruit is 150g or about one medium piece (e.g. apple), or two small pieces (e.g. apricot), or one cup of chopped or canned fruit or 1 ½ tablespoons dried fruit.



Seasonal Fruit and Vegetables Grown in Victoria

	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
Apples				
Apricots				
Blackberries				
Blueberries				
Boysenberries				
Cherries				
Cumquats				
Currants				
Feijoa				
Figs				
Gooseberries				
Grapefruit				
Grapes				
Honeydew melon				
Kiwifruit				
Lemons				
Limes				
Loganberries				
Mandarins				
Mulberries				
Nashi				
Nectarines				
Olives				
Oranges				
Passionfruit				
Peach				
Pears				
Persimmons				
Plums				
Pomegranate				
Raspberries				
Rhubarb				
Rockmelon				
Strawberries				
Tamarillos				
Tangelos				
Watermelon				
Youngberries				

	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
Artichokes (Globe)				
Artichokes (Jerusalem)				
Asian Greens				
Asparagus				
Avocado				
Beans				
Beans (Broad)				
Beetroot				
Broccoli				
Brussel Sprouts				
Cabbages				
Capsicum				
Carrots				
Cauliflower				
Celery				
Celeriac				
Chillies				
Cucumber				
Daikon				
Eggplant				
Fennel				
Garlic				
Kale				
Kohlrabi				
Leek				
Lettuces				
Mushrooms				
Okra				
Onions				
Parsnips				
Peas				
Peas (Snow)				
Potatoes				
Pumpkins				
Radishes				
Shallots				
Silverbeet				
Spinach				
Spring Onion				
Squash				
Swedes				
Sweet Corn				
Tomatoes				
Turnips				
Witlof				
Zucchini				

This chart lists the peak season for various fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables purchased during the local growing season are usually the cheapest and best eating quality. However many types of produce are now available year around.

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A-Z OF FRUIT

Apple



Selection

Choose firm fruit, avoid bruises and blemishes.

Storage

To retain crispness and freshness, store in refrigerator in a vented container.

Uses

Eat fresh, salads or platters. Baked whole, pies, tarts, crumbles, sauces, cakes and muffins.

Preparation

To prevent discolouration brush cut surfaces with any type of citrus juice.

Cooking

Tart or medium acid varieties are best for cooking. The sweeter varieties are more suited to eating fresh or in fruit salads and platters.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Add chopped apple to salads, particularly potato salad, coleslaw and red cabbage.
- ▲ Fill steamed, hollowed, golden nugget pumpkins with a mixture of cooked chopped onion, finely chopped apple, baby spinach leaves, feta cheese and pine nuts, bound together with beaten egg. Top with grated reduced-fat cheese and cook 15 minutes at 190°C until golden brown.

Apricot



Selection

Choose plump, firm (but not hard) fruit. Select based on texture, flavour and aroma rather than appearance.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature. If fruit has been stored in a refrigerator, allow several days at room temperature before eating for flavour to develop.

Uses

Eat fresh. Fruit salads, sorbets, compote, stewed, pureed, in Middle Eastern cuisine.

Cooking

Apricots are usually halved before cooking and the stone removed. May be poached, stewed and pureed, or made into jams and chutneys.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Poach and serve on tarts and flans glazed with warmed apricot jam.
- ▲ Stew and puree, then fold through a little honey and sieved reduced-fat ricotta cheese to make a fruit topping.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before use.

Banana



Varieties

Lady Finger: small plump banana with a sweet distinctive flavour.

Cavendish: the most common type of banana.

Gold Finger: looks like a Cavendish and tastes like a Lady Finger.

Plantain and Red Dacca: large cooking bananas.

Selection

Choose firm unblemished fruit and only purchase for immediate requirements, particularly in summer.

Storage

Ideal temperature is 13-18°C. Do not refrigerate as the skin will blacken.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salads, or as an accompaniment to meat and

curry dishes. Overripe bananas can be peeled, tightly wrapped and frozen then mashed and used in cakes, muffins, pikelets and milk shakes.

Preparation

Once peeled, brush the fruit with citrus juice to prevent discolouration.

Cooking

Cook bananas in skins on a hot barbecue, turning until the skins are black and banana flesh is soft.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Banana chunks rolled in lemon juice and coarsely grated coconut make a cooling accompaniment to a hot curry.
- ▲ Bananas rolled in desiccated coconut and frozen on a stick are a sweet treat for children of all ages.

Berries

Blueberries



Small, smooth silver frosted blue-black berry with a sweet juice.

Selection

Sold in punnets, choose plump, firm good coloured berries. Check base of punnet for mould or spoilage.

Storage

Store covered in refrigerator. Use as soon as possible as rapid deterioration can occur.

Uses

Fresh on fruit and cheese platters, fruit salads. In muffins, pies, mixed with other berries in Summer Pudding.

Preparation

Wash and dry well on absorbent paper if necessary.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Add to poached apple or pear slices, top with crumble topping and bake.
- ▲ Wrap in a pancake and serve with low-fat vanilla yoghurt.

Raspberry



Intensely flavoured fragile berries.

Selection

Choose bright red, firm berries. Check base of punnet for spoilage or mould.

Storage

Store covered in refrigerator. Use as soon as possible as rapid deterioration can occur.

Uses

Eat fresh alone or with other berries or fruits.

Preparation

Dry brush lightly if using fresh. Wash only if cooking, draining well.

Cooking

To make Summer Pudding, warm with other berries until the mixture becomes juicy and pour into a basin lined with bread or brioche slices. Cover with more slices and weight the top.

Strawberry



Red aromatic berries with seeds on the outside skin. A variety of size, colour and shapes are available.

Selection

Choose clean, bright red fruit. A fresh, bright, green calyx should be attached. Check the base of punnet for mould or moisture from overripe fruit.

Storage

Store covered in refrigerator. Use as soon as possible due to rapid deterioration.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salads, platters, and as decoration for many desserts and cakes.

Preparation

Wash and dry well on absorbent paper if necessary. Remove the green calyx with a sharp knife.

Serving suggestion

Halve strawberries and put onto a baking tray. Sprinkle with balsamic vinegar and grill.

Cherries



Large, sweet, juicy berry with inedible pip and stems attached.

Selection

Choose plump firm cherries with fresh green stems. Avoid over ripe and split fruit.

Storage

Wash just prior to using. Store in airtight container in refrigerator for a short time only.

Uses

Eat fresh, salads, fruit and cheese platters, desserts.

Serving suggestion

Combine poached cherries with reduced-fat Ricotta cheese and a little grated nutmeg. Use mixture to fill a crepe or sandwich hot cakes. Drizzle with reduced cherry liquid before serving.

Custard Apple or Cherimoyas



Resembles a pine cone and has grey-green, scaly skin. The soft white pulp inside has large black (inedible) seeds and tastes like a creamy blend of tropical flavours.

Selection

Ripe custard apples yield slightly when gently squeezed, avoid dark blemishes. Select fruit that is heavy for its size.

Storage

Hard custard apples should be stored at room temperature until they soften, then refrigerate. The fruit bruises easily.

Preparation

Remove skin and seeds and discard.

Uses

Eat on its own or in combination with other fruits, puree as a drink, in cake recipes and ice-cream.

Serving suggestion

Exotic fruit sorbet: Freeze for 30 minutes and eat like a sorbet. Exotic fruit salad: Combine equal parts custard apple, strawberries, bananas, and pineapple.

Dragon Fruit or Pitaya



The fruit of a cactus with intense skin colour, the pulp varies from white to various shades of red. Contains many small edible seeds.

Selection

The yellow variety is generally preferred because of its sweeter flavour. Select plump fruit that is firm, well coloured and shows no sign of bruising or skin damage.

Storage

Refrigerate. Best used as soon as possible.

Uses

Eat fresh, salads and platters, juice.

Preparation

Serve chilled and cut in half. Scoop out the flesh and seeds much like a kiwi fruit.

Durian



A large, oblong-shaped tropical fruit with green/yellow skin that is also covered in sharp pointed spines. Flesh is divided into about 5 sections, each containing 1-6 seeds surrounded by creamy yellow pulp. The flavour is quite unique. The durian is noted for its strong odour.

Selection

A yellowing in the skin and the fruit giving off a characteristic odour is a sign that the fruit has reached its maturity.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature then store in refrigerator. Keep sealed and away from other foods likely to pick up the strong odour of the ripe fruit.

Uses

Best eaten fresh and chilled.

Feijoa



An oval shaped, green-skinned tropical fruit, they have creamy white flesh surrounding centre seeds. Strong tasting flesh with hints of quince, pineapple and mint.

Selection

Ripe feijoas yield slightly when gently squeezed and are fragrant. Avoid blemished, soft fruit.

Storage

Allow to ripen at room temperature then refrigerate.

Preparation

To eat feijoas, just cut them in half and scoop out the pulp with a spoon.

Uses

Eat fresh, jams and syrups.

Fig



Bulbous shape with pulpy sweet soft flesh, speckled with edible seeds.

Selection

Figs should be plump and blemish free. Avoid shrivelled or overly sticky skins on fruit.

Storage

Highly perishable. Store in single layer in refrigerator for a short time only.

Uses

Serve whole, sliced or

quartered, fruit and cheese platters, salads, desserts.

Cooking

Figs may be poached, grilled, baked or made into jams and chutneys. Can be used to top flans and tarts.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Add sliced figs to baby spinach leaves or rocket and feta cheese for a great salad.
- ▲ Serve fresh quarters of purple figs with tasty cheeses and walnuts at the end of a meal.

Grape



Actually a berry. Small round fruits found in bunches. Some have seeds and others seedless.

Selection

As grapes do not ripen once removed from the vine, only choose ripe, firm grapes in bunches without withered or broken fruit, or stickiness.

Storage

In a box or container in refrigerator for a short time only. If damp, mould will develop quickly.

Uses

Eat fresh, garnish cheese and fruit platters, fruit salads, topping fruit flans and tarts.

Cooking

Wash just prior to using. To remove seeds for recipes cut in half and flick seed out with a knife, or use seedless varieties.

Serving suggestion

In hot weather freeze small bunches for refreshing snacks.

Grapefruit



Large citrus fruit with thick skin.

Selection

Choose heavy fruit, lighter fruit can have thick skin and minimal flesh and juice. Small blemishes on skin do not reduce quality of fruit.

Storage

In refrigerator.

Uses

Traditional breakfast fruit, add grapefruit segments to rich meat glazes, add to fruit salads, or make into marmalade.

Serving suggestion

Avocado, pink grapefruit and pawpaw tossed with warmed honey and lime juice.

Guava



A small, round to oblong shaped, green-skinned tropical fruit, guavas become yellow/green when ripe. They have white to salmon pink, juicy, seedy flesh and an aromatic fragrance aroma.

Varieties

Cattley and the Common.

Selection

Choose firm, undamaged fruit with a greenish-yellow skin

colouring. Ripe fruit should yield to gentle pressure.

Storage

Keep at room temperature until ripe and then place in refrigerator crispier.

Uses

Eaten fresh or as juice, in salads, jams, jellies and conserves.

Kiwifruit



Egg shaped with thin, fuzzy skin with tiny edible black seeds.

Selection

Choose only firm fruit, which yields to gentle pressure. Ripens at room temperature. To accelerate the ripening, place in brown paper bag with an apple or banana.

Storage

May be refrigerated for a short time.

Uses

Salads, puree, garnish, decoration for desserts.

Preparation

Cut in half and scoop out flesh with a spoon or remove skin and slice. Ripe kiwifruit may be sieved to make a delightfully coloured puree for decoration of desserts.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Cut kiwifruit in wedges, layer with cubes of rockmelon and natural muesli. Serve with low-fat yoghurt.
- ▲ Wedges of kiwifruit are a good crisp contrast when served with spicy chicken.

Lemon



Yellow, oval shaped with pointed tip and shiny skin. Distinct citrus fragrance.

Selection

Choose heavy fruit that is glossy, yellow and firm. Ripe lemons should have a pleasant citrus fragrance.

Storage

At room temperature or in refrigerator.

Uses

Drinks, marinades, salad dressings, garnishes, flavouring in cooked dishes, desserts, and made into marmalade. Lemon will stop other fruit and vegetables from turning brown when cut.

Preparation

Cut into slices or wedges to garnish drinks and fish dishes. Remove pips. The rind or zest (skin), may be grated or thinly peeled and used to add flavour to a variety of dishes. The juice may be squeezed and used fresh or frozen. The white pith is bitter and should be discarded.

Lime



Green, small oval shaped with pointed tip, shiny skin with pale green pulp. Very aromatic citrus fragrance.

Selection

Select heavy firm fruit, evenly coloured and glossy.

Storage

Room temperature or in refrigerator. Keep out of the sunlight, as deterioration will occur.

Uses

Juice, salad dressing, marinades, as a garnish for fish and shellfish, in Asian and Central American cooking.

Preparation

Cut in slices or wedges to garnish dishes. The zest may be grated and used to add flavours to dishes. Juice may be squeezed and frozen or used fresh.

Cooking

Use both rind and juice in cooking. Can replace lemon in many dishes for a distinctively different flavour.

Serving suggestion

Squeeze lime wedges over pawpaw with seeds removed.

Longan or Dragon-Eyes



Longans are small and round with a smooth, beige-brown leathery skin. The flesh is white to off-white or pinkish colour surrounding a central seed.

Selection

Look for bright, firm, well coloured fruit. There should be no sign of skin discolouration, cracking or shrivelling.

Storage

Wrap in plastic and store in refrigerator. Best to use as soon as possible.

Preparation

Remove skin and deseed before use.

Uses

Fruit salad and platters, add to Asian dishes. Puree and use in fruit juices and desserts.

Lychee



Small oval fruit about the size of a small plum, with red, leathery skin, sweet translucent juicy white flesh and inedible large glossy seed.

Selection

Choose only ripe fruit, green will not ripen. Must be firm with no signs of decay at stem end.

Storage

Store covered in refrigerator. Lychees deteriorate rapidly.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit platters, fruit and

savoury salads and in Asian dishes.

Preparation

The skin can be easily removed with a knife run gently round the centre, and the two halves will part. Remove the seed.

Serving suggestion

Quickly stir-fry scored squid sprinkled with lime zest, add chilli jam, lime juice and olive oil. Stir to coat. Serve immediately over the top of rocket leaves and lychee halves.

Mandarin



Smaller and flatter than an orange. Tender, soft, sweet flesh with loose orange skin and small pips. Easy to peel and segment.

Selection

Choose fruit with glossy skin and fine texture. Choose those that feel heavy for their size. Avoid soft spots. A loose feel and puffy appearance is normal due to the easy-to-peel skin.

Storage

Room temperature or in refrigerator.

Uses

Eat fresh, salads both sweet

and savoury, adds flavour and colour to desserts.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Line a salad plate with witlof (chicory) leaves. Pile mandarin and grapefruit segments on top, sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves and lightly coat with a dressing made with olive oil, lime juice, and slivers of preserved ginger.
- ▲ Toss mandarin segments with grated carrot, finely chopped red onion and coriander leaves, dressed with orange juice and avocado (or olive) oil.

Mango



Oblong pear shaped fruit with large flat inedible stone, peach coloured juicy flesh. Very aromatic when ripe. Green when unripe, turns yellow to orange/red as it ripens.

Selection

Select mangoes that yield to pressure. Avoid signs of bruising or whitening.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature. Mature-green mangoes usually ripen within 7-10 days between 18-22°C.

Keep ripe mangoes well wrapped in refrigerator (about 3 days).

Uses

Eat fresh, salads, platters and desserts, purees and sorbets, accompaniment to spicy chicken and fish.

Preparation

For decorative presentation, slice the fleshy sides from the mango keeping close to the stone. Score the flesh into even lines, taking care not to cut through the skin. Cut in opposite direction so that the lines form diamond cuts. Press up from the skin side to spread the cuts. Repeat on other cheek.

Serving suggestion

For a mango salsa, chop mango, add finely chopped red onion, a little garlic, chopped coriander, lime juice and fresh chilli. Serve with grilled fish or chicken.

Mangosteen



Round in shape, with squat ends. Thick reddish/purple (sometimes almost black) skin and a white juicy flesh. Has a fine, sweet, slightly tart flavour.

Selection

Skin should be firm with slightly yielding flesh. Avoid any skin imperfections or discolouration.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature. May be kept a short time wrapped in paper in the refrigerator.

Preparation

Scoop out flesh segments. Do not eat the seeds.

Uses

Eat fresh, in salads or as juice, puree as topping for icecream.

Melon

Honeydew



Watermelon



Rockmelon



Melons come in many varieties and in different sizes.

Selection

All melons should be heavy and firm for their size. Avoid damaged or soft melons.

Watermelon should sound hollow when tapped.

Rockmelon (Cantaloupe) has a porous skin allowing the exotic smell to come through when ripe. Ripe rockmelon (Cantaloupe) and **honeydew** will yield to gentle pressure at the flower end.

Storage

Refrigerate and when cut, cover with plastic film.

Uses

Fresh slices, fruit salad, juicing, savoury combinations with lean ham, prawns, smoked chicken, roast duck or prosciutto.

Preparation

All melons should be served chilled. Remove skin and seeds with a sharp knife.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Watermelon cubes with thinly sliced onion rings and cubes of feta for a refreshing salad.
- ▲ Slices of barbecued or roast duck, honeydew melon cubes, pistachios and rocket leaves tossed in an Asian style chilli dressing.

Nashi



Similar in shape to an apple with a taste more like a pear. Firm, crisp, juicy fruit with a yellowish-green russeted skin and white flesh.

Selection

Choose firm, unblemished fruit. Depending on variety, the colour may be either green-yellow or

partially to fully cinnamon/brown russeted. Avoid fruit that is soft or rubbery.

Storage

Best stored in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salads and platters.

Nectarine



Smooth, golden yellow to red skin, with inedible seed. Highly fragrant when ripe and will yield slightly to pressure.

Selection

Choose fruit without blemishes and bruising. Green fruit will not ripen properly as it has been picked when immature.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature, may be kept in refrigerator for short time.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salad and platters, savoury salads or compote.

Serving suggestion

Combine sliced nectarine, wedges of honeydew melon and mango with rocket. Dress with a red wine vinaigrette.

Orange



Juicy, round fruit, shiny orange pitted skin. Distinctive citrus fragrance and flavour.

Selection

Choose firm, heavy, glossy fruit. Avoid soft spots.

Storage

Store at room temperature or covered under refrigeration.

Uses

Peel and eat fresh, salads, juice, sauces, desserts.

Preparation

To segment an orange, cut the pith from the orange and run the knife between the membranes of each segment. Do this over a bowl to catch the juice. The outer peel, or zest has a very concentrated orange

flavour. If using, remove from the pith carefully with a zester or grater.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Combine peeled sliced oranges with green skinned apple slices and lots of chopped mint and chives. Make a dressing of equal quantities of orange and lemon juice and a little honey and ground blackpepper in a little sesame oil to taste. Toss gently.
- ▲ Add fresh orange juice to chicken stock while cooking, giving a delicious tangy flavour.

Passionfruit



Egg-shaped fruit from a vine, hard shiny skin, with sweet tart yellow/orange pulp and small edible seeds.

Selection

Choose heavy fruit, avoid excessive wrinkling or blemished skins.

Storage

Store in airtight bags in refrigerator or scoop out the pulp and freeze. Passionfruit at room temperature dehydrate quickly.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salad, juice, topping or sauce on desserts.

Preparation

Cut in halves and scoop out flesh and seeds with a small spoon. If juice is required, push gently through a sieve; add a little fresh orange juice to extend the volume. Freeze in small containers for convenience.

Serving suggestion

Fill a glass with low-fat natural yoghurt. Top with sliced banana and strawberries. Drizzle passionfruit pulp on top.

Papaw, Pawpaw or Papaya



Oval, thin smooth green/yellow skin, inedible black seeds. Flesh can be golden yellow or orange red.

Selection

Choose sweet smelling fruit without signs of deterioration such as bruises and black spots. At times 'freckles' appear on the skin and these do not affect the flesh.

Storage

A very delicate fruit, handle carefully to minimise bruising. May be stored in refrigerator for a short time.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salads and platters, savoury salads, chutney and relishes.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Papaw wedges with lemon or lime juice squeezed over them makes a refreshing treat.
- ▲ A simple rice pudding served warm with slices of papaw and topped with passionfruit pulp.
- ▲ A thick slice can be served as a ring, remove the seeds and fill with chicken salad or a combination of fruits.
- ▲ Chopped pawpaw is great with tropical chicken, veal and seafood dishes and especially Thai flavours.

Peach



Fuzzy yellow to pink skin with golden yellow or white flesh, inedible seed and distinctive fragrance. They can be freestone (easily separated from flesh) or clingstone (with flesh attached).

Selection

Choose mature fruit with an absence of greenness. Avoid bruised or over ripe fruit and shrivelled skin at stem end. Under-ripe peaches will soften at room temperature, but won't get any sweeter.

Storage

Ripe, firm peaches will soften at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe fruit for a short time only.

Uses

Eat fresh, poach, grill, stew, pies, tarts, fruit salads and platters, chutney, relish, salsa and jam. Adds flavour and colour to desserts or as an accompaniment to chicken, pork and fish.

Serving suggestion

For a salsa to serve with grilled fish, combine diced peaches with a little crushed garlic and ginger, finely chopped red onion, a small chopped and seeded chilli, coriander, and mint. Add a dash of balsamic vinegar (or red wine vinegar) and olive oil. Pour over fish and salad.

Pear



Bulbous shape with stalk. Shiny, freckly skin with white juicy flesh. Comes in many colours.

Selection

Choose fairly firm fruit that is unblemished. Handle gently as pears can bruise easily even when not fully ripe. Pears that have spent a short time in cool storage will ripen quickly.

Storage

Firm unripe fruit can be kept at room temperature where it will change from hard green with little flavour, to ripe yellow, which will be full of juice and flavour. When full ripeness is achieved rapid deterioration takes place so keep in refrigerator for a very short time only.

Uses

Eat fresh, salads, sliced on platters, poached, pies, tarts, crumbles, cakes and muffins, accompaniment to roast lamb or pork.

Preparation

If peeling and slicing fruit that is not to be eaten straight away, brush cut surfaces with citrus juice to prevent discolouration.

Serving suggestion

- ▲ Add chopped pear to baby spinach, toss with melon cubes, mint, spring onions and a dash of vinaigrette to make a refreshing salad.
- ▲ Poach peeled whole pears in dark grape juice. Cool and serve with low-fat natural yoghurt.

Persimmon



Round to heart shaped fruit that is bright orange when ripe, thin skinned and with an orange flesh. They feature a green, dry calyx at the stem end. Spicy and sweet flavour that is reminiscent of mango or papaw.

Storage

Ripen astringent varieties at room temperature and store in refrigerator. Non-astringent varieties keep quite well at room temperature but may be chilled for eating.

Selection

Select plump fruit that is firm, well coloured and shows no sign of bruising or skin damage. It is essential to distinguish between astringent and non-astringent varieties. Only non-astringent varieties can be eaten raw.

Uses

Depends on the variety, eat fresh like an apple or used in ice creams, cakes, jams and fruit salad.

Pineapple



Cylindrical in shape with a tough diamond pattern skin and spine, cactus-like leaves and a sweet, yellow, tangy fibre-like flesh that is quite juicy with a characteristic fragrance.

Selection

Select fruit that is plump, heavy for its size, with green fresh looking leaves and a distinctive sweet tropical aroma. Pineapples do not develop their golden appearance over winter, so a green tinged pineapple can still be ripe and ready to eat.

Storage

Best stored in refrigerator.

Seal in plastic or keep in airtight container if already cut.

Uses

Salads, platters, juice, grilled, barbecues, savoury meals and sweet and sour dishes.

Preparation

Cut a flat surface at the top and base of the pineapple. Stand upright on the base and from the top cut off the thick skin to the base taking the 'eyes' with the skin. Pineapple may be sliced thinly into rings or cut lengthwise into quarters, remove the hard fibrous spine, then cut into wedges.

Plum



Small round, shiny skin with inedible stone, varying skin and flesh colours. Juicy flesh flavours range from tart to sweet.

Varieties

Satsuma, Mariposa, Santa Rosa, Narrabeen and October Purple.

Selection

Select plump full-coloured fruit, firm but yielding to gentle pressure. Avoid hard, cracked or poor coloured fruit.

Storage

Ripen at room temperature. Store in refrigerator for a short time only.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit salads and platters, poached, stewed, pies, tarts and cakes, jam and sauces.

Serving suggestion

For breakfast, serve drained poached plums over toasted raisin bread topped with low-fat natural yoghurt, sprinkled with a spoonful of muesli.

Pomegranate



Hard leathery red skin surrounding many kernels, each with a tiny edible seed covered with a red pulp.

Selection

Choose those heavy for size with bright unblemished skins.

Storage

In a cool, dark place or refrigerator.

Preparation

Cut fruit in half. Scoop the kernels from the tough white membrane. Take care with preparation as the juice can stain clothes.

Uses

Eat fresh (kernels and seeds). As garnish.

Serving suggestion

Add to fish or poultry dishes.

Pomelo, Chinese Grapefruit or Tropical Citrus



A smooth yellow/green skin with thick peel and mild, sweet pulp that is white/yellow to a dark pink colour. Spicy-sweet, tangy or tart flavour. Sweeter and milder than grapefruit.

Selection

Choose bright, smooth evenly coloured skin with no obvious blemishes or soft spots.

Storage

Room temperature or in refrigerator.

Uses

Eat fresh, in salads, juice or marmalade.

Preparation

Use a sharp knife to remove the thick peel.

Rambutan



Rambutan are round to oval shaped about the size of a small plum. Reddish brown skin covered with soft spikes with translucent sweet juicy white flesh and inedible seed.

Selection

Choose firm, ripe fruit with bright red skin and no signs of decay at stem end.

Storage

Store in plastic bag or airtight container in refrigerator.

Uses

Eat fresh, fruit platters, fruit and savoury salads, in Asian cooking, pork, chicken and lamb dishes.

Preparation

The skin can be easily removed by running a knife gently round the centre to make the two halves part.

Rhubarb



Celery-like stalk, ranging from pink to red. Broad green leaves should not be eaten as they are toxic, containing high levels of oxalic acid.

Selection

Choose crisp, firm, long, brightly coloured stalks.

Storage

Keep in refrigerator, sealed in either a plastic bag or airtight container.

Preparation

Wash and cut stems.
Discard leaves.

Cooking

Stew by placing in saucepan with a little water and sugar. Simmer gently until rhubarb has softened.

Uses

Pies, sauces, puddings, muffins, jams and tarts.

Serving suggestion

Rhubarb can be very tart so mix with apples or pears, top with a crumble topping and bake in the oven.

Star Fruit or Carambola



Star fruit have a distinctive star shape, yellow/green skin and clean, crisp texture. Some varieties are sweet and some are slightly tart.

Selection

Choose firm, shiny fruit that are mostly yellow. Avoid fruit with brown spots or streaks.

Storage

In the refrigerator, tightly wrapped in a plastic bag for up to a week.

Preparation

Easy to use, don't need to be peeled or seeded. Slice across to give star shape.

Uses

Sliced in fruit salad or platters. Their distinctive shape makes a beautiful garnish.

Tangelo



Tangerine crossed with other citrus. Mineola is a mandarin/ grapefruit cross.

Selection

Choose fruit that is evenly coloured and that is heavy for its size. Avoid soft spots or blemishes.

Storage

Room temperature or in refrigerator.

Uses

Eat fresh, juice, salads both sweet and savoury, marinades and salad dressings, Asian recipes, duck, lamb, chicken and pork dishes.

Tamarillo or Tree Tomato



Egg shaped, about the size of a plum, smooth, glossy, either purple, red, orange or yellow skin. Inside flesh is black to orange surrounding edible small black seeds.

Selection

Choose only firm, unblemished, fragrant fruit, heavy for its size, which yields to gentle pressure.

Storage

Wrap in plastic and refrigerate.

Uses

Fruit platters, salads, chutneys, relishes and curries.

A-Z OF VEGETABLES

Asian Vegetables

Chinese Broccoli or Gai Lan



Chinese Cabbage or Wong Bok



Bok Choy, Pak Choy, Chinese Chard



Storage

In an airtight container in refrigerator crisper.

Selection

Choose clean, crisp leaves and compact flowers.

Uses

Braises and stir-fries.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 2-3 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 3 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Slightly softer and sweeter than ordinary cabbage.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Stir-fries, salads and coleslaws.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 2-3 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered

dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 3 minutes, stirring after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Cook shredded Chinese cabbage with crushed garlic, fresh ginger and chopped lean bacon for 2-3 minutes, stirring until tender.

A good substitute for cabbage or spinach.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Selection

Choose glossy leaves and white healthy stems.

Uses

Braises and stir-fries.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 2-3 minutes until wilted but still crisp.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 2-3 minutes until just cooked.

Serving suggestion

Stir fry sliced mushrooms, garlic and ginger quickly in a small amount of sesame oil. Add bok choy (cut in halves horizontally), and stir until wilted. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before use.

Asparagus



Selection

Tender straight stems with compact tips.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Uses

Entrees, vegetable side dishes, flans, frittatas, salads and stir-fries.

Cooking

▲ To use, snap off the woody ends. If stems are thick,

peel the lower part with a vegetable peeler.

- ▲ Boil or steam for 3-4 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish in 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 2 minutes until just tender.
- ▲ Barbecue by brushing with a little oil and cooking for 1-2 minutes, turning frequently until slightly blackened but still crisp.

Serving suggestion

Serve topped with a little salsa or baba ghanoush.

Avocado



Hass

Fuerte

Sharwill

Selection

Choose unblemished avocados showing slight give at the stem end.

Storage

To ripen, leave at room temperature. When ripe store in refrigerator for up to 2 days. When cut open, leave seed in and brush surface with water or lemon juice and cover closely with cling film.

Uses

Salads, cold dishes, spreads and dips. Tends to go bitter when heated or cooked.

Serving suggestion

Slice ½ avocado onto toasted multi-grain or rye bread. Top with lemon juice and pepper.

Bean



Beans

Butter Beans

Broad Beans

Selection

Choose firm, unblemished beans.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Stir-fries, salads and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

▲ Boil or steam for 4-5 minutes.

- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 4-5 minutes depending on quantity, stirring after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Cook beans. Gently heat a small amount of olive oil in a pan. Stir in some finely chopped fresh mint leaves then toss with the beans for 1-2 minutes. Serve as a vegetable side dish.

Beetroot



Easy to handle with the aid of disposable gloves to prevent staining hands.

Selection

Choose firm, plump beets.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Remove excess soil and leave tops intact.

Uses

Salads, roasts and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

(based on 3 medium unpeeled beetroot)

- ▲ Boil or steam for 45-50 minutes. Leave the peel on while cooking. After cooling the peel comes off easily.

- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 30-35 minutes or until tender, stirring after 15 minutes to ensure even cooking. Peel warm.

- ▲ Roast with other root vegetables, but keep separate, in moderately hot oven for 45-60 minutes. Peel but keep stem intact to avoid staining

Serving suggestion

Add chopped red onion and coriander leaves, a little oil, lemon juice and black pepper to grated peeled raw beetroot. Serve with a spoonful of low-fat natural yoghurt.

Broccoli



Common



Cathedral Broccoli

Selection

Choose tight compact heads with blue/green colour.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Uses

Stir-fries, salads, vegetable side dishes, frittatas and all short-time cooking dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 4-7 minutes, depending on size of floret.

- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 4-5 minutes until tender, stirring after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Stir-fry sliced broccoli florets in a small amount of oil with sliced almonds or cashew nuts. When broccoli is tender add soy, oyster or chilli sauce to flavour.

Brussels Sprouts



New varieties of Brussels sprouts are not bitter. The unpleasant smell sometimes associated with Brussels sprouts is due to over-cooking.

Selection

Choose small, compact and firm heads with bright green colour.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Uses

Vegetable side dishes, soups, stir-fries, salads and garnishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 6-8 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a single layer in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 6-8 minutes until just tender, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking. If sprouts are cut in half lengthways they will be tender in approximately 4 minutes.

Serving suggestion

Toss cooked Brussels sprouts in a pan after frying a lean rasher of chopped bacon and a few breadcrumbs and chopped almonds.

Cabbage



Common



Savoy



Red Cabbage

Selection

Select heavy heads of cabbage with shiny leaves.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Salads, vegetable side dishes and stir-fries.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam finely sliced cabbage in a minimum of

water, uncovered, for 4-8 minutes or until just tender, stirring well.

- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2-3 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 5-8 minutes or until tender.

Serving suggestion

Finely slice cabbage and combine with grated carrot, chopped onion and capsicum. Toss with coleslaw dressing and serve with grills and barbecued foods.

Capsicum



Green Capsicum



Red Capsicum



Yellow Capsicum



Orange Capsicum



Purple Capsicum

Red and green varieties come from the same plant, with red capsicums allowed extra time on the plant to develop colour.

Selection

Choose capsicum with firm glossy skins, no spots or shrivel.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

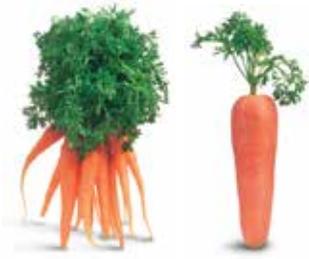
Uses

Stir-fries, casseroles and salads, and stuffed with meat and rice mixtures.

Serving suggestion

Cut into four, remove seeds. Grill or roast until skin blackens. Seal in plastic bag for several minutes to loosen the skin. Peel away the skin. Serve on grilled Turkish bread topped with other roast vegetables and meat.

Carrots



Selection

Choose firm, orange carrots with no signs of softness

Storage

Unwashed in an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Salads, soups, casseroles, stir-fries, cakes, muffins and raw with dips.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 5-7 minutes until tender.
- ▲ Microwave sliced in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 4-6 minutes, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking.
- ▲ Roast large chunks with potatoes, pumpkin, sweet potato and parsnips in moderately hot oven for 45-60 minutes.

Serving suggestion

Cook baby carrots or sliced larger carrots until just tender then toss in a serving dish with a little crushed garlic, honey, orange juice and chopped mint.

Cauliflower



Selection

Choose a clean white head with firm tight clusters heavy for their size. The leaves should be fresh and green.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Vegetable side dishes, soups, stir-fries and raw with dips or salads.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam florets with a chunk of lemon for 4-5 minutes until tender. The lemon helps alleviate the smell and keeps the cauliflower white.
- ▲ Microwave florets in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 5-6 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Serve cooked cauliflower with cheesy sauce or topped with a little low-fat natural yoghurt and sprinkled with ground cumin, paprika and crushed coriander seeds or chopped fresh coriander.

Celery



Selection

Choose fresh bunches with tight formation. Avoid browned or cracked outside stalks.

Storage

Unwashed in an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper with top and base removed (any clean unblemished bases are good flavour for soups and stews).

Uses

Soups, stews, stir-fries, salads, raw with dips and short lengths filled with low-fat cottage cheese or peanut butter for snacks.

Serving suggestion

Trim celery leaves and quarter sticks. Braise with chicken stock covered with baking paper in a moderately hot oven for 30-40 minutes. Set celery aside and boil remaining liquid until syrupy then serve over celery. Serve as a vegetable side dish.

Celeriac



A gnarled brownish-white vegetable which is the root of a special celery.

Selection

Choose smallish roots heavy for their size. Those with soft spots signal decay.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Salads and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

To keep celeriac white, always cook with a little lemon juice (or vinegar) added to the water.

- ▲ Boil or steam chunks for approximately 30 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2-3 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 15-20 minutes until tender, stirring after 10 minutes to ensure even cooking.
- ▲ Bake chunks with potatoes, pumpkin, sweet potato and parsnips in moderately hot oven for 45-60 minutes.

Serving suggestion

Cook chunks of celeriac and potato together until tender. Mash and serve.

Corn or Sweet Corn



Selection

Select corn with a green husk.

Storage

For a short time in an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Leave husk on to prevent dehydration.

Uses

Vegetable side dishes, soups, stir-fries, salads, fritters and frittatas.

Cooking

▲ To use, remove husks, silky threads and base.

▲ Boil or steam for 10-15 minutes until tender.

▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 5-6 minutes, turning after 3 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

With husks still attached, soak cobs for an hour in cold water, and barbecue for 25 minutes or until cooked, turning several times.

Cucumber



Common

Continental

Lebanese

Selection

Choose firm, fresh, dark green cucumbers.

Storage

In refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

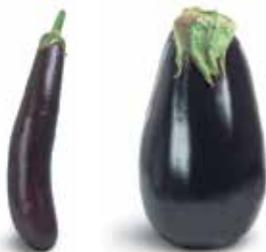
Uses

Salads and dips.

Serving suggestion

Slice continental or Lebanese cucumber and layer with sliced ripe tomatoes and sliced red onion. Drizzle with a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and sprinkle with chopped fresh herbs and freshly ground black pepper.

Eggplant, Aubergine or Brinjal



Gourmet Eggplant

Large Eggplant

Eggplants are pear-shaped and have purple shiny skin. They are categorised by size.

Selection

Choose firm, dark and shiny eggplant heavy for its size. It should have flesh that bounces back when lightly pressed. Avoid those with brown spots or shrivelled skin.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Casseroles, layered vegetable dishes, curries, baba ghanoush and stuffed with meat and rice.

Cooking

▲ To de-gorge, slice and sprinkle with salt, rinsing after 30 minutes and drying the surfaces well with paper towels. This also stops absorption of excess oil when grilling, barbecuing or pan-frying.

▲ Line a grill pan with foil, spray slices of eggplant with a little olive oil and grill each side for approximately 2-3 minutes until golden brown.

▲ Pan-fry in a heavy non-stick frypan.

Serving suggestion

Grill or barbecue slices of eggplant lightly brushed or sprayed with oil and serve with grilled capsicum and zucchini slices to accompany chicken. May be served as a light meal on toasted ciabatta or Turkish bread.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before use.

Fennel



Resembles celery and has aniseed flavours.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Selection

Choose firm white fennel with fresh green leaves.

Uses

Salads, soups, stuffings and vegetable side dishes.

Serving suggestion

Slice and add to any salad. Pan-fry quartered fennel bulbs in a little olive oil and garlic until golden and tender. Serve sprinkled with chopped fennel leaves, a few sliced black olives and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.

Lettuce



Iceberg



Buttercrunch



Chicory



Cos



Mignonette



Oakleaf



Radicchio



Red Coral



Rocket



Watercress

Selection

Choose lettuce that is firm with crisp leaves. Check for decay at stem end.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase. Store the outer leaves of whole lettuce separately and add to soups.

Preparation

Tear off leaves. Rinse well in cold water to remove grit, shake to dry.

Uses

Salads, sandwiches, soups, pasta sauces, stir-fries and vegetable side dishes.

Serving suggestion

Roll any tasty salad combination with sliced chicken, cucumber and mango chutney in a large lettuce leaf to enclose. Slice open a long bread roll, spread with labneh or cottage cheese and lay the enclosed salad inside the roll. Wrap tightly in cling film and pack in lunchbox with apple and a frozen fruit juice.

Mushroom



Selection

Look for freshness, firmness and colour. Withered mushrooms are a sign of age.

Storage

In a brown paper bag in refrigerator crisper (plastic makes mushrooms 'sweat').

Preparation

Wipe mushrooms with damp cloth. If clean and undamaged they do not require peeling. Stems may be used in stock, soups and for flavouring.

Uses

Casseroles, soups, stir-fries, grills, barbecues, vegetable side dishes, risotto, pasta and stuffings.

Serving suggestion

Choose large flats, brush with oil and grill or barbecue for 2-3 minutes on each side until cooked. Top with chopped tomato, spring onion and black olives and lightly sprinkle with grated parmesan or romano cheese. Grill until cheese browns and serve at once. Slice button mushrooms in half and pan-fry until golden brown. Place in a bowl and pour over Asian-style dressing. Cover and leave in refrigerator for 2 hours and serve as salad topped with chopped herbs and freshly ground black pepper.

Onion



Selection

Choose firm, unblemished product.

Storage

Chives, spring onions and leeks should be stored in an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. All others should be stored in a cool dark place in open trays.

Uses

Soups, casseroles, stir-fries, omelettes, frittatas, pancakes, salads and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ When preparing leeks, wash them thoroughly before cooking as the leaves often collect dirt.
- ▲ Boil or steam for 10 minutes until tender (whole onions or leeks).
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on high (100%) for 5-6 minutes

or until tender, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking.

- ▲ Roast with root vegetables in a moderately hot oven for 45-60 minutes and serve with roast meat.
- ▲ Barbecue by brushing with a little oil and cooking until golden brown.

Serving suggestion

For caramelised onion, place onion wedges in a non-stick pan with a little olive oil, bay leaf and a sprig of rosemary. Simmer covered for 10 minutes or until softened. Remove lid and continue to cook, stirring until a rich brown colour. Store covered in refrigerator and use on grilled steak or tofu burgers, or add to pasta sauces, frittatas and pizza toppings. For a great salad, thinly slice white, red or salad onion layered with peeled sliced oranges and black olives.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before use.

Parsnips



Selection

Choose firm, white, small parsnips with no signs of softness.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Uses

Soups, casseroles, vegetable side dishes and baked dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil or steam for 8 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave chunks in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water and cook on HIGH (100%) for 5-6 minutes, turning after 3 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Bake chunks of parsnip with pumpkin and potatoes around a lamb or beef roast.

Pea



Peas (Pod)



Sugar Snap



Snow Pea

Selection

Frozen peas are convenient and available all year round. When available choose fresh, firm, bright green peas that are not shrivelled or wilted.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Peas straight from the pod: vegetable side dishes, casseroles, risotto and omelettes.

Sugar snap peas: vegetable side dishes.

Snow peas: salads, stir-fries, pasta and rice dishes.

Snow pea shoots: salads, sandwiches and snacks.

Preparation

Sugar snap and snow peas have strings running along both sides of the pod. Before using peas snap off the stem and pull off both strings.

Cooking

Fresh green peas

- ▲ Boil or steam for 4-5 minutes.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 3 minutes
Snow and sugar snap peas
- ▲ Boil or steam for 2 minutes, or until tender.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water on HIGH (100%) for 2 minutes.

Serving suggestion

Finely slice a few spring onions and a couple of outside lettuce leaves and place in a saucepan with a small, finely diced carrot. Add a teaspoon of margarine, freshly shelled peas and a little water. Cover and simmer for 5-6 minutes or until peas are tender. Season with freshly ground black pepper and serve with spring lamb and boiled minted potatoes.

Potato



Carlingford



Delaware



Desiree



Kestrel



Nadine



Royal Blue



Ruby Lou

Many varieties of potatoes suitable for various cooking methods grow all year round.

Selection

Choose unblemished potatoes with no visible scars, damage or greening.

Storage

Remove from plastic bags and store alone in a cool, dark, dry place away from onions. A cardboard box or brown paper bag is ideal. Do not refrigerate or store for longer than necessary or potatoes will turn green and go soft. In either case, discard.

Uses

Soups, stews, vegetable side dishes, frittatas, omelettes, scones and bread.

Cooking

- ▲ May be peeled or skins scrubbed and left on. If peeling, remove only the thinnest layer to prevent loss

of nutrients.

- ▲ Boil or steam for 15-20 minutes, simmering until tender. Time is dependent on size of chunks. Fast boiling may cause potatoes to break up.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2-3 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 10-12 minutes, turning after 5 minutes to ensure even cooking. Time is dependent on size and quantity.

Serving suggestion

For salads, add a little lemon juice or white vinegar to the water to preserve the colour. For really crisp roast potatoes bring to the boil for 2-3 minutes just prior to roasting. Drain and brush with oil and cook in a hot oven. For smooth mash, drain the cooked potatoes and toss over heat to remove moisture. Mash to remove lumps and add milk when smooth. Warm milk is best.

Pumpkin



Butternut Pumpkin



Gem Squash



Golden Nugget



Ironbark Pumpkin



Japanese Pumpkin



Orange minikin

Storage

In cling film in refrigerator crisper for cut pieces, or at room temperature for whole pumpkins.

Uses

Soups, casseroles, curries, pasta and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil for 8-10 minutes.
- ▲ Steam for 15-20 minutes or until tender.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon

water on HIGH (100%) for 5-6 minutes or until tender, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Slice off the lids of mini pumpkins and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Bake with the lids at 180°C for 30 minutes or until tender. Fill with a mixture of chopped spinach, finely chopped almonds, grated nutmeg and ground black pepper. Cover with the lid and return to the oven for 10-15 minutes to heat the filling.

All fruit and vegetables should be washed before use.

Radish



Crisp, small vegetable with red skin and white flesh with a peppery flavour.

Selection

Select firm, fresh looking radishes.

Storage

In refrigerator crisper with all tops and leaves removed. Use within a week of purchase. To restore crispness and crunch, stand in chilled water before using.

Uses

Salads and dips.

Preparation

Scrub radishes under running water. Do not peel. Cut top and root end, then slice, dice, shred or serve whole.

Serving suggestion

Serve finely sliced with chopped spring onions and orange segments tossed in a tasty salad dressing.

Spinach



English Spinach



White Silverbeet



Red Silverbeet

Choose fresh, dark green bunches, with no signs of blemish or wilting.

Storage

In an airtight bag in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon as possible after purchase.

Uses

Stir-fries, salads, pies, quiches, pasta and rice dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Spinach is often gritty and sandy so wash well before using. Rinse leaves in cold water, shake to dry.
- ▲ Boil water, drop spinach in and remove immediately. Drain.
- ▲ Steam for 2-3 minutes until wilted. Drain.

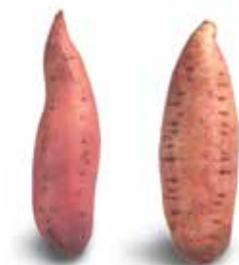
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 1 tablespoon water for 2 minutes on HIGH (100%) or until wilted.

- ▲ Stir-fry by adding to ingredients at the end of cooking and stirring until just wilted.

Serving suggestion

Steam spinach and drain well, top with poached egg and sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese and freshly ground black pepper. Tender baby leaves, sliced ripe pears and walnuts, tossed with a lemon and olive oil dressing and topped with grated fresh parmesan or romano cheese makes a great salad.

Sweet Potato or Kumara



Sweet Potato
(Gold)

Sweet Potato
(White)

Selection

Avoid those that are cracked, bruised or soft.

Storage

In a cool, dark, well-ventilated place, maybe in the potato box.

Uses

Soups, curries, stir-fries and vegetable side dishes.

Cooking

- ▲ Sweet potatoes should be brushed, cleaned and peeled thickly.
- ▲ Cooking time is dependent on quantity and size of rounds.
- ▲ Boil or steam for 10-15 minutes or until tender (cut into thick rounds).

▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 8-10 minutes, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking.

▲ Bake chunks of sweet potato with potato and pumpkin when roasting meat.

Serving suggestion

Grill slices of sweet potato brushed with oil and sprinkled with chopped rosemary leaves until tender and brown. Serve with grilled chops. Serve with zucchini, tomato halves and eggplant slices.

Turnip and Swede



Turnips

Swede

Widely available in soup packs.

Turnips: yellow or white, tinged with purple near the leaf base.

Swedes: pale yellow, tinged with purple.

Selection

Select small turnips and swedes that feel heavy for their size.

Uses

Turnips: vegetable side dishes, soups, casseroles, stir-fries and roasts.

Swedes: soups, casseroles and mashes (cooked and mashed with potatoes they are known as 'tatties' and 'neeps' in Scotland and accompany haggis).

Cooking

- ▲ Wash thoroughly then peel.
- ▲ Boil or steam for 10-15 minutes until tender.

Cooking time is dependent on size and quantity.

▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for approximately 8 minutes, stirring after 4 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Serving suggestion

Place peeled chunks of turnip or swede (or both) into a lightly greased baking dish. Cover with good flavoured stock, lay baking paper on top and braise at 180°C for 45-60 minutes until tender. Move dish to the stove top (if flame-proof) or tip into a saucepan and boil fast, stirring until vegetables are coated with a syrupy sauce.

Season well and sprinkle with chopped herbs. Serve as a vegetable side dish.

Tomato

Cherry Tomato



Tomato



Roma Tomato

Botanically a fruit but used as a vegetable.

Selection

Select bright coloured tomatoes free from blemish.

Storage

At room temperature away from direct sunlight to allow for natural ripening. To avoid over-ripening tomatoes can be stored in refrigerator crisper.

Uses

Sandwiches, salads, soups, casseroles, vegetable side dishes, sauces and dressings.

Serving suggestion

Layer slices of grilled eggplant with slices of tomato and bocconcini or mozzarella cheese. Scatter a few fresh basil leaves on top and a drizzle of Italian salad dressing.

Zucchini and Squash



Zucchini



Baby Zucchini



Squash

Zucchini/courgette: similar to a cucumber. Varying sizes and either dark green or yellow skinned. Also comes in a baby variety.

Squash: small, flat and circular with a scalloped edge and are pale green or yellow depending on variety.

Selection

Select both with glossy, unblemished skins and no soft areas.

Storage

In an airtight bag (preferably paper or cloth to prevent 'sweating') in refrigerator crisper. Use as soon after purchase as possible.

Uses

Soups, salads, rice dishes, pasta, stir-fries, muffins and cakes.

Cooking

- ▲ Boil zucchini: Not recommended due to high moisture content.

Squash: Cut into quarters and boil for 2-3 minutes until just tender.

- ▲ Steam for 4-6 minutes depending on size until just tender.
- ▲ Microwave in a covered dish with 2 tablespoons water on HIGH (100%) for 4-5 minutes, turning after 2 minutes to ensure even cooking.
- ▲ Grill slices by brushing with a little oil and grilling with eggplant and tomato for a tasty way of serving vegetables.

Serving suggestion

For a quick pasta dish, pan-fry thin slices of zucchini until golden brown, add a little crushed garlic and a few cherry tomatoes and toss until tomatoes begin to collapse. Mix in a few chopped basil leaves (or parsley) and stir into hot fettuccine with a little grated parmesan cheese and freshly ground black pepper.



LiveLighter Online

The livelighter.com.au website includes further information about the campaign and its messages, along with helpful tips, brand new healthy recipes and other tools to help people live healthier lives.

It also features the stories of real Australians, who have taken the first steps towards a healthier future.

Want more help to LiveLighter? Register now at livelighter.com.au to access your own personalised LiveLighter meal and activity planner. Designed by our experts, the planner will guide you towards a healthier lifestyle and motivate you to stay on the right track. Best of all, it's free!

For more information

We welcome your queries, suggestions and feedback. The LiveLighter website contains a wealth of information about the campaign. If you wish to contact the team directly, you can:

Email livelighter@cancervic.org.au



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