

Produce Storage

Maximizing the shelf-life of your fruits and vegetables

Before You Store

Do not wash fruits and vegetables before you store them, only immediately prior to eating or preparing them. Water can be absorbed by the produce and promote loss of flavor and speed decomposition.

It is recommended, though not completely necessary, to store fruits and vegetables in perforated grocery bags or plastic bags with holes poked in the sides. Keeping produce in unperforated or closed plastic bags can promote growth of mold and bacteria.

In the Fridge

Know your boundaries

Some fruits give off ethylene gas which promotes ripening and thus should be stored separately from fruit which do not need to be ripened quickly. Fruit that emit ethylene gas include avocados, under-ripe bananas, mangoes, kiwi, apricots, cantaloupe, and plums. Store these fruit in crisper drawers with low humidity, vegetables with high humidity, and other fruits separately.

Always keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs on a separate, lower shelf than produce. If there is a chance the package may drip, seal it in a plastic bag or place it on a plate. In addition, use separate knives and cutting boards specifically for produce and raw meats during preparation.

Use a thermometer

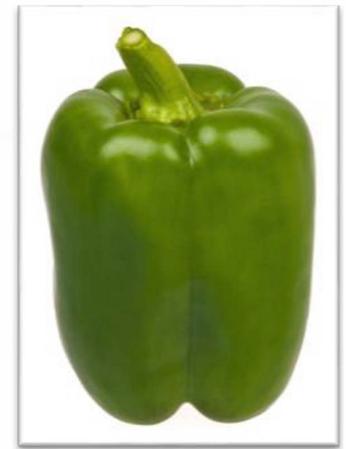
Refrigerators should be held below 40°F and freezers below 0°F. It is advised that a specific thermometer, called a refrigerator thermometer, should be used. Produce being stored on the counter or in a pantry should be kept in a cool, dry place.



Produce Storage Chart

Store in the refrigerator Consume within			
Apples	4-6 weeks	Asparagus	3-4 days
Apricots	2-5 days	Broccoli	3-5 days
Blueberries	10 days	Carrots	2-3 weeks
Cherries	7 days	Cauliflower	3-5 days
Grapes	1 week	Green beans	3-5 days
Pears	3-5 days	Leafy greens	1-4 days
Raspberries	3-6 days	Mushrooms	3-7 days
Strawberries	3-6 days	Summer squash	4-5 days
Ripen on counter, then store in the refrigerator Consume within			
Avocados	3-4 days	Peaches	3-5 days
Kiwi fruit	3-6 days	Plums	3-5 days
Store only at room temperature Consume within			
Bananas	When ripe	Cucumbers	When ripe
Grapefruit	10 days	Eggplant	When ripe
Lemons	10 days	Garlic*	1 month
Limes	10 days	Jicama	2-3 weeks
Mandarins	10 days	Onions, dry*	1 month
Mangoes	3-5 days	Peppers	1-2 weeks
Oranges	10 days	Potatoes*	1-2 months
Pineapple	When ripe	Sweet potatoes*	1-2 months
Pomegranates	2-5 days	Tomatoes	When ripe
Watermelon	When ripe	Winter squash	2-6 weeks
*Store garlic, onions, potatoes, & sweet potatoes in dry, dark area in pantry if possible			

Information from USDA's FoodKeeper App & UC Davis Postharvest Technology



Keep in Mind...

Some produce may last longer than these time frames while others will go bad before. To tell whether produce has spoiled, look for mold, dark spots, and wilting.

If you do not think you will eat the produce in time, you can always seal it in a freezer-safe plastic bag and freeze it for later. For example, most fruit can be frozen and later used to make delicious smoothies.

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It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-430-3244.

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