

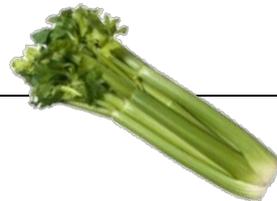


How to select, store, and use locally grown vegetables

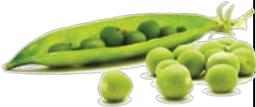
Approximate harvest and availability dates listed are for New York State.

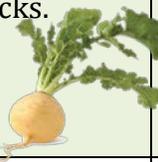
VEGETABLE	SELECTION	STORAGE	HOW TO USE
<p>Asparagus – harvested and available May through mid June.</p> 	<p>Choose spears that are crisp, round and straight, with tight pointed tips that have not begun to flower. Choose asparagus spears that are the same thickness so that cooking time will be similar. Spears that are flat are usually tough.</p>	<p>Asparagus should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and used within 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Wash well and trim off about an inch at the end of the spear if it is tough. Asparagus are best when steamed until just tender. They can be laid flat in a steamer or stood upright in a tall pot in about 1 inch of water. Cook them for 4 to 7 minutes or until they are tender. Serve as a hot vegetable or as a cold ingredient in salads.</p>
<p>Beans – Green, wax, snap, string beans - harvested and available from the beginning of mid June until mid October.</p>	<p>Choose slender, smooth, crisp beans with slightly velvety pods and a bright color. Choose beans without big seeds (these are older, tougher beans).</p>	<p>Beans should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and are best if used within 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Wash well and remove stems. Serve cooked.</p> 
<p>Beets – harvested from June until the end of November, available from June through February.</p>	<p>Choose firm, smooth beets with a deep red color, and fresh looking tops if available. Choose beets that are the same size.</p>	<p>Beets should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 2 weeks.</p> 	<p>Wash beets well. Beet greens should be removed but leave an inch or two of the stem. Do not peel beets until after they are cooked. Cool cooked beets slightly and rub off their skins.</p>

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<p>Broccoli – harvested and available from the beginning of June until the end of November.</p>	<p>Choose broccoli with compact, firm cluster of flower buds that have not opened, also look for dark green leaves and stems.</p>	<p>Refrigerate unwashed broccoli in a plastic bag for one week.</p>	<p>Wash broccoli, remove tough stems. Eat raw or steamed.</p>
<p>Cabbage – harvested mid June until the beginning of December, available from mid June until end of March.</p>	<p>Choose firm heavy cabbages that are free of yellowing leaves, splits or soft spots.</p>	<p>Cabbages should be stored in the refrigerator and used within 2 weeks.</p>	<p>Wash well and remove wilted leaves. Steam or stir fry or eat raw as in coleslaw or as an addition to salads.</p>
<p>Carrots – harvested from mid July until the end of December, available from mid July until mid April.</p>	<p>Choose carrots that are firm, smooth, evenly shaped and without cracks.</p>	<p>Carrots should be stored in the refrigerator wrapped in plastic and are best if used within 1-2 weeks. Remove greens if still attached.</p>	<p>Wash well, and remove top. Carrots can be eaten raw or cooked.</p>
<p>Cauliflower – harvested and available the months of July and August and then again from the beginning of October until the middle of December.</p>	<p>Choose clean, white, firm heads without spots or bruises. Avoid those with open flower clusters.</p>	<p>Cauliflower should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and is best if used within one week.</p>	<p>Wash well, separate into flowerettes. Enjoy flowerettes raw or cooked.</p>
<p>Celery – harvested and available from mid July to mid November.</p>	<p>Choose crisp bunches of celery with fresh green leaves.</p>	<p>Celery should be stored in the refrigerator. If wrapped in plastic, it usually lasts 2 weeks. It will last longer if wrapped in aluminum foil.</p>	<p>Wash well and trim ends. Can be eaten raw or cooked.</p>



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<p>Corn – harvested and available from mid July to mid October.</p> 	<p>Look for fresh green husks with tassels and no decay. Avoid corn with discolored or dry looking husks, stem ends or kernels. Check that ears are free of worm injury. Cobs with small, shiny kernels are generally sweeter and more tender than those with large, deep yellow, dull kernels.</p>	<p>Refrigerate the ears of corn in their husks until ready to cook. It is not necessary to wash corn before cooking. Use within a few days.</p>	<p>Corn is best cooked as soon after picking as possible. Husk just before cooking. Serve as corn on the cob or cut kernels off the cob.</p>
<p>Cucumbers – harvested and available from August to mid October.</p> 	<p>Choose firm, green and slender cucumbers that do not have soft spots and wrinkled skin.</p>	<p>Cucumbers should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 1 week.</p>	<p>Wash well and remove ends. Cucumbers are almost always eaten raw with or without the skin.</p>
<p>Eggplant – harvested and available from August to through October.</p>	<p>Choose firm, heavy eggplant that is even colored, has shiny skin and is free of scars.</p> 	<p>Eggplant should be stored in the refrigerator and is best if used within a week.</p>	<p>Wash well and trim top. As eggplant ages, the skin becomes bitter and may require peeling. Can be broiled, baked, sautéed, steamed, stewed or fried.</p>
<p>Lettuce – harvested and available from mid May until mid October.</p>	<p>Choose crisp, brightly colored lettuce that does not have yellow, wilted, or dry leaves.</p>	<p>Lettuce should be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and is best if used within 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Remove individual leaves and wash well. Pat or spin it dry before using. Lettuce is usually eaten raw in salads or on sandwiches.</p>
<p>Onions – harvested the end of July until mid October, available from the end of July until the end of April.</p>	<p>Choose onions that are firm and have a hard dry skin. Avoid onions that have soft spots or sprouts.</p> 	<p>Store in a cool, dark, dry place. They may need to be refrigerated in the summer. Do not store near potatoes.</p>	<p>Remove the papery skin and first layer before using. They can be eaten raw or cooked; whole, chopped, sliced, boiled, baked or sautéed.</p>

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<p>Peas – harvested and available the beginning of June until the end of July.</p>	<p>Pick pods that are crisp, green, and not too fat (large peas are old and tough).</p> 	<p>Whole peapods should be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and are best if used within 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Shell peas can be cooked in their shells or shelled first and then steamed or boiled. Snow peas or sugar snap peas can be eaten shell and all, raw as well as cooked.</p>
<p>Peppers – harvested and available from August to mid October.</p> 	<p>Choose firm, smooth peppers that have good color and shape and do not have soft spots or wrinkled skin.</p>	<p>Peppers should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 3-5 days.</p>	<p>Wash well and remove seeds and stem. Can slice into strips or chunks and serve raw or serve cooked.</p>
<p>Potatoes – harvested from the beginning of July until the end of October. Available from the beginning of July until the end of August.</p>	<p>Choose firm and fairly smooth potatoes. Avoid potatoes that have sprouted or have wilted or wrinkled skin, cut surfaces, green or dark areas.</p>	<p>Store in a cool, dry, dark place. Do not wash before storing. Do not refrigerate, and store away from onions.</p>	<p>Wash well. Potatoes can be steamed, boiled, baked, roasted, or microwaved.</p>
<p>Pumpkins – harvested and available from September until the end of November.</p>	<p>The smaller pumpkins are better for cooking. Choose firm, well-shaped pumpkins that are heavy for their size and have a hard, smooth, tough, bright orange skin. Do not choose those that are sunken or have moldy spots.</p>	<p>Store in a cool dry place for up to 1 month.</p> 	<p>Wash and remove seeds. Cut into quarters or smaller pieces. Boil, steam, or bake. Can peel before cooking if desired. The skin is inedible. The seeds can be washed, and then roasted on a cookie sheet.</p>
<p>Radishes –harvested and available from the beginning of May through November.</p>	<p>Choose smooth, crisp, well-formed radishes, without black spots. If bought with the greens still attached, the greens should be fresh and have a bright color.</p>	<p>Radishes should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if use within two weeks.</p> 	<p>Radishes should be scrubbed and washed with cold water. Trim tops and bottoms. Do not peel. Can eat radishes as is or add to salads.</p>

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Spinach and other greens (Swiss chard, beet, collard, mustard) – harvested and available mid May through mid November.	Choose crisp leaves with a good green color and fresh odor. 	Greens should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and are best if used within 3 days.	Wash leaves well to remove sand and grit. All greens can be served steamed. Spinach and Swiss chard can be eaten raw or added to salads.
Summer squash – harvested and available June until mid October.	Choose squashes on the small side that are crisp and free of soft spots and wrinkle skin.	Summer squash should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within one week.	Wash well. Do not peel, just cut off the ends. This squash can be eaten raw or cooked. 
Tomatoes – harvested and available from mid June through October.	Choose firm, unblemished fruit with a smooth skin and a distinct tomato smell.	Store at room temperature for up to 5 days. 	Wash well, remove stem if present. Serve raw or cooked in your favorite recipe.
Turnips – harvested from the mid July until the end of November, available from mid July until the end of March.	Choose small, firm turnips that are free of scars or cracks. 	Turnips should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 1-2 weeks.	Wash and peel, trim off top. Turnip can be eaten raw or cooked.
Winter squash (acorn, butternut, buttercup, Hubbard, spaghetti) – harvested from mid August until mid November, available from mid August until the end of March.	Choose firm, well-shaped squash that are heavy for their size and have a hard, smooth, tough skin. Do not choose those that are sunken or have moldy spots.	Store in a cool dry place for up to 3 months. 	Wash and remove seeds. Cut into quarters or smaller pieces. Boil, steam, or bake. Can peel before cooking if desired. The skin is inedible.

Adapted from The Market Basket Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Guide, New York State WIC Program, Farmers Market Nutrition Program. New York State harvest and availability dates from www.agmkt.state.ny.us/HarvestCalendar.html and www.prideofny.com.