

# autumnfresh

Top tips • Quick meals • Best buys • Nutritional advice for autumn fruit and vegetables by Rosemary Stanton OAM PhD



## eggplant

**to buy** Select small to medium-sized firm eggplants with glossy skin. They should feel heavy for their size.

**to store** Store eggplants in a plastic bag in the crisper of the fridge. Use within 3 days.

**to prepare** It's not always necessary to salt eggplants to draw out any bitter juices. Fresh young eggplants do not require salting. Salt eggplants if using for frying.

**to salt** Slice or chop and place in a colander, sprinkle with salt and leave for 20 minutes. Rinse and dry well with paper towel before cooking.



## Limes

**to buy** Select glossy-skinned vivid green limes which feel heavy for their size.

**to store** Store limes in a fruit bowl in a well-ventilated place for up to 5 days. For longer storage, place in the fridge.

**cook's tip** Roll a lime in your hands for 30 seconds before juicing to maximise the juice yield.

**meal in a flash** Marinate chicken thigh fillets in lime juice with chopped coriander and red chilli for 2 hours. Barbecue and serve with a cucumber salad.



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## Beurre Bosc pears

**to buy** Choose firm Beurre Bosc pears with cinnamon to russet brown skin.

**to store** Store pears at room temperature out of direct sunlight until they yield to gentle pressure at the stem end. Store soft pears in the fridge and use within 2 days. These pears can be eaten while still quite firm if desired.

**cook's tip** Sweet and buttery flavoured, Beurre Bosc is the ideal pear for cooking.

**Fresh for Kids**® Wrap cored pear wedges in strips of sliced reduced-fat tasty cheese.



## red onions

**to buy** Select vivid coloured red onions with dry crackling skin. Avoid those with signs of green sprouts or soft flesh.

**to store** Remove from plastic bag. Leave red onions in a dark, cool, well-ventilated place for up to 1 month.

**cook's tip** Use red onions for barbecuing and roasting. Finely slice and add to salads and coleslaw.

**meal in a flash** Gently pan-fry sliced red onions in olive oil with fresh thyme and a little whole grain mustard until golden. Serve on a steak sandwich.

## green onions (shallots)

**to buy** Sold by the bunch, green onions are often sold as shallots. They're picked before the bulb has matured so they're slim with the roots still attached.

**to store** Remove ties or rubber band. Wrap bunch in paper towel and store in a sealed plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 5 days.

**to prepare** Strip off any damaged or tough outer leaves. Trim the roots and very dark green tops. Slice as required.

**cook's tip** Use sliced green onions in salads and stir-fries.



## pomegranates

**to buy** Select firm, bright red to pink-blushed pomegranates that feel heavy for their size.

**to store** Leave fruit at room temperature out of direct sunlight for up to one week.

**to prepare** Using a small sharp knife, pierce the thin leathery skin and slice the fruit open. Gently squeeze the fruit then using a teaspoon, dislodge the edible ruby-red seeds from the pithy membrane.

**cook's tip** Add crunchy and juicy pomegranate seeds to fruit salads, or sprinkle over rice pudding and sweet desserts.





## avocados

**to buy** Choose avocado which yields slightly to gentle pressure at the stem end for immediate eating and a firm avocado for eating in a few days. Shape and skin texture depends on variety.

**to store** Leave avocado at room temperature out of direct sunlight until it yields to gentle pressure. Speed up ripening by placing in a paper bag with a banana. Refrigerate ripe fruit and use within 2 days.

**to prepare** Halve lengthways, twist gently to separate halves, remove seed and peel. Drizzle with lemon juice to prevent browning.



## snake beans

**to buy** Choose firm snake beans about 30cm–40cm long with some flexibility when slightly bent. Avoid very limp beans.

**to store** Store snake beans in a plastic bag in the crisper of the fridge. Use within 2–3 days.

**cook's tip** Cook rapidly. Add chopped snake beans to stir-fries, noodle dishes, Thai curries and soups.

**meal in a flash** Stir-fry snake beans with garlic, green onions, thinly sliced rump steak and oyster or black bean sauce. Serve with steamed Jasmine rice.

## Golden Delicious apples

**to buy** Choose firm apples with golden yellow skin.

**to store** Apples keep best in the crisper section of the fridge. Separate apples from green vegetables when storing to avoid greens deteriorating rapidly.

**cook's tip** Golden Delicious apples are excellent for cooking – bake them whole and use them in tarts, pies, cakes and muffins.

**Fresh for Kids®** Gently poach or microwave sliced apples in a honey syrup until tender. Serve with ice-cream.



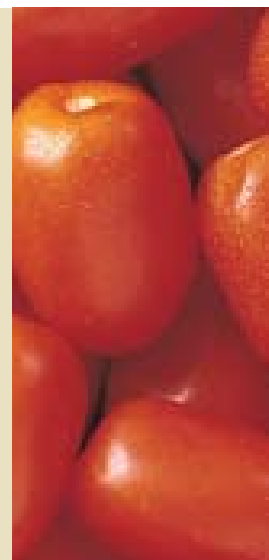
## Roma (egg) tomatoes

**to buy** Choose plump Roma tomatoes with an elongated egg-like shape. Ripe tomatoes are rich red in colour with a distinct aroma.

**to store** Leave tomatoes in a single layer at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, until ripe. Allow 2–7 days for ripening.

**cook's tip** Fleshy Roma tomatoes are ideal for cooking. Use them for tomato sauces and soups, slow-roasting and for chutney.

**Fresh for Kids®** Add sliced Roma tomatoes to pizza toppings.



## seedless grapes

**to buy** Select plump grapes which are firmly attached to fresh-looking stems. Grapes don't ripen or sweeten further once picked. Autumn seedless varieties include Thompson, Menindee, Flame and Red Globe.

**to store** Store unwashed grapes in a plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 2–3 days.

**to prepare** Wash grapes just before eating. Snip bunches into serving size portions if desired.

**Fresh for Kids®** Add grapes to fruit salads and freeze them for kids to enjoy their cool crunchiness.

## mangosteens

**to buy** Choose mangosteens with smooth, deep purple, leathery skin with fresh green stems attached. Fruit should feel heavy for its size.

**to store** Leave in a fruit bowl at room temperature out of direct sunlight. Use within 2 days for best eating.

**to prepare** Carefully cut a circle around the middle of the fruit through to the flesh. Twist to remove the top part and carefully scoop out the succulent and sweet segmented flesh.

**Fresh for Kids®** Simply cut mangosteens in halve and let kids scoop out the flesh with a teaspoon.



## best buys in autumn

### MARCH fruit

Apples  
Bananas  
Figs  
Fuji fruit  
Grapes  
Guava  
Kiwifruit  
Limes  
Mangosteens  
Nashi  
Oranges – Valencia  
Passionfruit  
Pawpaw  
Pears  
Plums  
Pomegranates  
Quinces  
Tamarillo

### vegetables

Asian Greens  
Beans  
Broccoli  
Cauliflowers  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant  
Lettuce  
Okra  
Onions  
Potatoes  
Pumpkin  
Sweetcorn  
Tomatoes  
Zucchini

### APRIL fruit

Apples  
Avocados  
Bananas  
Custard apples  
Fuji fruit  
Grapes  
Guava  
Kiwifruit  
Limes  
Mandarins – Imperial  
Nashi  
Pears  
Passionfruit  
Persimmons  
Pomegranates  
Quinces  
Tamarillo

### vegetables

Asian greens  
Beans  
Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts  
Cabbages  
Capsicums  
Chokos  
Fennel  
Leeks  
Mushrooms  
Okra  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Silverbeet  
Spinach  
Turnips

### MAY fruit

Apples  
Avocados  
Custard apples  
Kiwifruit  
Lemons  
Mandarins – Imperial  
Nashi  
Oranges – Navel  
Pears  
Persimmons  
Pomegranates  
Quinces  
Rhubarb

### vegetables

Asian greens  
Broccoli  
Brussels sprouts  
Cabbages  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery  
Celeriac  
Chestnuts  
Fennel  
Ginger  
Leeks  
Mushrooms  
Okra  
Onions  
Parsnips  
Silverbeet  
Spinach  
Sweet potatoes  
Turnips

# Putting more fruit and vegies into the school lunch box

by Dr Rosemary Stanton, nutritionist

**Growing active children need plenty of healthy foods to supply their high needs for nutrients.**

School lunch in Australia traditionally consisted of sandwiches and fruit good healthy choices that kids still enjoy. Sometimes, however, fruit and vegies are missing or crowded out of the lunchbox.

**Here are some suggestions to ensure these healthy foods get the star billing they deserve:**

- Include salad (lettuce, grated carrot, sliced celery, sprouts) on rolls, sandwiches or pita bread, along with chicken, turkey, lean meat or cheese.
- Brush sliced banana with lemon juice (to prevent browning) and combine with raisins as a sandwich filling.
- Pack a few small sticks of celery or some crisp carrot sticks. Red capsicum is also popular because it is so sweet.
- Encourage your child's school to have a 'fruit and vegie snack time' when all the kids take out their fruit (or raw vegies) and eat them together.
- Include a fruity lunch box treat with a small container of blueberries or some diced pineapple with sultana grapes.
- Wrap delicate fruits like plums or late season peaches in a paper serviette (also good to wipe fingers afterwards!)
- To keep fruit cool in the lunch box, pack it next to a bottle of frozen water.
- For small children, pack only what they can eat and keep it simple. For example, include a small new season's apple or pear, a mandarin or a little bunch of sultana grapes.

## fruit and vegie fat facts

by Dr Rosemary Stanton, nutritionist

### **Q. Do fruit and vegetables contain fat?**

**A.** Most fruits have virtually no fat. Avocados and olives are the exceptions.

### **Q. Is this fat good for me?**

**A.** Most of the fat in avocados and olives is monounsaturated. This type of fat is associated with the healthy Mediterranean diet and has proven heart health benefits, especially when substituted for saturated fats.

As a bonus, the monounsaturated fat in avocados and olives comes with vitamin E and a wide range of other important antioxidants that preserve the fats so they don't go rancid. These in-built protective antioxidants are important because if fats go 'off', they can damage the membranes around all body cells.

### **Q. How does the quantity of fat in avocados compare with the fat in other foods?**

**A.** Avocados have a total fat content of around 20% – which is about a quarter the level of fat found in butter or margarine. That makes avocado the most suitable sandwich spread for those watching their weight.

### **Q. Should I restrict my consumption of avocado?**

**A.** Few of us can eat unlimited quantities of any food that contains fat, but most people could easily fit half a small avocado into a daily weight loss diet. Those who are active enough not to be concerned about gaining weight can eat avocado as desired. Serve it with plenty of salad greens for a very healthy mix.