



pink grapefruit

To buy Pink grapefruit is often sold as ruby grapefruit and is sweeter and less acidic than yellow varieties. Choose fruit that feels heavy for its size with golden-yellow skin with a pink blush. Flesh colour ranges from light to deep pink.

To prepare Peel and remove the bitter white pith. Slice or chop as desired. Alternatively, cut the fruit in half and loosen segments with a small sharp knife.

To store Leave in a fruit bowl for a few days or store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.



baby cos lettuce

To buy Choose compact baby Cos lettuce with crisp, fresh-looking green leaves.

To store Store lettuce, unwashed, in a loose plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 3–4 days.

To prepare Trim base and separate leaves from the centre core and wash thoroughly just before using. For extra crispness, place washed and dried leaves in a loose plastic bag in the fridge for 1 hour before serving.

Whip up a salad
Toss baby Cos lettuce leaves with sliced boiled egg, toasted pine nuts and crisp bacon in a salad. Drizzle with your favourite dressing.



zucchini flowers

To buy Female zucchini flowers have a tiny immature zucchini attached and the male flower is attached to a stalk. Both female and male flowers can be stuffed and cooked. Choose fresh golden-yellow zucchini flowers with no signs of wilting.

To store Place zucchini flowers in a single layer on a plate, cover with plastic and store on the lowest shelf in the fridge. Best used within 1–2 days.

To stuff and cook zucchini flowers
Gently spoon your choice of filling into the flowers and fold the petals around the filling. Dust in flour and deep-fry until golden. Serve with lemon wedges.



papaya

To buy Select whole papaya with golden-yellow coloured skin. A fragrant aroma is a good indication of flavour. If cut, select fruit with bright-coloured, undamaged flesh.

For Asian salads, choose unripe and very firm, green papaya.

To store Leave at room temperature to fully ripen. Fruit yields to gentle pressure when ready to eat. Green papaya for Asian salads should be stored in the fridge and used within 1 week.

Whip up a healthy breakfast
Serve sliced ripe papaya with a squeeze of lime juice topped with natural yoghurt and passionfruit.



asparagus

To buy Available in green, white and purple varieties. Look for firm, even-sized spears with tightly-closed tips. Thickness is not an indication of tenderness.

To store Trim 1cm off the base of the stems and place in a plastic bag, or stand covered with plastic wrap in a glass containing 1cm water, and store in the fridge. Use within 3 days.

Whip up a side dish
Brush asparagus with oil and barbecue, turning often, over medium-high heat for 2 minutes or until just tender. Top with shaved parmesan, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and serve.



Shemiji mushrooms

To buy Select Shemiji mushrooms with tender, tawny-brown to pale beige caps, and stems in clumps. Avoid mushrooms that look very dry, wrinkled or sweaty.

To store Remove mushrooms from packaging and store in a paper or cloth bag on the bottom shelf in the fridge. Use within 2–3 days.

To prepare Separate the mushrooms from the clump at the stem base. Gently brush mushrooms with a pastry brush to remove any dirt.

Cook's tip
Shemiji mushrooms are excellent for stir-frying and pan-frying.



spring onions

To buy

Choose fresh-looking spring onions with dark green tops and small plump white bulbs. Sweeter than a mature onion, spring onions are excellent in salads.

To store

Store spring onions in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the fridge. Use within 5 days.

To prepare

Use the white bulb and lower pale green stem only, discard the dark green tops. Use whole or slice as required.

Whip up a side dish

Roast spring onions in a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar until tender. Serve with grilled steak or lamb.



blood oranges

To buy

Select plump blood oranges that feel heavy for their size with ruby-red tinged skin.

To store

Store blood oranges at room temperature out of direct sunlight for up to 1 week, for longer storage keep in the fridge.

Cook's tips

One medium blood orange yields about 1/3 cup juice. Add the juice to salad dressings or sauces.

Fresh for Kids®

Poach hulled strawberries in blood orange juice and a little caster sugar for 1–2 minutes. Serve drizzled over reduced fat vanilla ice-cream or thick natural yoghurt.



rockmelon

To buy

Select firm rockmelon with a sweet aroma that feels heavy for its size. Fruit should be beige to golden coloured (not green) with a pronounced netting pattern on the skin.

To store

Store whole rockmelon out of direct sunlight at room temperature until fully ripe. Ripe fruit yields to gentle pressure at the stem end. Cover cut rockmelon with plastic wrap and store in the fridge. Use within 2 days.

Fresh for Kids®

Wrap peeled wedges of rockmelon in strips of reduced fat ham for a healthy after-school snack.



snow pea sprouts

To buy

Choose crisp snow pea sprouts with green leaves and slender white stems. Avoid sprouts with yellowing leaves.

To prepare

Rinse in cold water and pat dry with paper towel.

To store

Store snow pea sprouts in their plastic punnet in the vegetable crisper of the fridge. Use within 4–5 days.

Fresh for Kids®

Add snow pea sprouts to sandwich, wrap and rice paper roll fillings.



artichokes (globe)

To buy

Look for plump small to medium-sized artichokes that feel heavy for their size with tightly-packed leaves.

To store

Store artichokes in a plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 2 days.

To prepare and cook

Trim stalk, leaving about 5cm attached. Remove large outer leaves and cut off the top third of the artichoke. Rub all cut surfaces with lemon juice. Cook in boiling salted water for about 15 minutes or until tender when tested with a skewer in the thickest part. Trim outer leaves, remove centre spiky choke and eat the tender artichoke heart.



bird's eye chillies

To buy

Select bright red or green, glossy-skinned bird's eye chillies, about 3 cm long, with vivid green stems attached.

To store

Store chillies in a paper bag in the fridge. Use within 1–2 weeks.

To prepare

Avoid contact with your skin when preparing chillies. Wear disposable gloves or hold the stem and snip with scissors. To remove seeds, cut lengthways and scrape out the seeds using a teaspoon.

Cook's tip

Bird's eye chillies are very hot. Remove the seeds for a less intense chilli flavour.

Best buys in spring

SEPTEMBER

fruit

Apples:
Lady Williams
Berries:
Strawberries
Grapefruit
Lemons
Mandarins:
Honey Murcott
Melons
Oranges:
Blood, Seville
Papaya
Pawpaw
Pineapple
Pomelo
Tangelos

vegetables

Artichokes
Asian greens
Asparagus
Beans:
Broad, Green
Beetroot
Broccoli
Carrots
Cauliflower
Chillies
Garlic, fresh
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Onions:
Spring, Green onions (shallots)
Peas
Potatoes
Silverbeet
Spinach

OCTOBER

fruit

Avocado
Bananas
Berries:
Blueberries
Mulberries
Strawberries
Youngberries
Carambola (Star fruit)
Grapefruit
Loquats
Mangoes
Melons
Oranges:
Valencia
Papaya
Passionfruit
Pawpaw
Pineapple
Pomelo

vegetables

Artichokes
Asian greens
Asparagus
Beans:
Broad, Green
Beetroot
Cucumber
Chillies
Garlic, fresh
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Onions:
Spring, Green onions (shallots)
Peas
Potatoes
Silverbeet
Spinach
Watercress
Zucchini

NOVEMBER

fruit

Avocado
Bananas
Berries:
Blueberries
Raspberries
Strawberries
Cherries
Grapefruit
Loquat
Mangoes
Melons
Oranges:
Valencia
Papaya
Passionfruit
Pawpaw
Pineapple

vegetables

Artichokes
Asian greens
Asparagus
Beans:
Green
Cucumber
Chillies
Lettuce
Onions:
Spring, Green onions (shallots)
Peas
Potatoes
Silverbeet
Spinach
Sweetcorn
Tomatoes
Watercress
Zucchini
Zucchini flowers

Q. When should weaning start?

- A. For the first six months of life, the National Health & Medical Research Council now recommends only breast milk (or formula if breast feeding is not possible). Breast feeding should continue until at least 12 months, supplemented with a variety of foods from about six months of age onwards.

Babies have sensitive tastebuds so they usually prefer fairly bland foods at first. However, if a breast-feeding mother eats strongly flavoured foods, her baby will have already enjoyed their flavour in breast milk and may be happy with more highly flavoured foods.

Q. Which vegetables are best to start baby on?

- A. One of the advantages of waiting until 6 months to begin solids is that vegetables can be mashed rather than pureed. Always give single vegetables to begin with so you can identify any foods that cause adverse reactions. Try **potato**, **pumpkin**, **sweet potato**, a few **green peas** (mashed to avoid the possibility of choking) or **zucchini** and add **broccoli** or **English spinach**. Avoid raw vegetables and anything hard that may cause choking and leave strongly flavoured vegetables like cabbage, Brussels sprouts and onion until later.

Do not add salt to baby's vegetables. A high salt intake early in life can easily lead to high blood pressure later in life.

Q. What about fruits?

- A. Fruits are popular with babies because they enjoy their natural sweetness. Start with soft fruits like mashed **avocado**, **pawpaw** or soft pieces of **peach**, peeled **pear**, **mango** or **banana**. Ripe **rockmelon** is also suitable, but ensure it is fairly soft so the baby doesn't choke on a chunk of melon. Stewed **apples**, **apricots**, **peaches** are also popular. If giving **oranges** or **mandarins**, peel away the pith and the skin around each pod.

fruit, vegetables and folate

by Dr Rosemary Stanton, nutritionist

Q. What is folate?

- A. Folate is one of the eight vitamins in the B complex. As its name suggests, it's related to foliage – and it's found in green vegetables.

Q. Is this fat good for me?

- A. Folate is needed for over 100 biochemical reactions in the body and is vital from the moment of conception as the baby's nerves develop. Extra folate reduces the chances of a baby being born with spina bifida and that's why women who are thinking of becoming pregnant should be sure to have plenty of folate.

Q. Which fruit and vegetables contain folate?

- A. Green vegetables are a top source of folate. The best include **spinach**, **lettuce**, **Brussels sprouts**, **broccoli**, **kale**, **cabbage**, and **green peas**. Root vegies are good sources too – especially **beetroot**. Folate is also found in some fruits, with the best sources including **honeydew melon**, **oranges**, **rockmelon**, **grapefruit** and all types of **berries**.

Q. Is folate lost during cooking?

- A. Some folate is always lost during cooking. Waterless cooking helps preserve more folate than boiling, so steam, microwave or stir-fry vegies. Baked **beetroot** is not only delicious, but a great way to get folate. And getting enough folate is yet another reason why we should enjoy lots of fresh salads – every day, if possible.

Q. How much folate do you need?

- A. Adults need 200 micrograms (mcg) of folate a day. During pregnancy, the recommended intake is 400 mcg. To put that into perspective, if you include the recommended 2 pieces of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables each day, you should meet your daily needs. (1 serve of vegetables is 1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup of raw salad greens.)