

winterfresh

Great tips for fresh fruit and vegetables

SYDNEY MARKETS™



broccoli

To buy

Select vibrant green broccoli with firm, tightly-packed florets. The small buds in the florets should not have opened or flowered.

To store

Store in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the fridge. Use within 3–4 days.

To prepare

Trim the broccoli stem and cut into even-sized florets. Peel the thick part of the floret stems.

Whip up dinner

Stir-fry broccoli florets with garlic, sliced onion, sliced rump or fillet steak, rice noodles and oyster sauce.



cauliflower

To buy

Choose vibrant creamy-white cauliflower with densely-packed florets and a fresh aroma.

To store

Trim the base and remove outer green leaves. Store in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the fridge. Use within 3–4 days.

To prepare

Cut into florets leaving about 3–5cm stem attached. Wash well before cooking.

Whip up a side dish

Place steamed cauliflower florets into a greased heatproof dish, sprinkle with grated Swiss cheese and grill until top is golden. Season and serve.



bananas

To buy

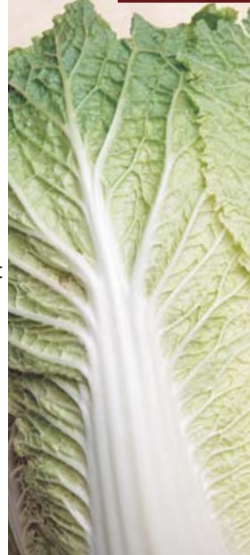
Select firm bananas at different stages of ripeness so that they don't all ripen at once. Black markings on the skin develop as a natural part of the ripening process.

To store

Leave at room temperature out of direct sunlight until golden yellow and fully ripe. Ripe bananas can be stored in the fridge but their skin will blacken – this does not affect their flavour. Use refrigerated bananas for cakes and smoothies.

Fresh for Kids

Make a healthy banana split; top split banana with reduced fat ice-cream and poached strawberries. Top with a few sprinkles and serve.



Chinese cabbage (wombok)

To buy

Select crisp Chinese cabbage with crinkled, pale green, tightly-packed leaves.

To store

Store Chinese cabbage in a plastic bag in the crisper section of the fridge. Use within 3 days.

To prepare

Trim the base and remove tough outer leaves. Separate leaves. Trim the thick white part on the base of the leaves if desired.

Cooking tips

Use shredded Chinese cabbage for coleslaw and salads. Cook rapidly for best flavour. Shred and add to stir-fries or soups.



dates

To buy

Choose plump, fleshy dates with glossy, moist skin. The sweet caramel-flavoured Medjool variety is in good supply in winter.

To store

Keep fresh dates in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 month. Serve dates at room temperature for best flavour. Due to their high sugar content, fresh dates can also be frozen.

To prepare

If desired, cut one side of the date and remove the seed.

Whip up a sweet treat

Dip seeded fresh dates in melted dark chocolate. Serve with coffee.



silverbeet

To buy

Choose crisp, young silverbeet with creamy-white stalks and deep green leaves.

To store

Trim stalk bases, remove tie from bunch and store in a plastic bag in the crisper in the fridge. Use within 3 days.

To prepare

Chop stalks and separate the leaves. Trim leaves and remove large white 'veins'. Wash well in cold water before using. If using the stalks for cooking, remove strings.

Cooking tip

When cooking silverbeet, add no more water than that clinging to the leaves after washing for maximum flavour and colour.



beetroot

To buy

Select deep purple beetroot with firm stems and fresh-looking leaves attached.

To store

Trim beets leaving about 5cm stems and the root attached. Store beets in a plastic bag in the fridge. Use within 1 week.

To prepare

Wash well and gently scrub the skin. Leave the stem and root attached. Peel beets after cooking.

Cooking tips

Individually wrap whole beets in foil and roast at 180°C for 1 hour or until tender. Alternatively, gently boil for about the same time.



flat mushrooms

To buy

Choose fully-opened flat mushrooms with creamy-white caps and chocolate-brown gills. These full-flavoured mushrooms should be firm and feel heavy for their size.

To store

Store in a paper bag on the lowest shelf in the fridge. Use within 3 days.

To prepare

Do not wash, wipe with damp paper towel. Remove or trim stems if topping or stuffing flat mushrooms with a filling.

Whip up breakfast

Brush flat mushrooms with olive oil, season and grill until tender. Serve with scrambled eggs.



pineapple

To buy

Picked ripe and ready to eat, pineapple does not ripen further after harvesting. Choose pineapple that feels heavy for its size with a sweet tropical aroma. Removing a leaf does not indicate ripeness.

To store

Leave pineapple at room temperature out of direct sunlight. Use within 3–4 days. Once cut, peel pineapple, cover with plastic wrap and store in the fridge for up to 2 days.

Fresh for Kids

Thread chopped pineapple onto paddle-pop sticks. Freeze and serve for a naturally sweet after-school snack.



strawberries

To buy

Choose rich red, even-coloured strawberries with fresh green leaves attached. Check the underside of the punnet and avoid mouldy or squashed strawberries.

To store

Place strawberries on a plate lined with paper towel, cover loosely with plastic wrap and store in the fridge. Use within 2 days.

To prepare

Wash strawberries and then remove the green stem and leaves (this is known as hulling).

Whip up dessert

Poach sliced strawberries in a little orange juice with caster sugar until just tender. Serve on toasted waffles with vanilla ice-cream.



swede

To buy

Choose small swedes with firm, golden-beige skin tinged with purple. Swedes should feel heavy for their size. Smaller swedes are the sweetest and most tender.

To store

Store in the crisper in the fridge. Use within 5 days.

To prepare

Thinly peel. Chop or slice the firm flesh as desired.

Cooking tips

Add chopped swede to a variety of soups. Slowly roast with other root vegetables until tender, or add to mashes for a robust flavour. Finely shred and add to stir-fries.



celeriac

To buy

For best eating, choose celeriac no larger than a grapefruit, that is smooth and feels heavy for its size. Crisp green stems should be attached.

To store

Store celeriac in the crisper in the fridge. Use within 1 week.

To prepare

Peel celeriac using a sharp knife. It discolours once peeled or cut, so drop into a bowl of water with a squeeze of lemon juice.

Cooking tips

Use celeriac in soups, gratins and casseroles. Mash celeriac with potatoes.

best buys in winter

JUNE

fruit

Apples
Avocados
Custard apples
Dates
Grapefruit
Kiwifruit
Lemons
Limes
Mandarins
Nashi
Oranges – Navel
Passionfruit – Panama
Pears
Pomelo
Quince
Rhubarb

vegetables

Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celeriac
Celery
Fennel
Jerusalem artichokes
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Okra
Olives
Onions
Parsnips
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Silverbeet
Spinach
Swede
Sweet potatoes
Turnips

JULY

fruit

Apples
Avocados
Custard apples
Dates
Grapefruit
Kiwifruit
Lemons
Limes
Mandarins
Oranges – Navel
Pomelo
Quince
Rhubarb
Tangelo

vegetables

Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celeriac
Celery
Fennel
Jerusalem artichokes
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Okra
Olives
Onions
Parsnips
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Silverbeet
Spinach
Swede
Sweet potatoes
Turnips
Witlof

AUGUST

fruit

Apples
Cumquat
Dates
Grapefruit
Kiwifruit
Lemons
Mandarins
Oranges – Blood and Navel
Pomelo
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tangelo

vegetables

Beetroot
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celeriac
Celery
Fennel
Jerusalem artichokes
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Okra
Onions
Parsnips
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Silverbeet
Spinach
Swede
Sweet potatoes
Turnips
Witlof

By Dr Rosemary Stanton, nutritionist

The value of freshly-made juices

Freshly-made juices are big business and offer a healthy alternative to soft drinks and alcoholic beverages.

I must confess that just watching someone pop various mixtures of carrots, apples, celery, beetroot, some parsley, oranges, pineapple, melon or tomatoes in to a juicer makes me feel healthy (and virtuous). And I also enjoy the fact that I'm then getting a heap of vitamins and some minerals to protect me against winter ills.

Making juices also gets kids in touch with fresh produce – and that's a valuable lesson in understanding what they're putting into their bodies.

If you have a juicer, you can also make delicious juices at home. It's a great idea to encourage children to concoct their own combinations of fruit or vegetables as they make fresh juices.

As well as producing delicious, healthy drinks, it's also fun. I could also add that even though preparing a fresh juice doesn't take long, it's long enough to get the digestive juices flowing and the slight effort makes over-consumption unlikely.

Freshly made juices are a great source of vitamins – including vitamins C, E, beta carotene (which the body converts to vitamin A) and several of the B vitamins, including folate.

Vitamins A, C and E are anti-infection vitamins, reducing the risk we'll fall ill to winter bugs. Folate protects the heart and is vital for the body's nervous system. Other B vitamins help us produce energy from carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

Fresh juices also provide minerals which include potassium and magnesium, with smaller quantities of iron, zinc and calcium.

These minerals all help the body function better, contributing to healthy skin, eyes and blood.

The health benefits of fresh fruit and vegetable juices

Perhaps most important health benefit of all: freshly made fruit and vegetable juices displace junk foods and drinks from the diet.

Many positive benefits then occur and we can enjoy less risk of excess weight, type 2 diabetes and clogged arteries. Once your healthy blood flows more freely, you also feel more vibrantly energetic.