

PRODUCE STORAGE

Proper produce storage is vital to the longevity of your new produce.

Open Containers:

Please keep in mind that some produce items may be distributed in non-factory-sealed containers.

Apples

Avoid washing apples before storing. Remove any spoiled apples. Put in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the refrigerator, or store in a cool place for no longer than 6 weeks.

Warning: Storing apples next to broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers, greens or cauliflower will cause these veggies to spoil faster. Apples give off ethylene gas, which causes faster ripening.

To speed up ripening, put an apple in a bag with fruits such as peaches, plums and bananas.

Artichoke

Refrigerator life: 4 to 5 days. Add a few drops of water to a plastic bag.

Asparagus

Refrigerator life: 4 to 5 days. Wrap stalk bottoms in a damp paper towel and place in a loosely closed plastic bag in crisper section of refrigerator, or stand in 2" of water, store in refrigerator with plastic bag over tips.

Broccoli

Refrigerator life: 4 days. Store in an open plastic bag.

Butternut Squash

Store in a dry area with good air circulation up to 6 mos. Winter squash should not be refrigerated unless cut. Stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from light, it will keep for up to three months. Cut squash will keep one week when wrapped tightly and refrigerated.

Cabbage, Whole

Refrigerator life: 1 to 2 weeks in a plastic bag.

Cabbage, Cut

Refrigerator life: 1 to 2 days if wrapped tightly in plastic wrap.

Carrots

Refrigerator life: Variable. Store in their original plastic bag.

Cauliflower, Whole

Refrigerator life: Up to 5 days. Store stem-side up in a plastic bag.

Celery

Refrigerator life: Up to 2 weeks. Store in a plastic bag.

Cherries

Cherries are highly perishable; refrigerate ASAP. Sort carefully and place loosely in a shallow container so that air can circulate. Wash cherries just before using. For highest quality, fresh cherries should be stored only 1 or 2 days.

Cilantro

Wash in cool water, remove dead stems/leaves, snip ends. Pat dry and place stems in cup with water but avoid submerging the leaves. Cover with a plastic bag/wrap and refrigerate. Change water if it becomes murky. Can also store, prepped as above, wrapped with a damp paper towel in a plastic bag. Most fresh herbs will last more than a week when stored this way.

Corn

More than any other vegetable, sweet corn tastes best when it's fresh from the garden. The minute it's picked, its sugar content starts turning to starch.

Cucumber

Refrigerator life: 1 week if waxed; less if not waxed.

Eggplant

Refrigerator life: 3 to 4 days. Store in a plastic bag.

Garlic

Shelf life: A few weeks to a few months, depending on size. Store in a cool, dark location.

Grapes

Avoid washing grapes before storing them. Check through bunches for spoiled grapes and remove; put grapes in a plastic bag in your refrigerator and store for a week maximum. Wash under cold water just before serving.

Green Beans

Refrigerator life: 3 to 5 days. Store in a plastic bag.

Jalapenos

Keep cool and dry. If you refrigerate them, first remove them from the plastic produce bag; otherwise they'll become soft and moldy. Generally they'll keep for 3-4 days. Once the skin begins to wrinkle, it loses potency, and if you're roasting or blanching them, the skins will be difficult to peel.

Leafy Vegetables

Refrigerator life: 3 to 5 days. Wrap in a damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag.

Leeks

Refrigerator life: Up to 1 week. Loosely wrap in a plastic bag.

Lettuce

Refrigerator life: Lettuce stored in sealed plastic bags in the crisper will last from a few days to 2 weeks. The firmer the lettuce the longer it will keep; iceberg up to 2 weeks, Romaine 10 days, butter and leaf lettuces for 4 days. Do not store with melons, apples, pears or other ethylene gas-emitting fruits, as they will cause the lettuce to turn brown.

Mangoes

A few black spots on the skin are typical of ripe mangoes. Put in a paper bag to ripen at room temp (two will ripen faster than one) and keep in a cool place, such as a cupboard. Move to refrigerator when ripe and use within a few days.

Mushrooms

Prepackaged mushrooms can be stored unopened in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days. Once opened, mushrooms should be moved to a paper bag and refrigerated.

Nectarines

Store at room temperature until fully ripe. Once fully ripe, store them in the refrigerator for no more than 2 days. Nectarines stored longer may lose their juicy flavor. Use a little lemon or other citrus juice on the cut areas to retard the browning affect.

Onions, Cut

Refrigerator life: 2 to 3 days if tightly wrapped in plastic wrap.

Onions, Green

Store green onions/scallions away from odor-sensitive foods such as corn and mushrooms, which will absorb the odor of the onions. Remove bands and damaged leaves and store in plastic bags in the crisper. They'll last up to 5 days.

Onions, Whole

Shelf life: 3 to 4 weeks. Store in a cool, dry, open space.

Oranges

Store citrus at room temp if you'll eat it in a week or so, or it will keep in the crisper for 6-8 weeks. Citrus is ripe when picked. Surface marks usually do not affect the fruit inside.

Peas

Refrigerator life: 1 to 2 days. Store in a plastic bag.

Peppers

Refrigerator life: Up to 1 week. Store in a plastic bag.

Potatoes, New

Shelf life: 1 week. Store in a cool, dark, dry place.

Potatoes, All-Purpose and Baking

Shelf life: Store in burlap, brown paper or perforated plastic bags away from light, in the coolest, non-refrigerated and well-ventilated part of the house. They can last up to 3 months, but more realistically, 3-5 weeks. Don't store onions and potatoes together, as the gases they each give off will cause rot.

Pumpkin

Shelf life: Up to 1 month in a cool, dry place.

Scallions (Green Onions)

Refrigerator life: Up to 3 days. Store in a plastic bag.

Spinach

Untie, remove blemished leaves, wash thoroughly in cold water, spin dry and refrigerate in plastic bag for 2-3 days.

Squash (Winter), Whole

Shelf life: Up to 3 months. Store in a cool, dry place.

Squash (Winter), Cut

Refrigerator life: Up to 1 week if wrapped tightly in plastic.

Squash (Summer)

Refrigerator life: Up to 1 week. Store in a plastic bag.

Strawberries

Strawberries are extremely perishable and should be refrigerated immediately. Wash just before enjoying. Refrigerate in a single layer on a paper towel in a moisture-proof container. Eat them within

72 hours, or freeze up to 10 months. Ideally, let them come to room temperature before serving to bring out best flavor.

Sweet Potatoes

Shelf life: Up to 1 month if stored in a cool, dry place; up to 1 week if stored at room temperature. If refrigerated, their natural sugar will turn to starch and ruin the flavor.

Tomatoes

Shelf life: Up to 2 days once fully ripe. Store at room temperature for the best flavor. Tomatoes should never be in the refrigerator until they have been cooked, cut or put into a raw dish like a salsa, or are fully ripe and then would spoil if left at room temperature. Place tomatoes stem end up, in a sealed paper bag with or without ethylene-producing fruit such as bananas. Refrigerated ripe tomatoes will taste better if brought to room temperature before eating.

Watermelon

Uncut watermelons - keep at room temperature for up to 2 weeks. Store cut watermelons in refrigerator. Cover cut surface loosely with plastic wrap.