



Home Storage Guide

for **Fresh Fruit**  
and **Vegetables**





## WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO STORE FRUITS AND VEGGIES PROPERLY?

- To keep them as fresh as possible for as long as possible
- To further ripen some fruit
- To prevent premature spoilage
- To prevent illness
- To get the most out of your money!

Improper storage of some whole fresh fruits and vegetables may cause deterioration of both their flavour and nutrition profile.

### 1 HOW TO RIPEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Some fruits don't ripen once harvested and are ready to eat and enjoy as soon as you buy them while others will continue to ripen after harvest. This is because they naturally produce a gas called ethylene, (e.g. apple, tomatoes, ripe banana). Ethylene triggers the ripening process; and exposure to ethylene can cause vegetable deterioration. It is recommended that you store your fruits and vegetables separately in the refrigerator.

*See products noted as ethylene producer or ethylene sensitive in the Storage Guides below).*

#### It's easy to ripen fruit at home!

- 1 | Place fruit in paper bag. Loosely close the bag.
- 2 | Leave at room temperature but away from direct sunlight.
- 3 | Fruits ripen at different rates depending on the type of fruit and the temperature of the room. Check on the fruit every day to ensure the best possible ripeness. Consult the table for more information about specific storage and timelines.

- 4 | To check ripeness, place fruit in the palm of your hand and squeeze gently. If the fruit responds to light pressure and smells slightly sweet, it's ready to eat! If it's not ready, leave it in the bag and check again each day until it's ready.

### 2 TIPS:

- 1 | Speed up the ripening process by adding a ripe banana or an apple to the bag.
- 2 | Once the fruit is ripe, eat it right away for the best flavour, aroma and texture. You can also store it in the fridge for a short time according to the information provided in the table below.



**Important:** Use only paper bags to ripen fruit, as plastic bags and containers trap moisture and air which will lead to spoilage. Remember to store ethylene producing fruit separately.

Some vegetables can be stored for several months in certain conditions. The ideal cold storage room must be dry, dark and cool (7 - 10 °C). Basements, garages and cupboards in today's homes are often not equipped to meet these three conditions, so plan your storage wisely. Storing large quantities of potatoes, onions, squash and rutabagas will not save you any money if they spoil before you can eat them!

Once fruits and vegetables have been cut, they should be used promptly or covered tightly and refrigerated for no more than two or three days. If cut produce is left at room temperature for longer than 2 hours it should be discarded.

### 3 SAVE MONEY!

To get the best value for your money, always follow suggested storage times, temperatures and special tips. Whole fruits and vegetables may be stored longer than the times indicated but their flavour and nutrition will deteriorate. Once cut, cover tightly, refrigerate and eat as soon as possible.

### 4 WASHING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

With the exception of leafy greens, fresh fruits and vegetables have a natural protective coating and should not be washed before storing. Washing will make them spoil faster.

- 1 | Wash fruits and vegetables under clean, cool, running water just before you prepare or eat them, even if you intend to remove the skin/peel.
- 2 | Use clean cutting boards and utensils when preparing produce.

Leafy greens like iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, green & red leaf lettuce and spinach will keep fresher if washed before storage. Just follow these easy steps:

- 1 | Wash with clean, cool running water.
- 2 | Discard wilted, discolored or blemished leaves.
- 3 | Carefully dry in salad spinner or on clean paper towels.
- 4 | Store in salad spinner or wrap lettuce loosely in clean paper towels and store in sealed plastic bag or container.
- 5 | Use within 1 week.

### 5 TIPS

- 1 | Lettuce turns pinkish-brown due to oxidation (being cut and exposed to oxygen) or when exposed to ethylene. Discard any brown ends or leaves.
- 2 | Lettuce and spinach purchased in airtight packages should be refrigerated "as is" and washed when opened for use.

Ready-to-eat, bagged, pre-washed leafy greens do not need to be washed again before eating.

## HOME STORAGE GUIDE | Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

FRUIT	ROOM TEMP STORAGE (20°C)	REFRIGERATED STORAGE (4°C) <small>Unless otherwise indicated, store in plastic bag or covered container.</small>	SPECIAL TIPS
<b>Apples</b>	No - Apples tend to soften 10 times faster at room temperature.	Up to 2 months in a perforated plastic bag in crisper.	N/A
<b>Apricots</b>	Until ripe	Once ripe, 1 week, uncovered	Ethylene producer.
<b>Atemoya/ Cherimoya</b>	Until ripe	Once ripe, 3 to 5 days	For best flavour, serve cold.
<b>Avocado</b>	Until ripe	Once ripe, 2 to 5 days	Ethylene producer. Sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent browning.
<b>Banana</b>	Until ripe	Once ripe, 1 to 2 days, uncovered	Unripe bananas are ethylene sensitive. Ripe bananas are ethylene producers.
<b>Blueberries</b>	No	10 days, loosely covered	Ready to eat, store in shallow container.
<b>Carambola (Star Fruit)</b>	Until ripe	Once ripe, 1 week	Ethylene producer. A yellow colour indicates ripeness.
<b>Cherries</b>	No	3 days	Sweet cherries will absorb odours from fragrant produce. Select cherries with stems since stems prolong shelf life.
<b>Coconut</b>	1 to 2 weeks	1 to 2 weeks, whole, uncovered	Refrigerate grated coconut for 1 week.
<b>Cranberries</b>	No	2 weeks	Cranberries freeze quite well.
<b>Grapefruit</b>	1 week; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	1 month; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	Grapefruit produce odours that are absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products.
<b>Grapes</b>	No	5 days	Grapes will absorb odours produced by leeks and green onions.
<b>Kiwifruit</b>	Until ripe	1 to 2 weeks (ripe)	Unripe kiwifruit is ethylene sensitive. Ripe kiwi fruit is an ethylene producer
<b>Lemons and Limes</b>	1 week; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	1 month; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	Lemons and limes produce odours that are absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products.
<b>Lychee</b>	No	1 to 2 weeks	For best flavour, choose fruit that is full, heavy and not cracked.

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Mangoes	Until ripe	Once ripe, 3 days.	Ethylene producer.
<b>Melons</b> <i>Most types, e.g. cantaloupe, honeydew, etc.</i>	Until ripe	3 days (ripe), whole, uncovered	Ethylene producer. Always refrigerate cut melon; cover well and store away from other produce. Use cut melon within two days.
Nectarines	Until ripe	Once ripe, 1 week	Ethylene producer.
Oranges	1 week; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	1 month; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	Oranges produce odors that are absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products.
Papaya	Until ripe	Once ripe, 1 week	Ethylene producer. Only store fully or half-ripened papaya in the refrigerator since cool temperatures shut down the ripening process.
Passion Fruit	No	1 week	Ethylene producer.
Peaches	Until ripe	1 week. Store uncovered in a single layer	Ethylene producer.
Pears	Until ripe	2 to 3 days. Store uncovered in a single layer	Ethylene producer. Pears are ripe when flesh around stem gives to gentle pressure.
Persimmon	Until ripe	Once ripe, 3 days	Ethylene producer.
Pineapple	No	3 days, uncovered	Pineapples will absorb odors produced by avocados and green peppers.
Plantain	Until ripe	Once ripe, 2 to 3 weeks, uncovered	Plantains must be cooked before eating. Do not refrigerate unless very ripe.
Plums	Until ripe	Once ripe, 3 to 5 days	Ethylene producer.
Pomegranates	No	3 to 4 weeks	N/A
Prickly Pear	Until ripe	1 to 2 days	N/A

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Raspberries	No	1 to 2 days, loosely covered in shallow container	N/A
Rhubarb	No	5 days	Rhubarb will absorb odors produced by avocados and green onions.
Strawberries	No	1 to 2 days, loosely covered in shallow container	Wash in cool water with the cap attached. For optimal flavour allow strawberries to reach room temperature before eating.
Tangerines	1 week; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	1 month; store loosely in open or perforated plastic bag	Tangerines produce odors that are absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products.
Watermelon	Few days	Once ripe, 1 week, whole, uncovered	Ethylene sensitive. Always refrigerate cut melon; cover well and store away from other produce. Use cut melon within two days.

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VEGETABLES	ROOM TEMP STORAGE (20°C)	REFRIGERATED STORAGE (4°C)	SPECIAL TIPS
<b>Artichokes</b>	No	1 week	Sprinkle with water before storing.
<b>Asparagus</b>	No	4 days	Wrap base of stalks in damp paper towel then place in plastic bag or store with stalks upright in water.
<b>Beans</b> <i>green or wax</i>	No	5 days	Ethylene sensitive. Beans are susceptible to chilling injury which results in surface pitting and browning.
<b>Beets</b>	No	3 to 4 weeks	Remove tops before storing.
<b>Belgium Endive</b>	No	2 to 3 weeks	Ethylene sensitive. Keep dry and away from light.
<b>Broccoli</b>	No	5 days, store in perforated plastic bag in vegetable crisper	Ethylene sensitive. Exposure to ethylene gas hastens yellowing of the broccoli buds.
<b>Brussels Sprouts</b>	No	5 days, store in perforated plastic bag in vegetable crisper	Ethylene sensitive. Exposure to ethylene gas hastens yellowing and can cause leaf separation.
<b>Cabbage</b> <i>green and red</i>	No	2 to 3 weeks	Ethylene sensitive. Exposure to ethylene gas hastens leaf separation & discolouration. Cabbage will absorb odours from apples and pears.
<b>Cabbage</b> <i>Chinese</i>	No	1 week, tightly wrapped with plastic wrap.	Ethylene sensitive. Exposure to ethylene gas hastens leaf separation & discolouration. Cabbage will absorb odours from apples and pears.
<b>Carrots</b> <i>young</i>	No	2 weeks, covered	Ethylene sensitive. Remove tops before storing. Exposure to ethylene gas will make carrots taste bitter. Carrots absorb odours from apples and pears.
<b>Carrots</b> <i>mature</i>	No	3 to 4 weeks, covered	Ethylene sensitive. Remove tops before storing. Exposure to ethylene gas will make carrots taste bitter. Carrots absorb odours from apples and pears.
<b>Cauliflower</b>	No	2 weeks	Ethylene sensitive.
<b>Celery</b>	No	3 minutes	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews or to a stir-fry during cooking.
<b>Corn</b> <i>on cob</i>	No	In husks for 2 to 3 days. Husked for 1 to 2 days, wrapped in a damp towel.	Corn will absorb odours from green onions. It is best to use fresh corn-on-the-cob as soon as possible because once picked the natural sugars turn to starch quickly.
<b>Cucumbers</b> <i>field or greenhouse</i>	No	1 week	Ethylene sensitive. Exposure to ethylene will turn cucumbers yellow.

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<b>Eggplant</b>	No	5 days	Ethylene sensitive. Eggplant will absorb odors produced by ginger root.
<b>Garlic</b>	A few weeks to several months in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	No. Refrigeration may cause sprouting	Storage time varies with maturity.
<b>Ginger Root</b>	No	2 weeks	N/A
<b>Greens</b> Lettuce varieties (including: iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, green & red leaf, spinach) Other varieties (including: collards, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, Swiss chard, turnip greens)	No	Up to one week Wrap fresh greens in damp paper towel and place in a perforated plastic bag and refrigerate. Discard when leaves are wilted or brown	Remove tops before storing.
<b>Herbs</b>	No, except basil	Up to 5 days Trim the ends of the stalks and place in a re-sealable plastic bag. Store the herbs in the crisper or vegetable bin of your refrigerator for up to five days.	Hardier herbs such as oregano, rosemary and sage will last longer than more delicate herbs such as basil, dill, chives Fresh basil is susceptible to cold. Rinse fresh herbs under fresh, cool running water.
<b>Mushroom</b>	No	5 days in paper bag	Mushrooms will absorb odours from green onions. Just before using, rinse in cool water (do not soak), or wipe with a damp cloth or soft vegetable brush; spend extra time cleaning underside. Mushrooms bruise easily - do not store other vegetables on top of them. Morels require thorough washing to remove sand.
<b>Onions</b> <i>Green onion, Leeks</i>	No	1 - 2 weeks	Ethylene producer. Tightly wrap any cut pieces of onion and store away from other produce. Use within 2 or 3 days.
<b>Onions</b> <i>Cooking</i>	3 to 4 weeks in single layer, in mesh bag in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	No	Ethylene producer. Cooking onions will absorb odours from apples and pears. Cooking onions draw moisture from vegetables they are stored with which may cause them to decay.
<b>Onions</b> <i>Sweet</i>	1 to 2 weeks in single layer, in mesh bag in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location		Ethylene producer. Sweet onions have a greater water and sugar content than cooking onions. This makes them sweeter and milder tasting but also reduces their shelf life.
<b>Parsnips</b>	No	3 to 4 weeks	N/A
<b>Peas</b> <i>Snow, Sugar and Snap</i>	No	1-3 days. Store loosely in plastic bag	Ethylene sensitive.
<b>Peppers</b> <i>Sweet Bell Peppers</i>	No	1 week	Ethylene sensitive.

To remove insects that may be present in broccoli, brussels sprouts or cauliflower, before blanching immerse prepared vegetables for 15 minutes in 1 L (4 cups) water containing 25 ml (1 Tbsp) salt. Rinse thoroughly. Blanch as directed.



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<b>Hot Peppers</b> <i>jalapeno, Serrano, habanero, etc.</i>	No	1 to 2 weeks	Ethylene sensitive.
<b>Potatoes</b> <i>New</i>	No	1 week	New potatoes can be refrigerated. Potatoes will absorb odors produced by pears.
<b>Potatoes</b> <i>Mature</i>	1 to 2 weeks in paper bag, in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	No	If mature potatoes are refrigerated dark spots can occur and an unpleasant sweet flavour will develop when cooked. If kept in warm temperatures, potatoes will sprout and shrivel. Exposure to light causes potatoes to turn green. Trim any green area away before cooking. Discard potatoes with green skin
<b>Pumpkins</b>	1 week	Can store up to 2 months whole, uncovered in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	
<b>Radishes</b>	No	2 weeks	Remove tops before storing.
<b>Rutabaga</b>	1 to 2 weeks	3 weeks, uncovered	N/A
<b>Sprouts</b> <i>Alfalfa, Bean, Lentil, Mung, Soybean, etc.</i>	No	2-4 days.	Wash and drain sprouts just before using. Discard sprouts that are past their "best before" date or have lost their crispness, look dark, or smell musty.
<b>Squash - Summer</b> <i>Zucchini, Yellow Crookneck, Straight neck, Patty Pan, etc.</i>	No	1 week	Summer squash have a tender skin and need to be trimmed but not peeled before preparing and eating. The rind and seeds are edible.
<b>Squash - Winter</b> <i>Spaghetti, Hubbard Butternut, Buttercup, Acorn, Turban, etc.</i>	1 week, whole, uncovered in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	2 weeks	Ethylene sensitive. Hubbard squash and other dark skinned squash turn orange-yellow in the presence of ethylene gas. Cured winter squash will last 2 - 6 months in cool temperature. Winter squash have a thick skin and need to be trimmed and peeled before preparing and eating. Most varieties also need to be seeded.

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Sweet Potatoes / Yams	Up to 2 weeks whole, uncovered in a dry, cool, dark, well ventilated location	No	Ethylene sensitive. Sweet potatoes and yams can be used interchangeably in recipes.
Tomatoes	3 to 4 days, uncovered, out of direct sunlight, until ripe;	No. (Stops ripening and affects flavour)	Ethylene producer. Can Refrigerate only when well fully ripened unwashed, but will affect flavour.
Turnip	No	1 week	Unwaxed turnips need to be scrubbed but not peeled before preparing and eating. Peel waxed turnips before preparing and eating.