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# KNOW YOUR PRODUCE





# TOMATOES

**Definition:** Tomatoes are fruits that are considered vegetables by nutritionists, they are sweet, tart, tangy or balanced in flavour.

**Health benefits:** The water content of tomatoes is around 95%. The other 5% consists mainly of carbohydrates and fibre. Tomatoes are a good source of several vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin C, potassium, vitamin K, and folate.

**Know your produce:**

1. Look for plump, heavy tomatoes with smooth skins.
2. Free of bruises, blemishes, or deep cracks.
3. Ripe tomatoes are fragrant, but even mature green ones should have a mild fragrance that promises future ripeness.
4. Fully ripe tomatoes are soft and yield to the touch; buy them only if you plan to use them immediately.

**Fun facts:** Tomatoes contain about nine times as much iron as milk. That makes a great remedy for fatigue and anaemia.



# CABBAGES

**Definition:** A cabbage is a vegetable, having thick green or purple leaves surrounding a spherical heart or head of young leaves. When raw, its texture is somewhat rubbery and its flavour kind of peppery but once cooked, the green cabbage softens and takes on a sweeter taste.

**Health benefits:** Cabbage is a low-calorie vegetable that is rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Contains powerful antioxidants that may help reduce inflammation. Your body needs vitamin C for many important functions, and it is a potent antioxidant. Red cabbage is particularly high in this nutrient, providing about 85% of the RDI per cup (89 grams).

**Know your produce:**

1. Always choose cabbage with large, dense, and firm head.
2. Cabbage should be heavy in size with bright colourful and crisp leaves without any crack or bruise.
3. Red and green cabbages should ideally have compact and shiny leaves.
4. Do not buy cabbage that is pre-cut, shredded or halved, as it will lead to loss of valuable vitamin C.

**Fun facts:** In ancient China people believed cabbage was a magic cure-all for bald men.



# ONIONS

**Definition:** An onion is a vegetable having a pungent taste and smell and composed of several concentric layers.

**Health benefits:** They are low in calories but high in vitamins and minerals including vitamin C, B vitamins and potassium. Eating onions may help reduce heart disease risk factors, such as high blood pressure, elevated triglyceride levels and inflammation.

**Know your produce:**

1. Choose firm dry onions with shiny, tissue-thin skins.
2. Necks should be tight and dry. If they look too dry or discoloured or have soft, wet spots, they aren't fresh.
3. Dry onions keep three to four weeks if stored in a dry, dark, cool location.

**Fun facts:** The sulfuric compounds in onions cause us to cry when we chop them. To cut down on the crying, chill the onion and cut into the root end of the onion last.



# CARROTS

**Definition:** The carrot is a root vegetable, usually orange in colour, though purple, black, red, white, and yellow cultivars exist. crunchy, tasty, and highly nutritious with a sweet flavour.

**Health benefits:** Carrots are about 10% carbs, consisting of starch, fibre, and simple sugars. They are extremely low in fat and protein. An excellent source of vitamin A in the form of beta carotene. They are also a good source of several B vitamins, as well as vitamin K and potassium.

**Know your produce:**

1. Firm carrots with a bright orange colour and smooth skin.
2. Avoid carrots if they are limp or black near the tops; they're not fresh.
3. Choose medium-sized ones that taper at the ends.
4. Thicker ones may be tough.
5. In general, early carrots are more tender but less sweet than larger, mature carrots.

**Fun facts:** People first grew carrots as medicine, not food, for a variety of ailments.



# BUTTERNUT SQUASH

**Definition:** a type of winter squash that grows on a vine. It has a sweet, nutty taste similar to that of a pumpkin. It has tan-yellow skin and orange fleshy pulp with a compartment of seeds in the blossom end. When ripe, it turns increasingly deep orange and becomes sweeter and richer.

**Health benefits:** It is a good source of fibre, vitamin C, magnesium, and potassium; and it is a source of vitamin A.

**Know your produce:**

1. Look for butternut squash with a solid beige colour, without any deep cuts or bruises.
2. A little surface scratching is normal.
3. Choose squash that feels heavy for its size.
4. Avoid squash with brown patches or punctures, which can introduce bacteria and mould.

**Fun facts:** This vegetable is often used as one of the first foods for babies since they are tolerated by children because of the taste.



# BELL PEPPERS

**Definition:** A bell pepper is a fruit

- Green peppers feature a more bitter flavour.
- Orange and yellow bell peppers are sweeter, with the sweetest being the red bell pepper.

**Health benefits:** Packed with vitamins and low in calories! They are an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium. Bell Peppers also contain a healthy dose of fibre, folate, and iron.

**Know your produce:**

1. Find one without any sunburn spots, shrivelling, or signs of decay
2. Orange and yellow bell peppers are sweeter, with the sweetest being the red bell pepper.

**Fun facts:** Red/yellow/orange bell peppers are simply green bell peppers that have been left on the vine to continue to ripen.



# SPINACH

**Definition:** Spinach is a leafy green vegetable that is edible, consumed either fresh or cooked. Raw spinach has a mild, slightly sweet taste that can be refreshing in salads, while its flavour becomes more acidic and robust when it is cooked.

**Health benefits:** Spinach is low in carbs but high in insoluble fibre. This type of fibre may benefit your digestion. An extremely nutrient-rich vegetable. It packs high amounts of carotenoids, vitamin C, vitamin K, folic acid, iron, and calcium.

**Know your produce:**

1. When buying whole bunches of spinach, look for leaves that are crisp and dark green, and avoid those that are yellow, limp, or wilted.
2. If buying pre-washed, packaged spinach, inspect the bag for any slimy or yellow leaves, and also check the expiration or a "best if used by" date.

**Fun facts:** Unlike most veggies, cooking spinach intensifies the health benefits. Half a cup of cooked spinach will grant you with threefold the nutrition as one cup of raw spinach.



# GREEN BEANS

**Definition:** Green beans are the unripe, young fruit of various cultivars of the common bean. They contain a grassy flavour when cooking and can be consumed fresh.

**Health benefits:** Green beans contain many essential vitamins, including folate. One cup of raw green beans contains 33 micrograms (mcg) of folate, almost 10 percent of the daily recommended value. Folate is a B vitamin that helps prevent neural tube defects and other birth defects.

**Know your produce:**

1. Look for beans that are bright green and free of black spots and blemishes.
2. The beans should not be flimsy.
3. For the most nutritional benefits, eat fresh green beans as soon as possible after harvesting or purchasing.

**Fun facts:** Green beans contain nutrients that help prevent diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.



# COVO / KALE

**Definition:** Covo, which is a type of kale and a member of the cabbage family, was introduced to Africa. This leafy vegetable has a nutty taste and takes a lot longer than common kales to cook.

**Health benefits:** Rich in Vit C and Vit K with calcium, fibre and also contains anti-cancer nutrients.

**Know your produce:**

1. Choose smaller-leaved covo for tenderness and mild flavour, especially if you plan to eat the greens raw.
2. Coarse, oversized leaves are tough.
3. Look for moist, crisp, unwilted kale, unblemished by tiny holes, which indicate insect damage.
4. The leaves should not be yellowed or brown. Covo stems are edible, so check to be sure that this part of the plant is also in good condition.

**Fun facts:** kale has more vitamin C than an orange.