



Storing Produce

By

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When we buy delicious fresh fruits and vegetables from the grocery store it can be overwhelming to choose which ones you will be able to buy and consume before they go bad. Unfortunately a lot of us have been misinformed on how to store our fresh fruits and vegetables. We tend to default on throwing our produce in the fridge because we assume the cold can't hurt them. An article written by Russ Parsons in the Los Angeles Times stated that

this is a misconception. A lot of fruits and vegetables are extremely temperature sensitive. There are plenty of storage procedures for fruits and vegetables to help them last longer and still taste great. Listed below are produce items that commonly get stored improperly.

- Stone Fruit (peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, and cherries):
 - If you have ever tasted a nectarine that looked wonderful from the outside but had no flavor and a mealy texture, chances are it had chill damage.
 - This occurs when under-ripe stone fruit is kept below 50 degrees, it stops ripening, thus discouraging all the

flavor from being released.

- When you buy stone fruits that are still firm, leave them at room temperature for a couple days until soft and then place them in the fridge.
- Tomatoes
 - If tomatoes are placed in the fridge before they are ripe, the cool air inhibits chemicals that would lead to the eventual ripening of the tomato.
- Melons
 - Any melon with a rough netted skin continues to ripen after being picked so should not be refrigerated until they are ready to eat.
 - Smooth-skinned melons such as honeydew will not ripen any more after being picked so you can go ahead and chill them.
- Cucumbers, eggplants and peppers
 - When these items are refrigerated, it should only be for a few days. After that they may start pitting and developing soft spots on the surface.
- Basil
 - Unlike most herbs, basil does not do well when refrigerated. If left in the fridge for more than 24 hours it will start to blacken and turn soft. It is best to keep it at room temperature.
- Garlic
 - Unless you want your milk to start smelling and tasting like garlic

it is best to store it on the counter.

- Potatoes
 - They should not be chilled but left at room temperature. Potatoes contain an enzyme which begins to change the starch to sugar when cool, leaving an odd tasting potato.

Fruits and vegetables are essential for a healthy life and according to the CDC, about 40% of Americans are falling short on their produce intake. Don't let fear of letting them go to waste stop you from buying fruits and vegetables. Use these tips to load up your grocery cart with fresh produce with confidence.



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