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Vegetable Guide

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A Note About Eating in Season

Welcome to the new CSA season at the Food Farm! We are honored to be your farmers.

We believe local, organically grown produce is just "right" on so many levels. Community Supported Agriculture allows us to create community and revitalize the local economy. It enables us to steward the earth which has been entrusted to us, producing food that is healthier for you and the environment, and it allows you to

develop a direct relationship with your farmer so you know where your food comes from.

This guide is intended to be a resource to help you identify and store your vegetables, and perhaps inspire your culinary adventures with a few recipe ideas.

As a way to eat more locally grown food in the off-season, consider preserving a few of your summer favorites now so you can enjoy them throughout the winter. You may also want to sign up for a winter share.

All the veggies included in this document are listed to the left. A single asterisk indicates the vegetable freezes well. A double asterisk means the Food Farm offers preserving shares, with large quantities of one specific vegetable. Preserving shares are available for purchase on our website:

foodfarm.csaware.com

Thank you for choosing us to be your farmers.

The CSA Lifestyle

Participating in a CSA farm is fun and exciting, but for many people it takes some getting used to. As consumers, we are used to most vegetables being available no matter the season. Eating seasonally can be a challenge at first, but it is very rewarding when you get the hang of it.

Our members find that by adopting a CSA lifestyle, they have a better appreciation of where their food comes from, a better understanding of how

their food is grown and local growing seasons. They are also introduced to a large variety of vegetables you may or may not see in your grocery store.

This lifestyle doesn't stop at new vegetables. It often inspires people to cook new recipes, eat more fresh produce, and savor how good it tastes to eat food that was recently harvested from local soil.

It is also important to note that

we are all subject to Mother Nature. Depending on the weather, some vegetables may have a longer or shorter growing season. Although we hope we never have a crop fail due to weather, disease or other factors, it is always a possibility. We try and let our members know if we ever have shortage or overage (especially of bulk purchases) for a certain crop.

Freezing Veggies

Freezing is an easy way to preserve fresh farm produce. Freezing maintains more nutrients than most other preserving methods. Vegetables that have been frozen will be softer once thawed. This may be noticeable in veggies usually eaten raw, but makes minimal difference in cooking.

Here are some tips for successfully freezing vegetables:

- Blanch produce before freezing.
- Freeze vegetables as soon as possible to maintain the best flavor, color and texture.
- Freeze veggies quickly to reduce mushiness. Turn down your freezer a few hours before, locate the coldest spot, and don't overload your freezer for a faster freeze.
- Air exposure can lead to rancid flavors and freezer burn. When packing remove as much air as possible.
- Freeze chopped up veggies on a cookie sheet and then transfer into a freezer bag, so it is easier to portion in future cooking.



Blanching is key!



Blanching slows or stops enzyme action that will deteriorate your produce.

How to blanch:

1. Wash and drain your veggies. Cut up vegetables as preferred for storage.
2. Bring water to a boil. Use 1 gallon of water per pound of vegetables or 2 gallons per pound of leafy greens.
3. Put vegetables into a strainer, blancher, mesh bag, or other perforated container that can be submerged in boiling water. Lower into boiling water.
4. Cover. Start timing as soon as water returns to a boil. Cooking time will range from anywhere between a minute and ten minutes. See the description for each vegetable for specific blanching time.
5. Cool immediately in an ice bath. Stir veggies several times to insure even cooling.
6. Drain thoroughly.

Asian Greens or Spring Mix

These delightful greens can be eaten raw when young or used as a cooking green when larger. They can also be added to a lettuce mix as a way to add a rich peppery touch to your salad. Store in your refrigerator and add a damp paper towel to the bag to prevent the leaves from wilting.



Basil

Basil is a staple herb that goes well with most summer vegetables, especially tomatoes. Basil is pretty fragile and should be kept dry and cool until you are ready to use it. Once the leaves get wet they turn black quickly.

Try stripping the bottom

leaves off the stem and putting the stems in a vase of water.

If you have more basil on hand than you can use, try making pesto or freezing chopped basil leaves. Simply pack basil leaves on the bottom of a plastic bag and roll it up to remove as

much of the air as possible. Seal the bag and use a rubber band to keep it in log shape. Cut a little basil off the log whenever you need it and just put it back in the freezer until next time.

Try using walnuts, almonds, or pecans in place of pinenuts in your pesto recipe.

Beets (Red and Chioggia varieties)

These roots are great slow roasted in the oven with olive oil and herbs. Beet greens are available in the spring through summer. These are great in salads, in a quiche or paired with

other cooking greens. The roots and greens should be stored in a cool humid place, such as the crisper drawer in your fridge. Chioggia is a variety of beet that is appreciated for its bold and beautiful coloring. Chioggias, when sliced open, are known for their

alternating rings of white and pink. They are best suited for using raw on salads, as their pretty coloring blurs and fades when cooked.

Chioggia are great raw and in salads.



Bell Peppers



**Purple
Pepper
Glamour
Shot**

Bell peppers are a welcome addition to soups, stir fries and pizzas. Peppers start green, they only turn red when we have sufficient heat and ripen-

ing time, so look for those later in the season. Peppers will keep well in your fridge in a plastic bag. It helps to make sure they are dry before storing.

Peppers freeze well and don't need to be blanched, just slice or dice, place on a tray and

then transfer to a bag after they are frozen.



One year we had so many peppers they seemed to be coming out our ears!

Bok Choy (A.k.a. Pac Choi)

Bok Choy comes early in the season. This grows well in cold weather. This is a great vegetable for stir-frying. Separate the green leaves from white stalks. Chop them into 1 inch wide diagonal chunks. Cut leaves into

smaller pieces. The stems take a few more minutes to cook than the leaves do. This is great with onions, tofu or meat, soy sauce, and grated ginger.



It will keep about a week in a plastic bag in your fridge.

Broccoli

Broccoli is great raw, steamed or blanched. Great in pasta, stir fry and pizza. Many of us only use the broccoli florets, but don't forget the stalks are wonderful too! You can roast them, grate them into salad or chop them into stir fry. They also make great stock additions.

Broccoli likes to be cold and humid, so keep it short term in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

It may keep a little longer by placing stem down, in a bowl with a half inch of water and refrigerate. Cover the broccoli head loosely with a perforated plastic bag so that air can pass through. Change water daily and it should keep for 5 to 7 days.

Blanch broccoli florets for about 3 minutes before freezing.



Cabbage



Throughout the season we have several varieties of cabbages. All are great thinly sliced in a coleslaw, salad, or sandwich. You can also make sauerkraut by shredding the cabbage, massaging it with salt, and packing it into a glass jar or crock. Leave at room temp for one to four weeks.

Cabbage stores best in the refrigerator. It can last quite a long time whole in a plastic bag. When cut, wrap tightly in plastic wrap. If your cabbage is looking tired, remove the outer layer of leaves and you may find the rest of the head is in great shape!

When freezing shredded cabbage, blanch for 1 1/2 minutes.



Carrot



We grow a variety of carrots. They are great fresh and slow roasted. While each variety of carrot has their own nuances, the biggest factor in determining flavor is when in the season they are harvested. Carrots harvested in late fall are super sweet and great for munching and/or slicing in salads.

In the early part of the season we send them with their tops. Carrot tops are edible and great for sautéing and making pesto.

For storage, remove green tops as soon as possible. Carrot leaves left attached draw moisture from the root. Carrots should be stored in a very humid envi-

ronment just above freezing. Placed in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer, they should store for a month or more.

Blanch small whole carrots five minutes before freezing. Blanch diced or sliced carrots two minutes before freezing.

Cauliflower

Cauliflower can be steamed or roasted, eaten raw or pureed for use in soup. Cauliflower has had a recent surge of popularity, and you can find recipes for cauliflower rice, gluten-free cauliflower pizza crust, and more online.

It should be kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator stem side down.

Cauliflower florets should be blanched three minutes before freezing.



Chard (a.k.a. Swiss Chard)



Chard has an impressive longevity and will produce all year long. It grows well in the summer months when it is too hot for spinach and is a good cooking substitute for spinach as well. Small chard leaves can be eaten raw in salads. Chard stems are also edible. If sauteing, add the chopped up stems to the pan first. Cook a

minute or two before adding the greens so it all cooks evenly.

Chard stores well in a plastic bag in the fridge. Like all greens it is water cooled at the farm so it may need to be dried before storing.

Chard freezes well. Blanch greens for two minutes before freezing.

Celery

Celery is a common ingredient in soup stocks, adds crunch to tuna or chicken salad and is great for fresh snacking. Most importantly celery is a fundamental ingredient of ants on a log!

Removing the leaves before storage will help to keep it crisp. The leaves are very flavorful, so they're a great addition

to soup stock! Leave the remaining stalk in one piece and place in a perforated plastic bag or aluminum foil in the crisper. The foil keeps in moisture, but allows the natural ethylene gas to escape, reducing spoilage.

If you've cut the celery into stalks already, put them in water in the fridge to keep them crisp.



Cilantro

Cilantro looks a lot like flat leaf parsley, but it has more delicate leaves and stems. This tends to be a love/hate herb; either you love or you hate it. Mince or chop the leaves to release maximum flavor. When using in a warm dish, add it right before serving. Try it in Mexican, Asian,

and Indian recipes.

Cilantro will come in bunches from the farm. Place the bunch stems down in a vase or glass, or with an inch or two of water, cover the leaves loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate.



Try substituting cilantro for basil in a pesto recipe.

Collards (a.k.a. Collard Greens)

Collards are a cool season vegetable green that is rich in vitamins and minerals, and

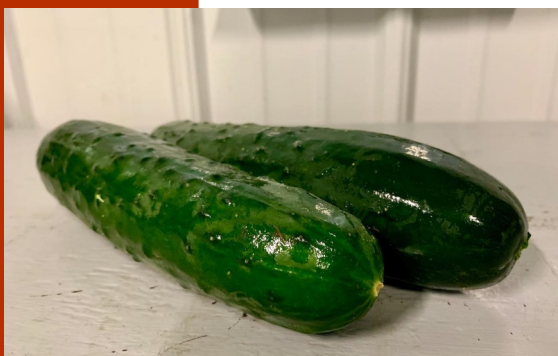


similar to kale. Collards are a popular substitute for cabbage in the Deep South, but can be grown in our northern climate because it is frost tolerant. Collards are often best in the fall after the plants have been exposed to a few light frosts.

Refrigerate collard greens in a plastic bag in your fridge.

Blanch greens for three minutes before freezing.

Cucumber



We grow both greenhouse and outdoor varieties of cucumbers. Both are great eaten raw, in a salad or in your favorite pickling recipe.

than a week in your refrigerator. Keep them in a plastic bag on an upper shelf toward the front of your fridge where it tends to be warmer.

Cucumbers store best between 45° and 55°, making it tricky to store for more

Dill

Flower heads are generally used in making pickles, but dill's feathery leaves are more versatile. Try adding it to eggs for an extra zing, or to sliced fresh cucumbers and yogurt.

To store, place the bunch of dill stems down in a vase or

glass with a few inches of water, cover the leaves and flowers loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Dill can also be frozen or dried. To freeze herbs for stew, dice and pack into an ice cube tray. Fill the spaces



in each cell with water. Once frozen store in an airtight container.

Kale

Kale can be prepared as you would spinach and is a great dietary source of fiber.

Blanching, steaming and stir-frying are all good cooking methods for kale. It cooks a little slower than spinach.

Kale chips are also great and easy to make, especially if you have access to a food dehydrator. Simply toss with olive oil and salt

and put in the dehydrator or oven on its lowest setting until crisp. When you have that down, try adding extra flavors like chili powder, nutritional yeast, or soy sauce.

Kale will keep well in a plastic bag in your fridge.

Blanch kale for three minutes before freezing.



Leeks

Leeks are usually ready in early fall. They add their own special flavor to any dish you would normally use onions in. The dark green leaves can be saved and used in a vegetable stock.

Fresh leeks should be stored in the refrigerator.

Wrapping them loosely in a plastic bag will help them retain their moisture.



Lettuce



We grow both leaf and head lettuce at the farm. Leaf lettuce is just a mixture of lettuces thickly seeded and harvested when young.

When storing lettuce it is helpful to keep it

dry. Run it through a salad spinner if you have one, and/or roll gently in a towel and store, towel and all, in a plastic bag in the fridge.

Romaine lettuce goes well with a heavier dressing like blue cheese or Caesar.

Loose leaf lettuces are more delicate and better suited for a lighter dressing like a vinaigrette.

Onion and Scallions

Onions are a staple in most cuisines. Because of our short growing season, seeding onions marks the beginning of the new season in early March. Yellow varieties are best for cooking and red varieties best for fresh eating in salads, salsas, and on sandwiches.

Store onions store in a cool, dry location, like a pantry.

To freeze onions, blanch 3-7

minutes or until the center of the bulb is heated. You can also slice the onion into rings and blanch for 10-15 seconds.

Before bulb onions are ready we will be sending scallions, which are faster growing. Scallions are some-

times called green onions. They mature faster than onions and are milder in flavor.



Parsley

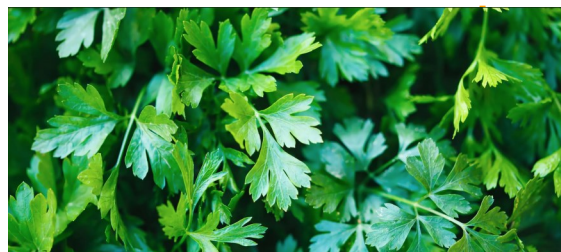
Parsley is a bright green herb, common in many recipes and as a garnish. Parsley is also very rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

Get the longest life out of your parsley by treating it like a bunch of flowers, and putting fresh cut stems in a few inches

of water. Make sure the leaves are completely dry and cover loosely with a plastic bag. Keep in the fridge.

Parsley can be frozen like basil and dill. All herbs can also be dried for your spice rack. Use a dehydrator or hang up your herbs upside-down, covered by

a paper bag, to keep bits of herb from dropping to the ground. Hang the bag in a dry well-ventilated space.



Parsnip

Fresh parsnips really only needs a good scrubbing before cooking, but can also be peeled with a carrot peeler if preferred. These can be boiled, roasted, grilled and steamed. Parsnips taste sweeter after a hard frost. They will keep well in your refrigerator for weeks in plastic.



Parsnips are a biennial plant that is grown annually. At maturity it can stay in the ground after frost making its flavor sweeter.

Garlic and Garlic Scapes

Our favorite garlic variety to eat and grow is called German Extra Hardy. It produces a large bulb and large cloves that are easy to peel. It is also flavorful and versatile enough for an array of dishes.

Garlic should be stored in a dry place at room temperature out of direct sunlight.



Garlic Scapes are the immature stems and seed heads of hard-neck garlic and can be used in almost any recipe in place of cloves. They also make a great pesto. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.



Green Beans

There is nothing better than fresh green beans. You can eat them fresh or quickly sauté or roast them in a little bit of butter or oil with garlic. Dilly beans (pickled green beans) are simple and easy to make and let you enjoy green beans months later.

Store green beans in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. Blanch green beans for three minutes before freezing.



Green beans are available in preserving share quantities.

Hot Peppers

Hot peppers are an essential ingredient in salsa and can be added to many dishes to add spice. A favorite recipe is to slice them in half, add cream cheese and bake in the oven until they are charred on the bottom.

Peppers can be stored in a plastic bag in the fridge, but make sure they are dry first.

Hot peppers also dry well. You can use a dehydrator, an oven on its lowest setting or hang peppers up on a string in a dry, dark corner.



Beautiful Hot Wax variety. This is great for pickling or in a batch of salsa!

Potatoes



**Karin and Veteran
Farm Volunteer
Ms. Potato
Patricia.**

Potatoes are a staple for many people and cultures. We grow a few varieties here at the farm. Red Norlands are best for boiling or steaming and the Russets are best for baking. German Butterballs are yellow fleshed and are great

in potato salad. "New" potatoes are simply potatoes that are harvested earlier in the season before their skins get tough. They are delicious, but do not store as long.

We pre-wash the potatoes at the farm so make sure they are dry before storing. Potatoes do best in a cool, dark, and dry place. They do best in

the fridge but room temperature is okay for short-term storage.

To freeze potatoes, cut in halves and blanch for three minutes before they go into the freezer.

the fall.

Pumpkin

Carving pumpkins will be distributed near the end of the summer season. These pumpkins are edible but don't have much flavor, so they are best used for jack-o-lanterns.

The pumpkins don't fit into the share boxes, so we will bring them to the pick-up sites and have them spread out for you to choose.



Radish and Turnips

Hakurei turnips are a sweet white salad turnip. They do not tolerate summer heat so we send them out in the early part of the season and try again near fall. Radishes and young turnips can be eaten fresh and make a great snack! Turnip and radish greens can be used

in a salad if small or cooked if more mature.

Radishes and turnips store fine in a plastic bag in the fridge. Store their greens separately, in a plastic bag.



Rhubarb



Rhubarb is an early sign of spring and is sent to our members during our first delivery. Botanically, rhubarb is a vegetable, however, many people treat it as a fruit, despite its tart flavor.

Most people have had strawberry rhubarb pie, but have you ever tried rhubarb pickles or other savory recipes? Try eating it fresh and dipping it into a bowl of sugar. The opportunities are endless!

Rhubarb stalks store well in a plastic bag in the fridge or can be chopped and frozen.

Rutabaga

Rutabagas keep winter interesting; they break up the monotony of potatoes! Try scrubbing, cubing, and steaming them, and then tossing with butter and little nutmeg. If they have been in storage awhile, peel them. Rutabagas can be prepared any way you would potatoes, and mixed with pota-

toes in most recipes.

Rutabagas will keep in a plastic bag in your fridge for over a month.

When freezing rutabagas, blanch for three minutes.



Snap Peas

Snap peas are best eaten raw. They can be steamed, boiled, stir-fried, or made into soups but the pods generally become mushy when cooked.

If you didn't eat all your snap peas while unpacking your share box, simply put them in a

plastic bag in the crisper drawer in your fridge.

Peas should be blanched for two to three minutes before freezing.



Just a 3oz serving provides you with more than 50 milligrams of vitamin C. That is more than half of the recommended daily intake.

Spinach

Spinach is a powerhouse vegetable that is vitamin rich and a good source of iron and fiber. It is quick to cook and quite versatile. It is delightful raw in a salads, stirred into soups, stir-fried, or added to smoothies. Spinach is stored the same way as lettuce, dried in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Spinach should be blanched for two minutes before freezing.



Tomatoes



There is nothing quite like the first tomatoes of the season. These fruits are the star of many recipes such as caprese salad, pasta with fresh mozzarella and springs of basil, bruschetta, and of course fresh salsa. Tomatoes do well canned, dried, or frozen.

It is best not put tomatoes in the fridge or in a bag. If they are under-ripe keep them in a sunny windowsill for a few days. Whole tomatoes can store for a few weeks on your counter; however, if they crack or have a dark spots, you'll want to use them right away. Avoid stacking or piling things on tomatoes because they bruise easily.



Roast the seeds for a yummy snack.



Winter Squash

Winter Squash will arrive in your share box at the end of the summer season. They prefer to be stored at around 50°, but they can handle warmer temperatures if the humidity is low. Even in less than ideal conditions, like on the kitchen counter, squash should

keep for up to a month, but if brown spots starts to appear on the skin, you should try and use the squash right away.

Depending on the size of the squash, you might be able to just cut it in half, scoop out the seeds, and place cut side down in a

pan with a little water. Bake at 350 ° for 30 to 60 minutes, until tender. Wait for it to cool a bit and scoop the flesh out of the skin. Puree if you want to bake now or later – squash freezes well after cooking. Try squash in soups, curries, or simply top with butter.



Zucchini

Zucchini is a type of summer squash. The amount of zucchini you receive in your share depends a lot on the amount of bee activity at the farm. This plant relies on insects or staff for pollination. You can put sum-

mer squash in about anything. If you end up with more zucchini than you can use promptly, grate it and freeze it in plastic bags, then use it for baking later.

Store your squash in a plastic bag with a few holes in the crisper in your fridge, or wrap the squash in a towel and seal it in a plastic bag in the fridge.



Food Farm

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The Food Farm is a certified organic farm located in Wrenshall, Minnesota, 30 minutes south of Duluth. The farm offers summer, winter, preserving and egg shares, enabling our members to receive fresh local food most of the year. Our weekly summer shares are delivered to 16 locations in Duluth, Superior, Cloquet, Esko, and Wrenshall. Some of our produce is also available at the Whole Foods Co-op, Duluth Grill and Chester Creek Cafe.