

# **Ask an Expert // Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**



LIVE WELL UTAH

**STORING  
FRESH FRUITS  
& VEGETABLES**

*Have you been to a farmers market yet this year? Whether it's from a farmers market or a grocery store, don't let that fresh produce spoil on your counter. Here are some tips on how to store fruits and vegetables so they last longer.*

One of the benefits of shopping at farmers markets is the fruits and vegetables are often fresher than those at most grocery stores. Much of the produce was picked within a couple of days, or even hours of the market. Fresher fruits and vegetables will last a little longer before they begin to spoil. But, there are also some additional things you can do at home to help your produce last even longer. Follow these fruit and vegetable storage recommendations to reduce the amount of produce that spoils before you can use it. Use this chart to identify fruits and vegetables that spoil the quickest and be sure to use those first.

|         | Produce       | Storage Time | Storage Recommendations   |
|---------|---------------|--------------|---|
| Group 1 | Apples        | 1-2 months   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These items can be kept at room temperature to ripen.</li> <li>• Refrigerate (40°F) for a longer life. DO NOT refrigerate tomatoes until fully ripened.</li> <li>• Store these fruits away from other produce. They may cause other produce to rot.</li> </ul> |
|         | Apricots      | 1-2 weeks    |   |
|         | Peaches       | 2-3 weeks    |   |
|         | Pears         | 3-4 weeks    |   |
|         | Melons        | 1-2 weeks    |   |
|         | Tomatoes      | 1-2 weeks    |   |
| Group 2 | Cherries      | 1-2 weeks    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep these items refrigerated (40°F).</li> <li>• For higher quality, cover with a damp paper towel.</li> <li>• Do not wash until ready to use.</li> </ul>  |
|         | Fresh herbs   | 1 week       |   |
|         | Leafy greens  | 1-2 weeks    |   |
|         | Raspberries   | 1 week       |   |
|         | Strawberries  | 1 week       |   |
| Group 3 | Beets         | 2-3 weeks    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep these items refrigerated (40°F).</li> <li>• For better quality, these can be stored in an unsealed or vented plastic bag.</li> <li>• Other produce in this group includes oranges, celery, radishes, and parsnips.</li> </ul>                             |
|         | Carrots       | 2-3 weeks    |   |
|         | Corn          | 1 week       |   |
|         | Peppers       | 1-2 weeks    |   |
|         | Summer squash | 1-2 weeks    |   |
| Group 4 | Cucumbers     | 1-2 weeks    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These items are easily damaged by cold.</li> <li>• Keep these items refrigerated (40°F), but check daily for signs of rot. The fridge door is best.</li> <li>• Do not wash until ready to use.</li> </ul>  |
|         | Green beans   | 1 week       |   |
|         | Eggplant      | 1 week       |   |
| Group 5 | Garlic        | 4-5 months   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These items do not need refrigeration.</li> <li>• Store in a cool room (50-60°F).</li> <li>• For better quality, store these on a wire rack or hang in a net bag so air can flow.</li> <li>• Do not wash until ready to use.</li> </ul>                        |
|         | Onion         | 5-6 months   |   |
|         | Potatoes      | 5-6 months   |   |

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*This article was written by Heidi LeBlanc, Food \$ense State Director, and Casey Coombs, RD, CD; Policy, Systems, and Environments Coordinator, Utah State University Food \$ense*