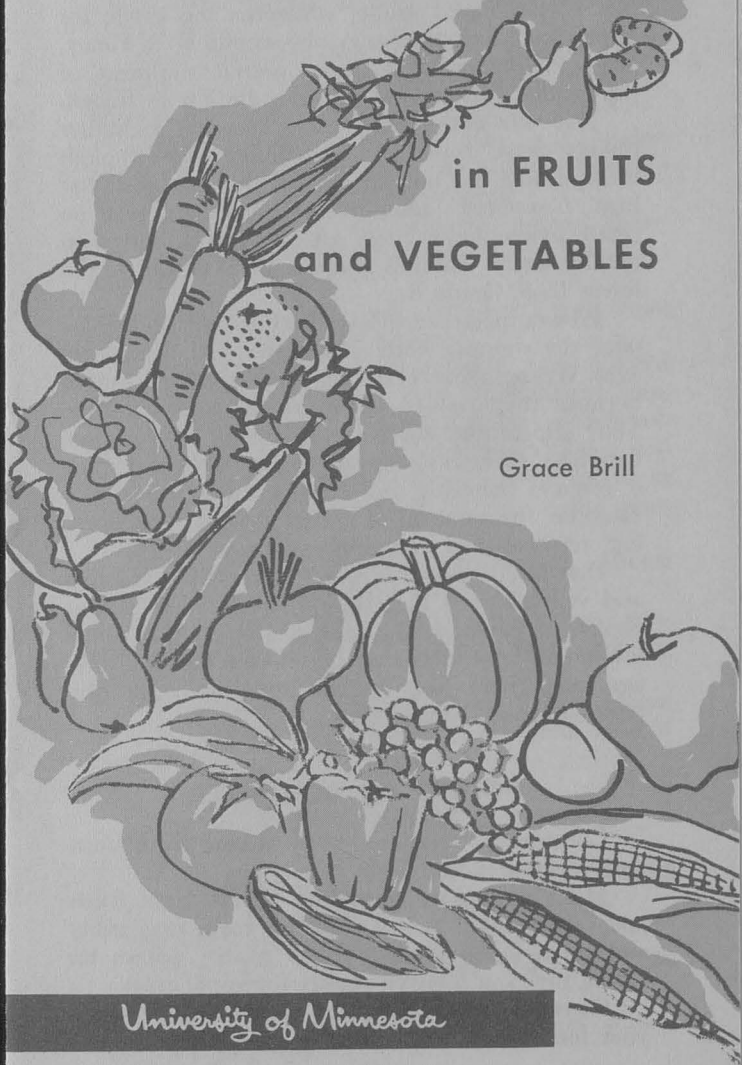


know the **best**  
**buys**

in FRUITS  
and VEGETABLES

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## KNOW WHAT AND HOW TO BUY

Grocery stores today offer a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables priced within the average shopper's reach. This is possible through improved methods of harvesting, handling, grading, refrigeration, and transportation. Also, the use of improved storage facilities has extended the season for less perishable products.

Most fresh fruits and vegetables are packed and sold to grocery stores on the basis of U. S. grades. These wholesale grades are usually designated as U. S. No. 1, U. S. No. 2, U. S. No. 3, etc. Major exceptions are potatoes and apples. Top grade potatoes are called U. S. Fancy with U. S. No. 1 as the next grade, while the top grade for apples is U. S. Extra Fancy, the second U. S. Fancy. Many marketing agreements permit shipment of top grades only but quality may be lost in transit.

This wholesale grading has resulted in higher quality fresh fruits and vegetables, even though these grades do not appear on the products you buy. Consumer standards, which do appear on retail foods, have been established at only two quality levels. The top grade is U. S. Grade A, the lower U. S. Grade B.

Prewrapped, prepackaged fruits and vegetables offer the shopper both advantages and disadvantages. Wrapping materials keep produce fresh longer because they reduce moisture loss and spoilage. They also protect foods from damage by excessive handling. Prepackaging may lower the price since it reduces handling and transportation costs. For example, the removal of carrot tops reduces packing, refrigeration, and shipping costs.

One disadvantage in buying prepackaged fruits and vegetables is that this processing limits your choice of product size and quantity. Also, some low quality products may be included in the package, and there may be additional costs in prepackaging some products.

### POINTS TO REMEMBER

Consider these points when buying fresh fruits and vegetables:

**Make your own selections.** Select fresh fruits and vegetables that fit your menu needs for quality and ripeness—for example, top quality apples for eating raw, but a lower quality for apple crisp.

**Consider those fruits and vegetables grown in your locality.** They are usually lower in price, and

they may have better flavor than products shipped in from other areas.



Consider so-called “plentiful foods.” The U. S. Department of Agriculture distributes information about such products through the mass media. Foods are usually cheaper when there is a plentiful supply.

**Remember that low prices don't always mean good quality.** Fruits or vegetables may be low in price because they are overripe or have begun to deteriorate. But “specials” on these products can be good buys if your store has a plentiful supply.

**Consider defects that affect appearance and edibility.** High grade fruits and vegetables are usually free from blemishes that may be present on those of lower grade. Sometimes these blemishes will disappear during preparation for the table and are not detrimental. But watch for defects that might affect edibility or permanent appearance.

**Buy by weight and measure.** Sometimes products sold by measure in containers are packed with a loose or “slack” pack which reduces the proper quantity. Also, a container of a product like potatoes may be sold at a set price regardless of weight or quantity.



**Buy according to the size and needs of your family.** Don't buy larger quantities than you can refrigerate and utilize without waste. Determine the kind and amount of vegetables and fruits you buy through meal planning.

**Don't handle fruits and vegetables unnecessarily.** Rough handling of fruits and vegetables causes spoilage and waste for which you as a consumer pay. When judging product quality, use care to avoid bruising or injury.

Consider fruits and vegetables that are “good buys” nutritionally. Fruits and vegetables supply nearly all the vitamin C and over half the vitamin A we need. Major vitamin A and vitamin C providers are therefore good buys regardless of price fluctuations because they contribute needed nutrients to the diet. The following foods in these amounts provide an adult’s vitamin A needs (5,000 International Units) for 1 day:

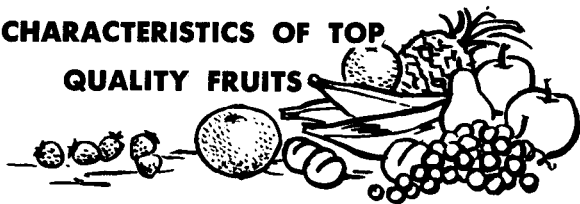
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cooked carrots
- $\frac{1}{2}$  medium sweet potato
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cooked winter squash
- 2 cups canned tomatoes
- 1 cup cooked broccoli (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup canned apricots
- $\frac{2}{5}$  medium muskmelon (5-inch-diameter)
- 3 medium tomatoes

An adult’s recommended daily requirement for vitamin C (70 milligrams) can be met by serving the following foods in these amounts:

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup orange juice (fresh or frozen)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups raw cabbage
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup cooked broccoli
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  medium potatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$  grapefruit (4 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-diameter)
- 1 medium orange (2 $\frac{4}{5}$ -3-inch-diameter)
- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups canned tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup frozen strawberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup fresh or frozen strawberries
- 2 medium tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{5}$  medium muskmelon (5-inch-diameter)

Compare the costs of fresh, canned, or frozen fruits and vegetables. In figuring cost per serving, divide total cost by the number of servings you’ll get from your purchase. Consider factors such as time, nutritive value, food preferences, and storage.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TOP QUALITY FRUITS



*Apples*—Proper variety for intended purpose, fresh and firm, well-colored for variety, free from bruises and insect stings.

*Apricots*—Plump, fairly firm, juicy flesh, uniformly golden-orange color.

*Bananas*—Full, firm, bright in appearance, free from bruises. Completely enclosed in peel. Yellow flecked with brown indicates fully ripened fruit, yellow tipped with green a partially ripe one.

*Blueberries*—Plump, whole, dry, an even deep blue color.

*Cherries* (sweet and sour)—Bright, fresh appearance, plump, a good color for variety.

*Cranberries*—Plump, firm with high luster.

*Grapefruit*—Firm but springy to the touch, well-shaped, heavy for size. Fruits with pointed stem ends are apt to be thick skinned and less juicy.

*Grapes*—Tokay: bright red, large, thick tough skins, neutral flavor. Thompson Seedless: greenish white, always seedless, elongated, firm thin skins, neutral flavor.

*Muskmelons*—Netting coarse and corky, ash- or yellowish-gray color, a slightly sunken calloused scar at stem end, characteristic aroma.

*Oranges*—Firm, heavy for size, good color, reasonably fine textured skin for variety. Pleasing in odor. Free from soft spots or mold.

*Peaches*—Creamy or yellowish ground color, firm or fairly firm with fresh looking skin, free from bruises.

*Pears*—Fairly firm but not hard, free from bruises, well-shaped for variety.

*Plums*—Plump, fresh appearance, fully colored for variety, soft enough to yield to slight pressure.

*Pineapple*—Firm and heavy for size; golden-yellow, orange, yellow, or reddish-brown color; a distinct, fragrant, pineapple odor. If green leaves at crown of fruit can be plucked out easily, the pineapple is ripe.

*Raspberries*—Fresh, bright appearance, uniform good color, plumpness of individual berries.

*Strawberries*—Fresh, bright appearance, generally full red color. Well-formed with caps attached.

*Watermelon*—Symmetrical shape, velvety bloom on surface of rind. Crisp, sweet, juicy flesh. Base of fruit yellow.



*Asparagus*—Firm, fresh, brittle, green stalks; tight, compact tips.

*Beans, snap*—Fresh, crisp, and firm with lots of snap. Uniform in size, immature seeds.

*Beets*—Tops: young, clean, fresh, and tender. Roots: smooth, small crown, firm, free from blemishes.

*Broccoli*—Tender, firm stalks, compact closed bud clusters, dark green or purplish green color.

*Cabbage*—Solid, firm heads, heavy for size with good color leaves.

*Carrots*—Firm, smooth, well-colored, not shriveled.

*Cauliflower*—Clean, compact, white or creamy white flowerets. Jackets of bright green, fresh leaves.

*Celery*—Medium length stalks that are sufficiently solid, thick, and brittle, snap easily. Free of blemishes.

*Corn*—Husks fresh and green, ears well-filled to top, kernels milking and plump, dark brown silk.

*Cucumbers*—Firm, fresh, well-shaped, green.

*Eggplant*—Firm, heavy for size, uniformly dark purple. Free from scars or cuts.

*Greens*—Fresh, young, tender, green.

*Lettuce*—Head lettuce: clean, crisp, and tender with heads quite firm. Free of tip burn. Loose leaf lettuce: clean, fresh, tender, free from discoloration.

*Onions*—Green: fresh green tops, medium size necks well-blanched for 2 to 3 inches from root. Dry: bright, clean, hard, well-shaped, mature onions with dry skins that do not rub off easily.

*Peas*—Bright green, fresh pods, tender, fairly well to well-filled with well-developed peas.

*Peppers*—Firm, thick fleshed, well-shaped with a bright shiny surface.

*Potatoes*—Firm, relatively smooth, reasonably well-shaped. Free from bruises and green spots.

*Squash*—Summer: skin free from blemishes but easily punctured, 6-8 inches in length. Winter squash or pumpkin: hard rind, heavy for size, free from blemishes.

*Sweet potatoes*—Clean, smooth, well-shaped, firm, bright in appearance. Free of defects.

*Tomatoes*—Well-formed and plump, uniform color, free from bruise marks, not overripe or soft.

*Turnips*—Firm, smooth, heavy for size, few fibrous roots and leaf scars.

