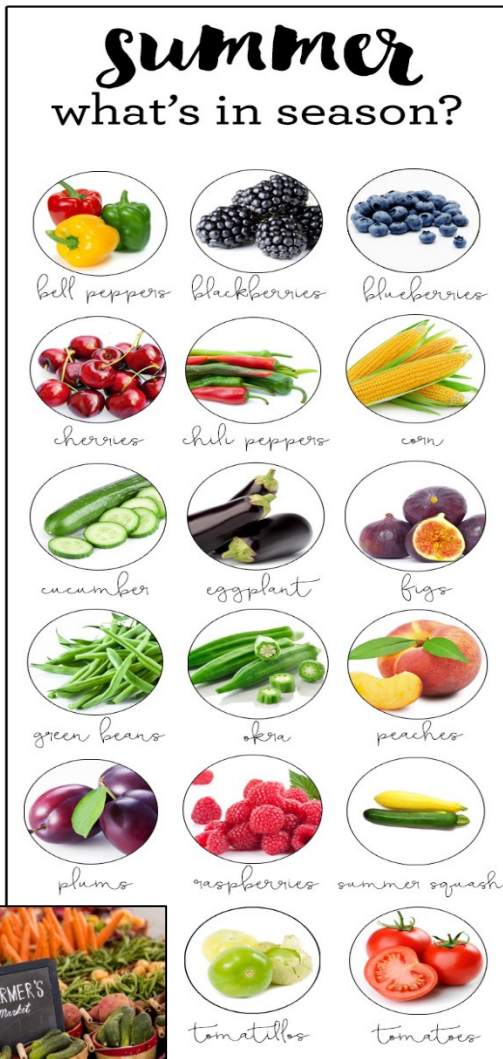


Make Meals More Delicious with Fresh Herbs

Whether it's rosemary, basil, dill or cilantro, fresh and dried herbs are one of the quickest, easiest ways to punch up the flavor of foods. Like other vegetables, herbs do carry some food safety risks during their growth and transport, so proper selection and storage is key.

Here's how to keep your herbs fresh, safe and tasting their very best:

- **Be picky.** When shopping for fresh herbs, choose those that are completely clean and free of soil. Then once home, cut off and discard any bruised stems or leaves.
- **Keep them cold.** Fresh herbs should always be refrigerated, starting in the grocery store and again when you bring them home.
- **Store them right.** Most herbs will keep unwashed in a plastic bag for up to five days in your refrigerator. However, those with leaves that brown or wilt easily such as basil or cilantro will fare better stored, stems down, in a glass of water with a plastic bag placed loosely over the leaves.
- **Cleanliness is key.** Before using fresh herbs, wash your hands well in warm, soapy water. Then, make sure your herbs are clean by washing them under cold, running water and drying them carefully with a clean paper towel. When cutting or chopping, use a separate cutting board designated only for fruits and vegetables to ensure that they don't become contaminated with bacteria from raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- **Don't forget dried herbs.** These can be a tasty alternative to fresh, but they also require proper care. Heat and light will cause herbs to lose their flavor very quickly. Store them in an airtight container, in a pantry or closed cabinet, and they'll stay fresh for at least one year.



This Month's Featured Vegetable:

Sweet Peas

Peas often get a bad reputation for being unhealthy because they are a "starchy" vegetable.

And although they are indeed higher in carbohydrates than many other vegetables, peas are little powerhouses of good nutrition when eaten in moderation.

Green peas are a very good source of vitamin K, manganese, dietary fiber, vitamin B1, copper, vitamin C, phosphorus and folate. They are also a good source of vitamin B6, niacin, vitamin B2, molybdenum, zinc, protein, magnesium, iron, potassium and choline.

