Seasonal calendar: vegetables

When produce floods the market it tastes better and usually costs less. Dark mark: peak season. Light mark: available, but not yet (or no longer) at its best price.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cabbage	●	●	○			○	○	○	●	●	●	●
Sauerkraut (homemade)	●	●	●	○						○	●	●
Beets	●	○	○				○	●	●	●	●	●
Carrots	●	○	○				○	●	●	●	●	●
Onions	●	●	○				○	●	●	●	●	●
Pumpkin & winter squash	○	○							●	●	●	○
Leeks								○	●	●	●	○
Radishes				○	●	●	○		○			
Green onions & herbs				○	●	●	●	●	○			
Spinach				●	●	○			●	○		
Cucumbers					○	●	●	●	○			
Zucchini						●	●	●	●	○		
Tomatoes						○	●	●	●	○		
Bell peppers							○	●	●	●		
Eggplant							○	●	●	○		
Green beans						○	●	●	○			
Sweet corn							○	●	●			
Broccoli & cauliflower						○	○	●	●	●	○	
Fresh garlic						○	●	●	○			

● peak season, best value ○ available, pricier

Seasonal calendar: fruit

When produce floods the market it tastes better and usually costs less. Dark mark: peak season. Light mark: available, but not yet (or no longer) at its best price.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Strawberries					○	●	○					
Cherries						●	●					
Raspberries, blueberries						○	●	●	○			
Apricots & peaches						○	●	●	○			
Watermelon & melon							○	●	○			
Plums							○	●	●			
Apples	○	○	○					○	●	●	●	○
Pears								○	●	●	○	
Citrus	●	●	○								○	●
Pomegranates & persimmons	○									○	●	●

● peak season, best value ○ available, pricier

How to save with the seasons

1. Buy at the peak

When there's plenty, prices drop and flavor peaks: tomatoes in August, cabbage in October, squash in November.

2. Off-season: freezer and cans

Frozen broccoli, peas, spinach and berries are as nutritious as fresh. In winter, canned tomatoes beat pale fresh ones.

3. Spring costs the most

From April to June, last year's beets, carrots and cabbage run out and the new crop isn't in yet. Lean on beans and frozen vegetables.

4. Stock up at the peak

Make sauerkraut in October, freeze berries in July, peppers and tomato sauce in August–September. Each month has its stock-up tip.

5. Price per pound

Compare the unit price, not the package price. Loose produce is usually cheaper than pre-packed.

6. Markets and 'seconds'

Vendors often sell cheaper near closing time. Misshapen peppers or small carrots work just as well in a stew.

7. Protein has no season

Chicken, eggs, fish and beans barely change with the seasons. Wait for sales and buy frozen: frozen fish and shrimp are just as good.

8. Write prices down

In a year you'll know when to buy what in your own town. There's a price log page at the back of this planner.

Seasons are for temperate Northern Hemisphere climates: most of the US and Canada, the UK and Europe. In the southern US many crops arrive earlier. Prices vary by region, weather and year, so use this as a guide, not a guarantee.