

# RAINSHADOW ORGANICS SUMMER CSA VEGETABLE GUIDE



# Welcome to the Rainshadow Organics Summer Vegetable CSA!

This document is a guide to most of the vegetables you will find in your summer CSA.

*Use the pictures to identify something you might not know.*

*Get some ideas on how to freeze or dehydrate things you get a lot of excess.*

*Find some new recipe inspiration.*

*Discover tips and tricks for keeping your vegetables fresher longer.*

We hope you enjoy it!

*~ Rainshadow Organics*



# Arugula

*Arugula has a peppery, slightly bitter flavor. It is stronger than most lettuces, so it's often paired with other greens. Mature arugula has sturdy leaves, whereas baby arugula tends to be more tender and milder in flavor. Hotter weather makes for spicier leaves.*



**To store:** Arugula is highly perishable and will only last about 2 days. Store in the fridge inside a perforated plastic bag. If you decide to wash it first, be sure to spin the leaves dry before placing them loosely into a plastic bag or Tupperware with a dry paper towel to absorb the moisture.

**To freeze:** Blanch leaves in boiling water or steam for two minutes, followed by soaking in ice water. Remove from ice water and drain well. Freeze "balls" of arugula on a cookie sheet in individual portions. When frozen, pop them into a Ziplock bag.

# Asian Greens

*We have a variety of Asian greens in our Summer CSA. This includes Yukina Savoy and Pak Choi/Bok Choy. These are traditional stir-fry vegetable from China. Asian greens grow in elongated, upright heads of dark green leaves. The leaves can be cooked and eaten like spinach, while the crisp stems can be used like celery or asparagus. Our favorite thing to do with Yu quickly. Pak Choi is delicious as a stir fry or Ramen addition.*



**To store:** Cut off any yellow leaves. Store wrapped loosely in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

**To prep:** Wash and remove any damaged yellowing leaves. Cut off the root tip. If the stems are thick, cut the leaves from the stems and cook them separately a few minutes before you add the leaves.

**To freeze:** Cut the stems from the leaves and chop to desired size. Store those separately. Cut the leaves into ribbons or squares or keep whole. Store separately from stems. Bring salted pot of water to a boil. Boil the leaves in boiling pot of water for 90 seconds. Douse in ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain the leaves and squeeze out moisture. Place in Ziplock freezer bags, removing as much air as possible. Put in freezer. Blanch the stems separately for 2 minutes. Douse in ice water and drain before packing into separate Ziplocks.

# Basil

*We have 2 different varieties of basil in our CSA, Tulsi and Italian Basil. Tulsi is an herb primarily used in teas and Italian Basil is the classic used for pesto, caprese salad, and Italian cooking.*



**To store:** Basil is very sensitive to cold. Do not refrigerate fresh basil; it will turn black. Instead, strip the lower leaves off the stems and place stems in a glass of water on the kitchen counter like a flower.

**To prep:** Mince well. Add to butter, cream cheese, or your favorite pasta sauce. Make a batch of pesto with pine nuts, Parmesan, olive oil, salt, and garlic.

**To dehydrate:** Remove leaves from stem and place on a piece of paper towel on a glass plate. Cover with another piece of paper towel. Microwave plate on high for 1 minute. Leaves will be dry. Crinkle them with your finger and place them in a dry container, such as a Mason jar with a lid or hang in a corner of your kitchen until dry.

**To freeze:** Basil does not freeze well by itself. Options include making a batch of pesto and freeze it flat in Ziplock bags or muffin tins or adding chopped basil to olive oil or water and freezing in ice cube trays.

# Beans

*There are many varieties of pole bean — green, purple, yellow, or speckled.*



**To store:** Store unwashed beans in a bag in the veggie bin of your fridge for up to 1 week. Rejuvenate limp beans by soaking them in ice water for 30 minutes.

**To prep:** Wash beans. Cut off the tips and remove strings. Cook whole or chop. These beans do not need to be shelled.

**To freeze:** Remove tips. Blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes, rinse in cold ice water for 2 minutes, drain, dry well, and pack into airtight containers.



## Beets

*Beets come in many colors — red, gold, orange. You can eat the green tops too!*



**To store:** If your beets still have greens attached, cut them off, leaving an inch of stem. Store the beet roots, with the rootlets (or "tails") attached, unwashed, in a plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. They will keep for several weeks.

**To prep:** Just before cooking, scrub beets well and remove any scraggly leaves and rootlets. If your recipe calls for raw beets, peel them with a knife or a veggie peeler, then grate or cut them according to the recipe. To remove the skins, you can roast them in foil, steam, or boil them, and the peels will slip right off.

**To freeze:** Boil or bake beets until done. Cool them in ice water or let them come to room temperature. Remove peels. Trim the beets into 1/4 inch slices or keep them whole (if they are small). Place in Ziplock freezer bag and remove as much air as possible. Seal and freeze.

## Beet Greens

*The tops of beets can be sauteed, blanched and frozen, or used in a salad.*



**To store:** Cut beet greens from their roots. Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 1 week.

**To prep:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Remove the thicker stems. Cut into appropriately sized pieces, depending on use.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed beet greens for 2-3 minutes in hot boiling water. Immediately dunk in cold ice water to stop the cooking process. Then drain and pack into airtight containers. Freeze them in "balls" on a cookie sheet; then pop them into a Ziplock for the perfect portion.

# Broccoli

*Broccoli is a cool-weather crop, available only in the early summer or fall. It is a member of the cole family. This family also includes cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, Napa cabbage, collards, kale, and kohlrabi. All of the cole vegetables contain bioflavonoids that help reduce the risk of cancer.*



**To store:** Wrap broccoli loosely in a plastic bag and keep it in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Store for a week.

**To prep:** Soak head upside down in cold salted water (1 teaspoon salt to 8 cups of water) for 30 minutes to remove any hidden field worms. Any critters will float to the top. You can eat the stalks, leaves, and head of broccoli. Break the head into florets of desired size. Then use a peeler or paring knife to cut the tough skin off the broccoli stalk, and cut into equal size pieces. The stalks will require a few extra minutes of cooking time.

**To freeze:** Cut into florets. Blanch in boiling water for three minutes or steam for five minutes. Remove and dunk in ice water for 5 minutes. Drain. Individually quick freeze broccoli on a parchment-lined tray and then package into air-tight freezer bags.

# Cabbage (Green/Purple)

*Purple cabbage's color will run into other ingredients when cooked.*



**To store:** Place dry, unwashed cabbage heads in the refrigerator, preferably in the vegetable bin. The outer leaves may eventually get floppy or yellowish, but they can be removed and discarded to reveal fresh inner leaves. Store for up to 3 months!

**To prep:** Rinse the cabbage under cold water before use. Cut cabbage head first into quarters, then diagonally across the wedge. Be sure to remove the stem end and triangular core near the base.



## Cabbage (Green/Purple) (continued)

**To use:** Eat steamed, braised, raw in salads, or fried. Turn raw cabbage into coleslaw or sauerkraut. Roast cabbage steaks/slices at 400F drizzled with olive oil and salt. Or try stir-frying shredded cabbage in olive oil until wilted with a little bit of minced garlic.

**To freeze:** Choose how to cut your heads based on your end use. Cook in a pot of boiling water for 90 seconds. Douse in ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain the cabbage and dry as much as possible. Place in Ziplock freezer bags based on the portions you plan to use and remove as much air as possible. Put in freezer.

## Cabbage (Napa)

*Napa or Chinese cabbage has tall leaves, and the heads are not as tightly bunched.*

**To store:** Place whole in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to a week. Use quickly before the leaves yellow.

**To prep:** To prepare the entire head at once, cut it in half lengthwise, remove the core, and chop as desired. You can slice the leaves from the stem. Chop the stems and use them in stir fry.

**To use:** Napa is great sliced and sautéed with onions and garlic. It goes well in a stir fry. For a caramelized flavor, cut the cabbage into wedges and roast them until the cabbage is tender. Or slice in half and grill the entire wedge until charred.

**To freeze:** Cut into quarters, wedges, or shred it. Cook in boiling pot of water for 90 seconds. Douse in ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain the cabbage and dry as much as possible. Place in Ziplock freezer bags and remove as much air as possible.



## Cantaloupe

*Cantaloupe has dense, netting-like skin with thick, juicy orange flesh and a sweet flavor. We grow very small, sweet cantaloupes here at Rainshadow. What they miss in size, they make up for in flavor!*



**To store:** If your cantaloupe melon seems a bit short of ripe, keep it at room temperature for a few days until there is a sweet smell coming from the stem end. Once the melon ripens, then store it in the refrigerator. Cut melon should be covered in plastic wrap.

**To prep:** A big knife and cutting board are helpful. Cut in half, scoop out the seeds, then cut into quarters or slices. Remove the rind.

**To freeze:** Melon must be frozen in a sugar syrup. Choose a ripe melon (but not too mushy). Remove the rind and seeds and cut into cubes. Prepare sugar syrup. In a pot on stove, combine 1 3/4 cup sugar with 4 cups water. Heat until dissolved then let cool. Syrup must be cold before packing. Place melon in freezer containers and cover with cold syrup. The syrup should cover all the fruit. Remove air and seal. Freeze.

## Carrots

*Carrots are sweetest in the fall and winter when they start to store their sugars in the root! During the summer they are refreshing and crisp!*



**To store:** Remove the green tops as soon as you can, leaving about an inch of stems. Refrigerate these carrots in a plastic bag. You can also store them in a bin of water (like celery) to keep them crisp, changing out the water every few days. Save the tops in a plastic bag.

**To prep:** Our carrots don't need to be peeled. Cut into sticks for dipping, dice, or slice for a salad, or boil 2-inch cubed carrots in rapidly boiling salt water, uncovered, for 7-10 minutes. Fresh carrot tops can be chopped into a green salad or stir-fried too! The greens can be dried and used as an herb like parsley. You can also make carrot top pesto if you are feeling adventurous.

**To freeze:** Blanch cut coins for 3 minutes in boiling salt water, dunk in cold ice water for 3 minutes, drain, let dry, and pack in airtight container.



# Cauliflower

*Cauliflower is a cool-weather crop, so you'll only see it in the fall at the markets. It comes in multiple colors.*



**To store:** Wrap dry, unwashed cauliflower loosely in plastic and store it in the refrigerator. It will keep for up to a week.

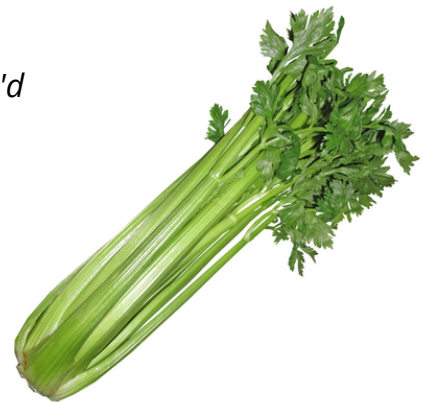
**To prep:** Remove the leaves (which you can eat like kale). Cut out the hard core. Serve raw on vegetable trays with a thick dip. To steam: cut off florets and steam for 5 minutes. Drizzle with butter and lemon juice. To roast: drizzle with olive oil and salt/pepper, bake at 450 degrees on a foil lined cookie sheet for 20 minutes, then sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. Cauliflower is great added to curries, soups, and stews.

**To freeze:** Blanch 2-4 minutes in boiling salt water. Soak in ice water bath for 4 minutes. Drain, let dry, and pack into Ziplock bags.

# Celery

*Farm-fresh celery often includes skinnier stalks than what you'd find at the grocery stores. They are celery flavor bombs!*

**To store:** You can wrap your celery tightly in foil and place it in the fridge. This will keep it crisp for weeks. If you don't want to use foil, try chopping the celery into smaller stalks and putting them in a bowl of water in the fridge.



**To prep:** Rinse well. Cut a half-inch off the base. Cut the tops off the celery. Save these for your freezer scrap bag and make broth later! You can also save the tops and use them for salads, for dried herbs, or DIY celery salt.

**To freeze:** Freezing celery is not recommended. But if you do so, you'll need to use it for soups as it will lose its crispness. Chop celery to desired size. Blanch in boiling hot water for 3 minutes. Plunge into ice water for 3 minutes. Drain. Lay celery on a cookie sheet and flash freeze in a freezer. Place frozen celery into a Ziplock container.

# Chard

*Swiss chard has expansive, pocketed leaves with stems in a spectrum of colors: red, white, green, yellow. It is actually in the beet family but doesn't develop a bulb. Its leaves are more tender and delicate than other greens. Eat small leaves raw in salads and blanch or steam larger leaves. You can freeze chard for recipes later. You will get chard from us as bunches of larger stalks or loose as smaller and more tender leaves.*



**To store:** Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks.

**To prep:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Remove the thicker stems by folding the leaves down the center and cutting out the stem. Stack several leaves on top of each other and slice into 1-inch wide ribbons.

**To use:** Add uncooked greens to a mixed green salad. Steam stem pieces 8-10 minutes, and leaves 4-6 minutes. Or sauté greens until tender in a large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Watch for color to brighten as this signals they are done. Serve cooked chard alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes. Chard also goes great in stir-fries or in any recipe calling for spinach.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking. Drain and freeze.

# Cilantro

*Cilantro looks like parsley, but has a strong soapy smell and flavor. It is used in ethnic cuisine — Asian, Indian, and Mexican (especially salsa). Since it doesn't stand up to much heat, it is usually added to a dish right before serving. This plant grows in cool weather conditions, so you won't see it in the heat of the summer months.*



**To store:** For short-term storage, stand upright in a container with an inch of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.

**To prep:** Chop the stem and leaves with a butcher knife. The stems can be eaten too.

**To freeze:** Not recommended.



# Collards

*Collards are a heartier leaf like kale with a stronger flavor.*

**To store:** Wrap the leaves in a plastic bag and store in the crisper. Use within a week if possible or until the leaves turn yellow.



**To prep:** Remove the stem with a knife. Use the leaves for wraps, stirred into soup, braised with bacon, in a stir-fry, pesto, chili, salads, or served alongside ham hocks.

**To freeze:** Blanch 4 minutes in boiling salt water. Soak in ice water bath for 4 minutes. Drain, let dry, and pack into Ziplock containers.

# Corn

**To store:** Refrigerate sweet corn as soon as possible with husks on. The longer you wait to eat it, the more sugar will turn into starch, and the corn will lose its sweetness.



**To prep:** You can eat corn raw or cook it in the husks. Shuck the cob by pulling the husks down the ear and snapping off the stem. The silks will fall off as you cook the corn. Rinse under cold water. If you see a green worm, just cut out the damaged section — the rest of the cob is still edible! To cut the kernels off the cob, stand the cob upright on its base and run a sharp knife from the tip of the ear down to the base.

**To cook:** Steam corn in 1-2 inches of water for 6-10 minutes, or drop ears into boiling water for 3-6 minutes. Season with butter or salt. You can also grill corn in the husk — place the corn in its husk in water for 10 minutes — then place on grill for 15 minutes.

**To freeze:** Blanch on the cob for 3-5 minutes, rinse under cold water, and drain. Cut off the kernels with a knife, and then pack it into airtight freezer containers.

# Cucumber

*Cucumbers are in a family known as cucurbits that includes melons, squash, pumpkins and gourds. They are classified as either slicers or picklers. Pickling cucumbers have thin, lighter skin than slicers.*



**To store:** Place cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator for up to a week.

**To prep:** Slicing cucumbers are often peeled. Pickling cukes are not. If the seeds are bulky, slice the cucumber lengthwise and scoop them out. Scoring the skin of a cucumber with a fork or zester gives it attractive stripes. Slice, dice or cut into chunks according to recipe.

**To freeze:** You can freeze cucumbers in a vinegar brine, but they will be mushy when you eat them later. Not recommended.

# Dill

**To store:** For short-term storage, stand upright in a container with an inch of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks



**To prep:** Chop the leaves and stem before cooking.

**To cook:** Dill is a standard in pickling. It also combines well with green beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, tomatoes, parsnips, potatoes, spinach, cucumber, squash, eggplant, and eggs.

**To freeze:** Trim off the long stem ends leaving only an inch attached to the feathery foliage. Place a couple of sprigs together inside a resealable plastic freezer bag; press out all of the air and seal. When you need fresh dill for a recipe, remove the frozen sprig and snip off what you need while still frozen. Do not let it thaw.



# Eggplant

*Eggplant is a close relative of tomatoes, peppers and potatoes. All are members of the nightshade family. They are smooth-skinned, oval to elongated, and range in color from white, to black to purple to pink and sometimes orange!*



**To store:** Wrap unwashed eggplant in a towel (not plastic) to absorb any moisture, and keep it in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator. Or store unrefrigerated at a cool room temperature. Use within a week and it should still be fresh and mild.

**To prep:** Eggplant is usually peeled. The flesh will brown when exposed to air. To prevent browning, coat in lemon juice or keep submerged in water.

**To use:** Brush 1/2-inch to 1-inch slices of eggplant with olive oil or melted butter and broil or grill until brown. It also makes an excellent baba-ganoush dip. For a delicious casserole dish, chop eggplant into cubes, layer in a pyrex dish with tomatoes, onions, mozzarella, and basil, and sprinkle with olive oil and salt. Bake at 400 F for 25 minutes.

**To freeze:** Peel and cut into slices 1/3-inch thick. Blanch for 2 minutes in steam. Cool immediately in cold water. Package in layers with each slice separated with two pieces of wrap.

# Fennel

*Both the fronds and the bulb are edible. Fennel has a distinct licorice taste.*



**To store:** Cut off the stalks where they emerge from the bulb. If you want to use the feathery foliage as an herb, place the dry stalks upright in a glass filled with two inches of water. Cover the glass loosely with a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for a few days. The unwashed bulb may be kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator drawer for 2 weeks.

**To prep:** Remove the tip base of the white bulb. Cut off the stalks. Chop or mince the stems and leaves for garnish or seasoning.

## Fennel (Continued)

**To use:** Try fennel raw: brush raw slices with olive oil and lemon juice, sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve as an appetizer. Use the fernlike tops as a licorice-flavored herb or garnish. Use the stems in soup stocks in place of celery. Grill, braise, or roast fennel. The feathery leaves are great on baked or broiled fish with butter and lemon.

**To freeze:** Cut bulb into quarters and blanch in boiling water for 1 minute. Then plunge into ice water for 1 minute. Drain and freeze in Ziplock bags.

## Garlic Scape

*The scape is the flowering part of the garlic plant that emerges in June. We cut the scape before it blooms to redirect energy back to growing the bulb. It has a milder garlic taste and can be substituted for garlic.*

**To store:** Store scapes unwashed in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

**To prep:** Chop off the very tip and woody parts of the stem. Then mince finely and use in place of garlic.

**To use:** Garlic scapes can be chopped or diced raw into green or pasta salads, sautéed in place of bulb garlic, sprinkled onto pizza, eaten raw, or used anywhere garlic flavor is desired. They are also great grilled.

**To freeze:** Scapes can be chopped and flash frozen in Ziplock bags.



## Ground Cherry

*Husk cherries, commonly referred to as ground cherries or husk tomatoes, are small pale orange fruits wrapped in a crinkly, paper-like husk. They look a little bit like small tomatillos. Their flavor is a cross between a tomato and a pineapple.*



**To store:** Store in their husks in a paper bag in the refrigerator for seven days.

**To prep:** Remove the husks and rinse the fruits before preparing.

**To use:** Mixed with berries, they make a great addition to desserts. You can also make a preserve out of them. Add with jalapenos and cilantro for a great salsa variation. And you can always just throw them into a salad.

**To freeze:** Remove husk. Throw the cherries into a Ziplock bag or Mason jar and freeze.

## Kale

*Kale is a member of the brassica family. Kale comes in blue-green, reddish green, and red/purple varieties and may have flat or curly leaves. All types of kale have thick stems. It has a mild cabbage flavor when cooked.*



**To store:** Place kale unwashed, wrapped in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Best used very fresh, but may last for a week.

**To prep:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. If your greens have thick stems, you definitely want to remove them. Fold each leaf in half and slice out the stem. Then stack the leaves up and slice them diagonally into 1-inch-wide strips.

**To use:** Saute in olive oil. Use in soups, spaghetti sauce, pesto, quiche, or kale chips. Siberian Kale is very tender and can be used raw like lettuce. You can also massage all kale with a pinch of salt and a drizzle of olive oil to make a delicious salad base.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers. Stems can also be frozen.



# Kohlrabi

*This plant was developed by crossing a cabbage with a turnip! The edible part of the plant is an enlarged section of the stem that develops just above the ground.*



**To store:** Store kohlrabi globe and leaves separately. The bulb will last for 2 weeks refrigerated in a plastic bag. Wrap leaves and stalks in a plastic bag and keep in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator.

**To prep:** Rinse under cold running water just before use. Cut the outer skin off with a knife. Trim off the remains of the stalks and root. Grate, slice, or chop as desired.

**To cook:** Cut raw kohlrabi bulb into sticks for a refreshing addition to a raw vegetable tray or grate it for salads. Try raw kohlrabi smeared with peanut butter. Lightly boil, steam or bake it, or add it to stews and stir-fries. Young kohlrabi leaves can be used in recipes calling for greens.

**To freeze:** Cut into cubes or slices and blanch for 3-4 minutes. Place into ice water bath to stop the cooking. Drain and dry. Place in Ziplock freezer bag.

# Leeks

**To store:** Cut off the green tops (save those greens and put them in your veggie freezer bag to make veggie stock). Loosely wrap unwashed leek bottoms (with roots attached) in a plastic bag and store them in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator where they will keep for 2 weeks.



**To prep:** Cut the leek about 1 inch above the white part, where the leaves begin changing from dark to light green. Save the unused greens; they'll give great flavor to your next vegetable stock. Slit the leek lengthwise and soak it in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. Fan the leaves under running water to dislodge dirt, then pat dry. Chop the white part of the allium finely.

**To use:** Use leeks in salads, casseroles and soups or wherever you'd use onions. They can be braised, boiled, grilled, or steamed.

**To freeze:** Cut the white parts of the leek into slices and flash freeze in Ziplock bags. Or sauté in butter or oil and freeze already sautéed.

## Lettuce Heads

**To store:** Store unwashed lettuce in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. To store lettuce that you have already washed and dried with a spinner, place back in a plastic bag with a dry paper towel in the bag, and place the package in the vegetable crisper bin. Use within 4 days.



**To prep:** Slice the head at its base with a knife and let the leaves fall open. Discard any damaged or leathery outer leaves and tear large leaves into bite-size pieces. Wash leaves in a basin of cold water. Dry in a salad spinner.

**To freeze:** Not recommended.

## Salad Mix

*Our salad mix consists of a variety of baby greens: lettuces, arugula, mustard greens, sometimes spinach, and occasionally red orach (also known as French spinach). Bring your reusable shopping bags or Tupperware container for salad mix. We pre-rinse our lettuce mix, but make sure you soak and rinse your salad again!*



**To store:** Wash leaves in a basin of cold water. Dry in a salad spinner. Store salad mix that you have already washed and dried with a spinner back in a plastic bag or Tupperware container with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Use within 4 days.

**To prep:** Sort through lettuce and discard any damaged or off looking leaves. Make into a delicious salad.

**To freeze:** Not recommended.

## Okra

**To store:** Wrap in a paper towel and place inside a paper bag. Store paper bag in the vegetable drawer. Do not wash fresh okra until you are ready to use it.

**To prep:** Trim the ends. Dice into rounds.

**To cook:** It is best when sauteed, stewed, stir-fried, or deep-fried. It's also delicious pickled. Okra will release a liquid that will thicken whatever it is cooked with.

**To freeze:** Blanch the whole pods in a pot of boiling water for no more than one minute. Dunk in ice water for one minute. Drain. Freeze in Ziplock bags.



## Onion, Fresh

*Fresh onions will start becoming available in August.*

**To store:** Fresh onion will need to be stored in a plastic bag in the fridge and used within 2 weeks.

**To prep:** Peel the onion's skin and cut off the roots and top. Save your papery onion skins in a bag in your freezer reserved for making vegetable stock. If you encounter a little rot in your onion, just cut away the bad sections. If there are a few black spots, rinse the whole onion in cool water and rub the spots off with your thumbs.

**To freeze:** Cut or slice onions to desired size and place in freezer Ziplock bag. Remove all the air and seal. It helps to freeze them in 2-3 cup increments.





## Parsley

**To store:** For short-term storage, stand upright in a container with an inch of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with a plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.



**To prep:** Chop the leaves and stem before cooking. The stem can be used to flavor soups and stews too.

**To dry:** Place a piece of paper towel on a glass plate. Layer the parsley evenly around the plate being sure not to overlap. Cover with another piece of paper towel. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Leaves will be dry. Crinkle them with your finger and place them in a dry container, such as a Mason jar with a lid.

**To freeze:** Chop parsley finely and freeze in ice cube trays with water. Pop out frozen cubes and freeze in a freezer bag.

## Snap Peas

**To store:** Use as soon as possible within 4-5 days of harvest. Refrigerate in a perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer.



**To prep:** Wash well. Snap off the ends and remove the string if present.

**To use:** Eat young, fresh snap peas raw. Put them on top of a salad. Add raw peas to stir-fry or soup in the last stages of cooking. Steam peas until just tender-crisp, for three minutes. Toss with butter, olive oil, cream, vinaigrette, or pesto.

**To freeze:** Peas freeze well but will lose their crunchy texture. Remove stems/strings. Blanch peas for 1 minute, rinse under cold water, drain, and pack into Ziplock freezer bags.

## Peppers, Sweet

*These come in a variety of colors: green, red, yellow, orange, purple, and chocolate. Colored peppers are simply green peppers that were allowed to ripen to their full color change. They are sweeter and need to be eaten sooner. Shapes and sizes vary: round, bell-shaped, elongated, banana shaped, etc.*



**To store:** Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer for 1-2 weeks.

**To prep:** Cut in half and remove the seeds from the inside. Slice, chop or mince.

**To use:** Try roasting peppers over a flame until the skin blackens. Place the pepper inside a plastic bag to cool. Then remove to slide off the skins. Add raw to salads or use with dips. Cook in soups, pasta dishes, sautéed veggie dishes ... the sky is the limit!

**To freeze:** Wash and dry peppers. Freeze whole or cut into bite-size pieces or slices and place in Ziplock freezer bag, removing as much air as possible. Roast, remove skins and seeds and freeze for roasted red peppers all winter long.

## Peppers, Hot

**To store:** Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer for 1-2 weeks. You can also dehydrate peppers for long-term.



**To prep:** Be careful when preparing hot peppers of any kind. For greatest safety wear rubber gloves while chopping and handling them. Do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth or other places. Wash hands thoroughly when finished. Slice off the top of the hot pepper, including the stem. Since the heat in chili peppers is concentrated in the seeds and membranes, you can cut out the heat-filled seeds and membranes for a milder heat.

**To dry:** Dry whole peppers and crush into red pepper flakes for use during the winter months.

**To freeze:** Wash and dry peppers. Keep whole, or cut into bite-size pieces and place in Ziplock freezer bag.

## Potato, fresh

**To store:** Keep unwashed potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place, such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard. They will keep for two weeks at room temperature. Light turns them green, and proximity to onions causes them to sprout. Don't put them in the refrigerator, as low temperatures convert the starch to sugars.



**To prep:** Scrub well and cut off any sprouts or green skin. Peeling is a matter of preference. In soups, the skins may separate from the flesh and float in the broth, but when baked, pan-fried or roasted, the skins acquire a crisp, crunchy texture.

**To cook:** Boil potatoes in water for 20-30 minutes until tender. If desired, mash them. Use potatoes in soups, hash browns, and salads. Roast sliced or whole small potatoes with fresh herbs, salt, and olive oil at 400 F until tender, about 20 minutes.

**To freeze:** Cool cooked or mashed potatoes and freeze them in a Ziplock bag.

## Radish

**To store:** Remove radish leaves if they are still attached. Store the unwashed greens in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. Store radish roots unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 1 week.



**To prep:** Scrub radishes well. Trim off the stem and rootlets.

**To use:** Eat radishes raw with a sprinkle of salt. Grate radishes into slaws and salads. Try small young radish leaves in salads or scrambled eggs. Blanch whole radishes in boiling, salt water for 5-10 minutes, or steam them until just tender, 8-12 minutes. Top with butter, salt, and pepper or with a vinaigrette. They're also great grilled and pickled.

**To freeze:** Blanch for 3 minutes, then dunk in ice water for 3 minutes. Drain. Pop in a freezer bag and freeze. The radish greens can be blanched as well – but only for 2 minutes.



# Rhubarb

*This tart vegetable is one of the first to emerge in the spring. Because of its sour taste, sugar is usually added. It has the texture of celery and can be red or green.*

**To store:** Wrap in foil and place in the fridge. Use within a week.

**To prep:** Remove the leaves and bottom inch of the stalk. Chop or mince.

**To use:** Add to pies, cakes, muffins, scones, jello, or sauce. Try eating rhubarb raw as a snack, dipped in sugar!

**To freeze:** Chop and pack into Ziplock freezer bags to flash freeze.



# Romanesco

*Romanesco is a cool-weather crop, so you'll only see it in the fall at the markets.*

**To store:** Wrap dry, unwashed romanesco loosely in a plastic bag and store it in the refrigerator for up to a week.

**To prep:** Remove the leaves (which you can eat like kale). Cut out the hard core. Break into florets or cook whole.

**To use:** Serve raw on vegetable trays with a thick dip. To steam: cut off florets and steam for 5 minutes. To roast: drizzle with olive oil and salt/pepper, bake at 450F on a foil lined cookie sheet for 20 minutes, then sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. To make rice: pulse florets in a food processor fitted with a normal blade.

**To freeze:** Blanch 2-4 minutes in boiling salt water. Soak in ice water bath for 4 minutes. Drain, let dry, and pack into Ziplock containers. You can also freeze riced romanesco.



## Green Onions

**To store:** Chop off the top inch of the tender green tips and stand the scallions in an inch of water in a tall container covered loosely with a Ziplock bag, refreshing the water every 3 days.



**To prep:** Remove roots and any slimy or off looking outer skin. Chop the leaves and stem before cooking.

**To use:** You can eat the entire scallion. Rinse scallions in cold water and snip off anything that's floppy. Use chopped scallions as a garnish; they are less pungent. The minced greens of scallions are a good substitute for chives. Use them in stir-fry or almost any recipe calling for onions, raw or cooked. They are excellent in soups and stews.

**To freeze:** Chop into desired size and place on cookie sheet and freeze. Then pop into a Ziplock baggie and store in the freezer. You can even freeze the green tops!

## Spinach

**To store:** Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks.



**To prep:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Spin dry.

**To cook:** Add uncooked spinach to a mixed green salad. Blanch spinach until it wilts, 2-4 minutes, or steam for 5-8 minutes. Sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Watch for color to brighten as this signals it is done.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 1 minute. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers. Freeze.

# Thyme

**To store:** Roll sprigs in a damp paper towel and place it in a resealable plastic bag or stand your thyme sprigs up like a bouquet of flowers in a drinking glass or jar with about an inch of water inside.



**To dehydrate:** Place stems evenly on a paper-towel-lined glass plate. Cover with another paper towel. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Leaves will be dry. Strip them off the stem with your finger and place them in a Mason jar with a lid.

**To use:** Strip leaves from woody stem with your fingers. Mince leaves to release their flavor. Or add whole sprigs into the cavity of a chicken.

**To freeze:** Strip the leaves from the woody stem and chop the leaves coarsely. Spoon 1 tablespoon of the herb into each compartment of an ice cube tray, add about 1 inch of water to each compartment, and place the tray in the freezer. Remove the frozen herb cubes from the trays and bundle all the cubes in a plastic freezer bag. One frozen herb cube is equal to 1 tablespoon fresh or 1 teaspoon dried herb. Just add a cube when your recipe calls for the herb.

# Tomatillo

*The tomatillo, or “husk tomato” is important in authentic Mexican cooking and is best known for its central role in salsa verde, or green sauce.*



**To store:** Store at room temperature with husks on, for 2 weeks. For longer-term storage, refrigerate in husks in a plastic bag.

**To prep:** Remove husk before eating. Wash. Chop to desired size.

**To cook:** Use tomatillos to make salsa verde with garlic, onion, hot chili pepper, lime juice, fresh cilantro, and salt. They are often roasted first.

**To freeze:** Remove the husk and wash. Freeze whole in a Ziplock freezer bag.

# Tomato

**To store:** Do not refrigerate tomatoes. Store them at room temperature out of the sun stem side down. Putting them in a paper bag will accelerate the ripening process. Heirloom tomatoes will have strange shapes and cracks. These are highly perishable and should be eaten within 1-2 days.



**To prep:** If you'll be cooking tomatoes, consider removing the skins so they don't float around in your dish. To do so, score the end of the tomato with an "X," dunk whole tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds, lift out with slotted spoon, plunge into ice water, and the skins will slide off.

**To freeze:** Tomatoes can be frozen whole with the skin on. The skins will slide right off when they thaw. Simply pop the washed tomatoes whole into a Ziplock bag. Thawed tomatoes are appropriate only for cooking sauces, salsas, or purees.

## Cherry Tomato

**To store:** Do not refrigerate tomatoes. Store them at room temperature out of the sun. Putting them in a paper bag will accelerate the ripening process.

**To prep:** Wash. Remove the stem top.



**To freeze:** Tomatoes can be frozen whole with the skin on. The skins will slide right off when they thaw. Simply pop the washed tomatoes whole into a Ziplock bag. Thawed tomatoes are appropriate only for cooking sauces, salsas, or purees.



## Turnip, Hakurei

*Turnips are a root vegetable, related to arugula and radishes, which are members of the mustard family. Young Hakurei turnips, also known as salad turnips, are great raw, grated or chopped in salads, or sautéed or roasted with olive oil and fresh herbs.*



**To store:** Remove the greens from the turnips and store in a plastic bag to use within 3 days. The turnip roots should be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your fridge for up to a week.

**To prep:** Cut off the green tops (which can be eaten as well). Wash and cut the white roots into wedges or slices.

**To cook:** Serve raw with dip in a veggie tray. Or grate and add them to a salad. Turnips are delicious when roasted with other root vegetables (like carrot, potatoes, rutabaga, garlic).

**To freeze:** Blanch for 3 minutes in hot boiling water. Cool in ice water for 3 minutes, drain and pack into freezer containers or freezer bags.

## Watermelon

*Watermelon has dark and light green stripes on the outside and the inside is crisp, tender, sweet, and hydrating. Our watermelons are usually small but pack a mighty sweet punch!*



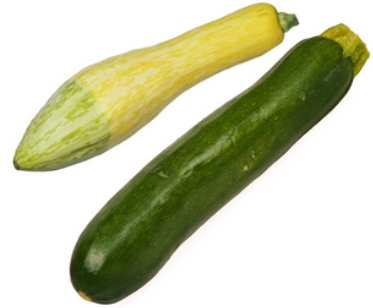
**To store:** Refrigerate watermelon right away. They do not ripen off the vine or emanate a ripe smell. Cut melon should be covered in plastic wrap, and chunks or slices should be kept in an air-tight container. Eat melons within a week.

**To prep:** Using a big knife, cut melon in half, then cut into quarters or slices.

**To use:** Use in salads, or eat it raw in slices. Blend watermelon, water, and sugar or honey for a refreshing aqua fresca.

## Yellow Squash & Zucchini

*Summer squash is a general term for 70 different types of fast-growing, tender-skinned, soft-fleshed squash including Zucchini, yellow squash (either straight or crookneck), and scallops (or patty pan) which look like flying saucers. If you get a giant-sized zucchini, use it for making zucchini bread. It will be too tough and seedy for other recipes.*



**To store:** Store squash unwashed in the vegetable bin for about a week.

**To prep:** Rinse under water to remove the dirt or prickles, and slice off the stem and blossom ends. Then slice or chop. Scrape out seeds from giant sized zucchinis before using them to bake.

**To use:** Slice tender, young summer squash raw into salads. Try them in stir-fry or with pasta. Lightly steam (4-5 minutes) and dress them with fresh herbs or pesto. Or coat squash lightly in oil and roast at 350F whole or sliced in half for 15-45 minutes. Stuff whole squash with your favorite stuffings. Bread them and make zuke fries.

**To freeze:** You can freeze grated zucchini for use in breads and muffins. Squeeze as much liquid out as possible before adding to the freezer bag.

## Yod Fah Chinese Broccoli

*This vegetable is not actually related to broccoli but tastes like combination of asparagus and broccoli. Yod Fah has thick stems that remain tender and you should eat all parts of this plant. The greens are similar to kale, the stems resemble asparagus, and the florets are similar to broccoli. Use in stir fries or to replace broccoli in your favorite recipe.*



**To store:** Store unwashed in the fridge, wrapped in a plastic bag

**To prep:** Cut off and discard 1 inch from stem ends. Cook in a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling salted water until just tender, about 3 minutes, transferring with a slotted spoon to a large bowl of ice and cold water to stop cooking.

**To freeze:** Wash thoroughly and cut off woody stems. Blanch (plunge into boiling water) for three minutes and chill quickly in ice cold water. Drain off excess moisture, package in airtight containers or freezer bags and freeze immediately.