



BONUS: Produce-Storage Guide

Here are some produce-saving lessons that I have come up with over the years to make sure my produce stays fresh as long as possible -- generally everything can last a week or more. I almost never throw out rotten produce anymore, which is also due to having some quick recipes that I can use to incorporate older veggies before they go bad: like soups, stews and water sautes.

GREENS

Re-use the plastic produce bags that you can get at the grocery store. Put 1-2 paper towels in the bag, along with the produce so that they can soak up some of the moisture from the lettuces. Seal the bag with air in it and refrigerate in a crisper or a lower location of the fridge. Your greens should last a good 5-7 days this way.



I put a paper towel in the plastic bag my greens are in, to absorb moisture. This is red leaf lettuce.



I seal the bag with some air trapped inside, to keep it fresher. Greens are still alive and they need air!

GREENS (cont.)



I keep the bags of greens on the bottom shelf where it's colder in my fridge.



Here's an addition to my current set up: [that green plastic tub](#). I totally LOOOOVE this tub. It holds 3 huge heads of romaine at a time and is a great shape for the fridge. I found that I was having a hard time making salads daily because I'd look at unwashed greens and get lazy. So I started washing 2-3 heads at a time and keeping them in this tub and it works WONDERS. Fresh greens are available whenever I need them for salads, and I only have to wash them every 3 days. (I remove the full leaves from the stem part of the head and discard that, wash them, dry them, and put them in the tub with some paper towels: they keep for a long time!) So I keep washed salad greens in the tub, and the rest I store as I mentioned above this pic, because I don't mind washing them when I'm making smoothies each time because I don't have to dry them.

APPLES

Keep apples away from other fruits and veggies as they give off a gas that helps things ripen and in turn rot faster. This can be helpful if you want to ripen bananas faster on the counter for instance, but not great if you don't want things to rot in your fridge. I store my apples in a paper bag on the top shelf of the fridge, away from other produce.



I keep some apples in the fridge so they are cold, but I keep them in a paper bag.



I keep some apples out on the countertop if I'm going to use them for warm smoothies.

MUSHROOMS

When possible, keep mushrooms in their original packaging, and if they're open, put the whole container in a plastic bag until used. You can put a paper towel in there as well, if desired. When mushrooms get slimy, discard.

OTHER VEGGIES

Most other veggies, like zucchini, peppers, cabbages, cucumbers, etc, do best when kept in sealed plastic bags in the fridge. When they are half-used, store them the same way and they will keep for 2-4 more days usually.



I use this old greens container to separate out veggies that are half-used, so I can quickly see what to use first in my fridge. I usually keep all salad veggies in one place like this so when I go to make a salad, I can just pull out the whole container and start chopping.



I always keep tomatoes out on the countertop, and they last 5-7 days this way usually. I find if I keep them in the fridge, they get mealy.

ONIONS



Green onions: I store these in a vase with some water in my fridge door. When I go to use them, I just chop off and discard any part that isn't fresh and they keep really well covered like this.



I have two vases that I use to store green onions and asparagus. I keep some water at the bottom of the vase and the greens covered with a bag, and they last for 1-2 weeks this way.

ONIONS (cont.)



Whole onions: Keep in a cool dark cupboard. I store mine in plastic bags as well, and just keep re-using the plastic bags for this type of storage, as well as trash bags, etc. I can always tell if an onion is going bad just by how it smells when I open up this cupboard!

BERRIES

It is perfectly fine nutritionally, to buy berries frozen during the winter, since the fresh ones are so expensive. It's also semi-ok to get non-organic frozen, since they will have been sprayed with less pesticides and fungicides than the fresh ones. Of course if you can afford it, organic is always best. But always buy fresh berries organic. If fresh, store them in their original containers, unwashed, in the fridge until ready for use. Wash right before using.



AVOCADO

Buy avocados just barely darkening, or green. Allow to ripen on your counter at home. They are ready to eat when the skin is very dark and you squeeze them gently and the flesh underneath yields to pressure. Too soft and they might start to get brown spots. You can stop the ripening by putting them in the fridge and then they will last another 4-7 days! Putting citrus on them will stop the browning of the exposed avocado flesh. Or else store with a bit of plastic film touching all surfaces of exposed avocado to keep from browning.



Two avocados ripening on my counter top. One is more green than the other, so I will put the dark one in the fridge now so it will last another at least 4+ days. I usually buy them green and put them in the fridge when they've been dark brown for about 1-2 days.



I just put them straight in the fridge like this to keep them fresh and not over-ripening.

BANANAS

I buy bananas green or just turning yellow and allow them to ripen on my counter or in my produce racks. I wait until they are this spotty to start using, because they are sweeter. I will wait another 2-3 days until I remove the peel and freeze them in halves in a ziploc in my freezer, to be used for banana nice cream, smoothies, or to be warmed again for oatmeal, etc.



This banana will be fairly sweet, because of the spotting. I would start using a banana once it's gotten to this level of spottiness or beyond.



The bananas that are super ripe: they get peeled and frozen for nice cream! I ALWAYS have bananas on hand like this. I'm constantly buying 2-3 bunches at a time.