

SPRING VEGETABLE GUIDE



Green is back—fresh artichokes, asparagus, peas and salad greens add color to your spring dishes.

ARTICHOKES

Italians have a deep attachment to the artichoke, which is native to the Mediterranean and first appeared in modern records in Naples around 1400. When spring rolls around in Rome, artichokes are served every way possible, from deep-fried to thinly sliced raw and topped with shaved pecorino and fruity olive oil. Frozen and canned artichokes are definitely convenient, making them a great addition to weeknight meals and quick dips when the season is over.

WHAT YOU GET: Plenty of fiber and a good amount of vitamin C, potassium and folate make artichokes an obvious healthy choice.

SHOPPING TIP: Look for green, plump, compact heads. Brown spots on the scales may be unattractive but indicate that the artichokes have been frost-kissed and have improved flavor.

STORAGE TIP: Refrigerate in a plastic bag for up to 1 week.

ASPARAGUS

King Louis XIV of France was so fond of asparagus he ordered greenhouses to grow the delicacy year-round. Today, you don't need to be royalty to enjoy it anytime, but it is the freshest and tastiest right now.

WHAT YOU GET: One stalk of asparagus contains just 4 calories and delivers healthy doses of folate, potassium and fiber.

SHOPPING TIPS: Consumers who choose spindly asparagus are actually missing the juicy tenderness of fatter, more robust spears. “Elegantly thin” asparagus is less sweet, more grassy and herbaceous. Shun any spear that appears shriveled or whose bud is spreading open.

STORAGE TIP: If you're not going to eat your asparagus within a day or two, stand it upright in a glass of water to keep it hydrated.

PEAS

Only about 5 percent of the peas grown in the world are actually eaten fresh—most are frozen or canned. Do your part to boost the statistics by indulging in fresh spring peas—snap, snow or English shelling. Choose snow peas or snap peas if you're looking for the tasty edible pods to throw in a salad or simply sauté, and shelling varieties for the fun-to-open pods full of little green gems.

WHAT YOU GET: Bursting with nutrients, peas are a very good source of vitamin K, manganese, vitamin C, iron, fiber, vitamin B1 and folate, as well as a good source of a host of other vitamins and minerals.

SHOPPING TIP: Look for peas with light, bright coloring without any brown, bruised, withering ends.

STORAGE TIP: Refrigerate peas for 2 to 4 days.

SALAD GREENS

Salads using fresh, seasonal greens are an ideal way to get dinner on the table fast without spending much time in front of the stove. Or try watercress on a tuna salad sandwich or arugula on a grilled vegetable sandwich.

WHAT YOU GET: Salad greens are a virtually calorie-free food. A 2-cup bowlful has less than 15 calories yet is packed with nutrients, such as folate, vitamin C, fiber, potassium and the vitamin A precursor beta carotene, which in itself is a powerful antioxidant that helps neutralize free radicals that damage cells.

SHOPPING TIPS: Prewashed greens are ubiquitous in produce sections.

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Find them in bags, plastic tubs or bulk bins. Greens come in single-item bags, such as spinach or romaine, or blends, such as mesclun or baby lettuces.

Lettuces like Bibb, Boston, iceberg and romaine are often sold as heads.

Greens like watercress, arugula and spinach are often sold by the bunch.

Whether purchased by the bag, head or bunch, salad greens should look fresh, crisp and green. Avoid greens that are brown, yellow, wilted, blemished, bruised or slimy. If stems are still attached they should be undamaged.

STORAGE TIP It is best not to wash leaves before storing because the moisture encourages decay. If greens are sprayed in the market, dry on kitchen towels before wrapping in dry towels and placing in plastic storage bags. Most greens keep in the refrigerator crisper for three to five days.

RECIPES

Check the Price Chopper Recipe Cards Rack, or go to www.pricechopper.com.

CHILI-RUBBED TILAPIA WITH ASPARAGUS & LEMON

FRESH HERB & SNAP PEA SALAD

GREEK DINER SALAD

GREEN SALAD WITH ASPARAGUS & PEAS

KOREAN-STYLE STEAK & LETTUCE WRAPS

STEAK SALAD-STUFFED POCKETS

WHOLE-WHEAT COUSCOUS WITH PARMESAN & PEAS

Steak Salad-Stuffed Pockets



Fresh Herb & Snap Pea Salad



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