



THE SEASONAL EATING CHALLENGE

Juicy tomatoes. Sweet corn.

Fragrant basil. When produce is at its best, nothing is better. And purchasing in season from local farms puts dollars directly into the pockets of farmers, supporting your local economy, reducing the need to ship food for miles and supporting a more biodiverse food system. Our interactive PDF offers tips for how to use new-to-you produce and techniques to make the most of the fresh flavors of seasonal produce.

Ready to get started?



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Getting Started

Step 1:

Use the **Seasonal Food Guide** to find what's in season near you, then buy something new from your local farmers' market or farmstand.

Step 2:

Pick a new cooking technique. We have some suggestions on the next page, or look at cookbooks or your favorite online resources for new cooking ideas.

Step 3:

Try out your new technique and new ingredients. Take photos and jot down notes to help you remember favorite new ingredients and techniques.

Step 4:

Challenge yourself to try at least one new food each week. See how many new fruits and vegetables you can try! Share your favorites with us on social media [@foodprintorg](https://twitter.com/foodprintorg).

Cooking Techniques

Skip Cooking. When it's too hot to turn on the oven, choosing produce in its prime lets you skip the cooking. Try no-cook versions of **puttanesca**, hearty **summer soup** and more.

Grab Inspiration. Not sure what to do with those aromatic herbs or that interesting variety of melon you found? Look for inspiration and advice from a cookbook focused on **farmers' market recipes**, **seasonal eating** or **plant-based recipes**.

Go Meatless. Skip the meat and fill your plates with the bright flavors of seasonal produce. Some ideas: turn sweet potatoes into **po' boy sandwiches**; top a **platter of grilled vegetables with chimichurri**; and use fresh cauliflower for **homemade veggie burgers**.

Grill the Unexpected. Eggplant and corn are the obvious grilling choices. But plenty of other vegetables (and fruits) can take the heat to get that smoky, charred flavor. We're especially fond of grilling carrots (aka **carrot dogs**), **cabbage for slaw** and watermelon (in both sweet and **savory recipes**).

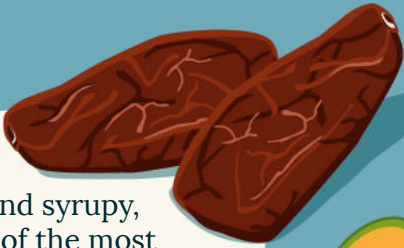
Shop In Bulk. One way to save at the farmers' market is shopping for "seconds," produce that may have a little dent or ding but that is still delicious and might be deeply discounted. This is a great way to end up with a case of tomatoes or peaches to turn into **sauce or jam** for the winter.

Turn Savory Sweet (and Vice Versa). **Candied cucumbers** and **pickled strawberries** may sound like oxymorons, but berries and stone fruit are great for savory sauce, while mild and sweet vegetables such as squash and snap peas can be used in sweet preparations including **ice cream**, **cobbler** and **baked goods**.



Regional Flavors

Whether it's your hometown or a place you are visiting, there are always unique local or regional fruits and vegetables to try.



Dates: Large, plump and syrupy, Medjool **dates** are one of the most popular varieties. Deglet Noors have a more subtle sweetness and nutty undertones. Barhi dates are the softest and sweetest dates, perfect for snacking. Look for them in California, Arizona and other hot, dry areas.



Pawpaws: Although **pawpaws** grow all along the East coast and many Northern states, they are fairly unknown. Cousin to tropical fruits cherimoya and soursop, this native fruit tastes like a cross between a banana and mango, with a custardy texture perfect for use in creamy desserts.



Muscadine Grapes: These large, thick-skinned **grapes** range in color from bronze to dark purple and are softer and sweeter than other grape varieties. You'll find them from July to October throughout the Southeast, from Kentucky to East Texas.



Mayhaws: A specialty of the South, particularly the swampy areas of Georgia and Louisiana, mayhaw is a small, reddish fruit, resembling a crabapple, with a flavor similar to apple and pear. They aren't commonly eaten raw, but are much loved as a jelly fruit.



Guavas: You'll find **guavas** at markets in South Florida, Hawai'i and Puerto Rico. Pineapple guava are oval shaped and taste like a mix of strawberry, pineapple and guava. The Brazilian pink guava has thin yellow skin and a mild, sweet flavor, while Red Hawaiian guavas are yellow skinned with aromatic red-pink flesh.

New Varieties of Old Favorites



You've had Granny Smith apples, blackberries and button mushrooms. Appreciate the biodiversity of your local food system by trying some of the more rare and flavorful varieties of these much-loved ingredients.

Apples: There are 100 commercially grown **apples** in the US. A few to look out for: the early ripener Ginger Gold, the tart Lemoen, the juicy, tart Rave and the sweet, flavorful Cortland.

Apricots: There are many **apricot** varieties, as well as hybrid crosses. Beyond the classic sweet orange apricot, look for the golden yellow heirloom called Blenheim or the very sweet Aprium, an apricot-plum mix that can be found in purple, yellow and pink.

Beans: Instead of the regular green and yellow string **beans**, search for long beans (also called Chinese long beans or yard long beans), Romano beans (smaller ones will be more tender) and Scarlet Runner beans.

Brambles: Dewberries, Loganberries, Tayberries and Boysenberries are all crosses between **raspberries and blackberries**, which have subtle variations in color and flavor. Skip the red berries from the grocery store and try a new variety from the market this week!

Lettuces: **Kale** isn't the only green at the market. **Dandelion greens** offer a bitter bite,

lamb's quarters and **nettles** are wild greens that can be used like spinach, and **radicchio** varieties offer color and spice to the salad bowl.

Melons: If you like cantaloupe, try the mild Persian **melon**, or Galia, a sweet cantaloupe-honeydew hybrid with pale green flesh. More honeydew-like flavors include the yellow-skinned Canary melon or the Santa Claus melon, which looks like a watermelon.

Mushrooms: The **mushroom** kingdom has a wide variety of textures and flavors to explore: there's Lion's Mane, a white shaggy mushroom that has a crab meat-like texture when fried; the nutty flavored Shemiji; and Maitaike, with a flavor reminiscent of chicken.

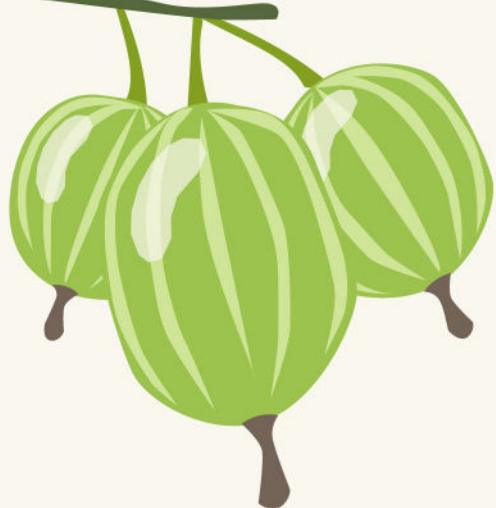
Plums: Beyond the classic black-skinned, red-fleshed **plum**, there are plums in yellow (Mirabelle), Granny Smith apple green (Green Gage) or deep red with green streaks (Satsuma).

Radishes: Red **radishes** are most common, but you can find pink, black, purple and white radishes, as well as the oblong French Breakfast radishes. Watermelon radishes are a star, with white or green skin and hot pink interior.

Tomatoes: Go beyond the beefsteak, grape, cherry and plum **tomatoes** at the grocery store – there are **10,000 varieties** out in the world. For some fresh flavors, pick up the smoky Purple Cherokee, zingy Green Zebras or sweet Hawaiian Pineapple.

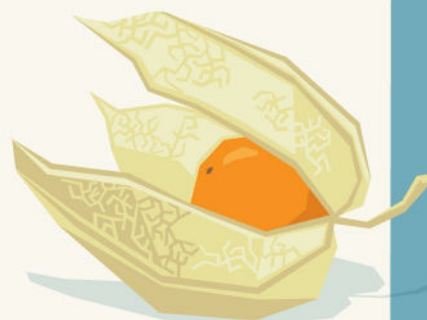
Unique Flavors to Try

There are special flavors hiding in plain sight at your local market. Next time you see something you don't recognize, don't skip over it; instead, ask questions and try it out!

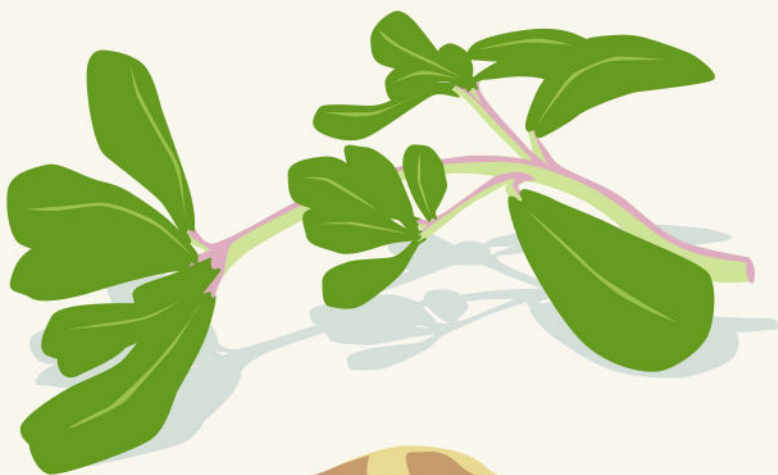


Gooseberries: Most **gooseberries** are grape-shaped and can be found in colors ranging from dark red to bright green. Look for firm, plump fruit, avoiding mushy or mealy gooseberries.

Ground Cherries: These sweet, tart yellow-orange fruits grow in a papery husk; leave husks on **ground cherries** until you're ready to eat them.



Purslane: This tart, succulent green grows wildly all over the US, and can be foraged or found at farmers' markets. Use **purslane** raw or cooked for a lemony crunch.



Sorrel: While this green might look like spinach, **sorrel** has been described as tasting lemony, like sour green apples, wild strawberries and kiwi mixed with basil and spinach.



Sunchokes: **Sunchokes** range in color from light brown to creamy tan, but may also be pink or reddish. Also sometimes called Jerusalem artichokes, they have a sweet-nutty flavor.