

How to Pick Perfect Produce!

Fall is such a nice season. The cool air sets in and leaves begin to change and while most think of summer as the season of fresh produce, Fall brings a fresh set of fruits and vegetables that are delicious and ready to be devoured. Going apple picking and filling the home with the fresh scent of roasted autumn squash are some classic Fall favorites but do you know how to select the best apple and the perfect acorn squash? Below you will find a few tips on how to pick the perfect produce along with a delicious Fall inspired recipe to get you ready for the season.

Always Select Produce that is In Season. Knowing which fruits and vegetables are in season is key to selecting these items when they taste the best. Buying fresh in season produce will also ensure the highest nutrient content. Shipping vegetables and fruits from other countries will extend the time after they are harvested which causes them to lose some of their vitamin and mineral content. Some Fall favorites in the produce aisle are as follows: apples, beets, broccoli & cauliflower, fennel, figs, grapes, carrots, pears, potatoes (all varieties), autumn squash (butternut, acorn, spaghetti and pumpkin), pomegranate and mixed greens.

Give the Produce a Whiff. Smelling the produce is another way to determine readiness. A good example of this is pineapple which should smell sweet at the stem end. Melons and citrus fruit are also very fragrant when ripe and this is a good sign of overall flavor. While it is hard to use this trick for vegetables you can always give any produce item a good sniff in order to learn more about taste and how it may fit in well with other ingredients.

Get Your Hands Dirty. Sticking with an emphasis on the Fall produce a lot can be learned by picking the item up and holding it. A good example of this are autumn squash. When you hold squash, it should feel heavy for its size and be void of any cuts or soft spots. You should also look at the skin. For example, sweet potatoes are highly perishable, and the skin should be firm and intact, not wrinkly. Finally for items like greens, swiss chard and kale, the stems should be firm and crisp with bright shiny leaves. Avoid greens with leaves that are yellowing or drooping.

Talk to the Experts Going to farmers markets or even local farms is another great way to get fresh in season produce and also learn more about how these plants grow. Talking to the farmers themselves is a great way to get expert tips on incorporating their specific fruits and vegetables into entrees and meals. Purchasing produce at farmers markets, stands and farms will also ensure peak freshness and nutritional content since there was no storage or transport to a store shelf. Apple and pear picking and going to a pumpkin patch are also great outdoor Fall activities that will increase your step count for the day and also embrace the change in season.



Skillet Apple Pork Chops

Adapted from *Clean Eating Magazine*
Online

<https://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/skillet-apple-pork-chops>

Serves: 4, Total Time: 26 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ Tbs. of Olive Oil, Divided
- 4 (6oz) Bone in Pork Chops
- ¾ tsp. of Kosher salt
- ¾ tsp. of Black pepper
- ½ cup of unsalted chicken stock
- 1 tsp. of Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. of chopped fresh sage
- 1 ½ tsp. of chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 medium apples thinly sliced
- 1 small red onion, thinly vertically sliced



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 ½ tsp. of oil to the pan; swirl to coat. Sprinkle pork chops evenly with salt and pepper. Add pork chops to pan
2. Cook pork chops for 5 minutes on each side (or until pork chops are done) and then remove from pan
3. Combined stock and mustard stirring with a whisk. Add remaining 1Tbs. of oil to the pan along with salt and pepper, sage, rosemary, apple, and onion.
4. Cook for four minutes stirring occasionally. Stir in stock mixture to pan.
5. Return pork chops to pan; cook for 3 minutes or until the liquid is reduced by half. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION:

1 Pork Chop and 2/3 Cup of Apple Mixture

- 254kcal, 9.6g of Fat, 2g of Saturated Fat, 15g of Carbohydrates, 3g of Fiber, 10g of Sugar, and 27g of Protein