

A Guide to Summer Food

By APage

Summer is a wonderful time to experiment with **fresh, nutrient packed** food. Here's a list of some of the healthiest **seasonal** summer food and why you should **consider** adding them to your **diet**.

AVOCADO

THE BENEFITS

This fruit (yes it's a fruit) is an excellent source of:

- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin K**- Aids blood coagulation
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance
- Folate**- Boosts cell renewal and fetal development
- Monounsaturated fats**- Helps cholesterol management



DIET TIP

Avocados should not be cooked, but are a great addition to salads and are the classic base of guacamole.



CUCUMBER

THE BENEFITS

Cucumbers are delightfully refreshing and are a good way to stay hydrated during the summer. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Magnesium**- Boosts muscle and nerve function
- Vitamin K**- Aids blood coagulation
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance



DIET TIP

Cucumbers are best consumed raw in salad, sandwiches, soups and dips; they also pair very well with dill, mint, red onion, salt, and vinegar.



SUMMER SQUASH

THE BENEFITS

Summer squashes come in many forms: zucchini, yellow squash and pattypan. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin B6**- Aids brain function, immune health, and nerve function
- Molybdenum**- Helps balance chemical processes in the body



DIET TIP

They are best baked, grilled or wilted, then drizzled with olive oil, salt and pepper.



TOMATOES

THE BENEFITS

Tomatoes grow like weeds in many climates during the summer months. Look for tomatoes that are plump and heavy for their size. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin K**- Aids blood coagulation



DIET TIP

Avoid refrigerating if possible because it stops the ripening process. There are several varieties of tomato, and most are eaten raw. Roma tomatoes are ideal for making sauces, and all tomatoes pair well with basil and olive oil.



CHERRIES (RED, WHITE, YELLOW)

THE BENEFITS

Red cherries are ripe when the flesh is deep red. White and yellow cherries are ripe when the flesh is flushed with pink. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Calcium**- Good for bone and dental health, muscle performance, and nerve health



DIET TIP

Cherries keep well at room temperature for several days, and longer if refrigerated. Remove the stems and pits just before eating or using. They are best eaten raw, but can also be used in baking.



MELONS

THE BENEFITS

Honeydew melons and canteloupes should smell sweet and yield to pressure at the stem end. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance



DIET TIP

Melons store at room temperature for 2 to 3 days. Refrigerate after cutting and remove seeds and stems.



STRAWBERRIES

THE BENEFITS

Strawberries are ripe and ready for eating when they are red in color and have an intact green, leafy hull. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Manganese**- Good for bone health



DIET TIP

Avoid berries with brown spots or overly large berries with hollow centers. Store strawberries at room temperature or refrigerate in a single layer. Use within a day or two and always wash before eating.



PEACHES

THE BENEFITS

A ripe peach will yield to pressure, without totally collapsing and last a few days at room temperature and even longer in a refrigerator. They are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin B-3**- Boosts energy metabolism
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance



DIET TIP

Peaches bruise easily and the juice will stain clothing, so handle them with care. They are best used raw in cereal, salads, smoothies and sorbets. They can also be cooked into crisps, pies and jams.



SOURCE: <http://www.healthcentral.com/diet-exercise/cf/slideshows/your-guide-to-summer-food/cucumber/>