



Food Writers New Zealand
HANDBOOK
vegetables and fruit

FRESH NEW ZEALAND GROWN VEGETABLES

People are increasingly concerned about the origin and safety of their food. They also expect responsible and sustainable farming practices; New Zealand GAP certifies producers that demonstrate their commitment and ability to meet these expectations. GAP stands for Good Agricultural Practice and describes responsible practices inside the farm gate. It is the starting point in the supply chain for certified safe and sustainable fresh produce. GAP certified producers are audited by independent certification bodies.



New Zealand GAP

Vegetable	When Available*	Most Plentiful
Artichokes, globe	October – January	November – December
Artichokes, Jerusalem	March – September	April – August
Asian vegetables	All year	All year <i>(depending on vegetable)</i>
Asparagus	September – January	October – December
Beans, broad	November – March	November – March
Beans, green	November – April*	December – March
Beetroot	All year	November – April
Broccoli/broccolini	All year	All year
Brussels sprouts	March – September*	March – September
Butternut	All year	January – August
Cabbage, Chinese	All year	All year
Cabbage, green	All year	All year
Cabbage, red	All year	April – August
Capsicums <i>(peppers)</i>	All year	All year
Carrots	All year <i>(spring carrots October–January)</i>	All year
Cauliflower	All year	All year
Celeriac	All year	April – November
Celery	All year	All year
Chilli peppers	All year	January – April
Chokos	April – June	May – June
Courgettes	All year	October – April
Cucumber	All year	All year
Eggplant	All year	All year
Fennel	All year	April – August
Garlic	All year	All year
Indian vegetables	February – April*	February – April

* Imported varieties may be available in different months

Vegetable	When Available*	Most Plentiful
Kale/cavolo nero	All year	All year
Kohlrabi	May – August	May – August
Kumara	All year <i>(new season starts April)</i>	All year
Kumi kumi	December – April	December – April
Leeks	All year	March – October
Lettuces	All year	All year
Marrow	October – March	October – March
Melons	January – March*	January – March
Microgreens	All year	All year
Onions, brown	All year <i>(new season starts December)</i>	All year
Onions, red	All year*	December – August
Parsnips	All year	April – December
Peas	November – January	November – January
Potatoes <i>(must be cooked)</i>	All year <i>(new season starts spring)</i>	All year
Pumpkins	All year	January – November
Radish / daikon radish	All year	All year
Rocket	All year	All year
Rhubarb	All year	September – June
Salad greens	All year	All year
Shallots	February – April	February – April
Silverbeet	All year	All year
Snow peas	October – April*	October – April
Spinach	All year	All year
Spring onions	All year	All year
Sprouted beans and seeds	All year	All year
Squash, buttercup	December – July	December – June
Squash, supermarket	June – November	June – November
Swedes	All year	February – November
Sweetcorn	December – April	January – March
Taro <i>(must be cooked)</i>	All year <i>(imported)</i>	All year <i>(imported)</i>
Tomatoes	All year	All year
Turnips	All year	February – August
Watercress	All year	May – December
Witloof	All year	All year
Yams	April – October	June – September

* Imported varieties may be available in different months

Please contact your supplier for availability as variations in supply will occur depending on region, season and weather. For more information: www.vegetables.co.nz

COMMERCIAL POTATOES

This is a general guide to which potato variety to use for which cooking method. Potatoes are affected by weather, growing conditions and the time of year, so we recommend buying potatoes that have been cook-tested and labelled for end use.

Variety	Type
Annabelle Draga Frisia Gourmadine Highlander Jersey Benne Marilyn Nadine Osprey Red King Edward Tiffany	WAXY, SMOOTH TEXTURED Ideal for boiling and salads. These potatoes have a high water content and are low in starch. They have a dense texture and retain their shape during cooking. This type includes most 'new' potatoes.
Desiree Driver Karaka Maris Anchor Moonlight Purple Passion Rocket Rua Summer Delight Van Rosa Vivaldi	GENERAL PURPOSE These good all-rounders have moderate starch content and are not too floury, not too waxy – they sit between the two ends of the spectrum.
Agria Fianna Ilam Hardy Laura Marabel Markies Red Rascal Victoria	FLOURY, FLUFFY TEXTURED Ideal for roasting, wedges and mashing. These potatoes are low in water content and high in starch. They have a dry and delicate texture, break up easily when cooked and absorb a lot of liquid and flavour.

For more information: www.potatoes.co.nz

CHINESE VEGETABLES

Some vegetables used in Chinese cookery

Name	Description / edible part	Preparation	Cooking method / uses
Chinese box thorn <i>gau gei choi</i>	This vegetable has a straight unbranched stem and is closely covered by small oval leaves, and in some varieties, thorns. The branches are usually about 25–30cm long	Use only leaves, discard stems	Soup where it imparts a distinct flavour
Chinese chives <i>jiu tsai</i> <i>gau tsoi</i> <i>gau choy</i>	Flat leaves with distinctive garlic flavour. Shiny green stems and smooth plump buds	Trim stems by snapping off lower ends. Chop finely to use as a herb	Stir-fry, soups, egg dishes
Chinese kale Chinese broccoli Chinese sprouting broccoli <i>gaai laan</i>	Long green stems with buds, white flowers and green leaves with a white haze	Flowering stems main part used. Chop leaves roughly, peel stem and cut into even-sized pieces	Stir-fry, steamed
Chinese white cabbage <i>bok choy</i> <i>pak choy</i> <i>baak choi</i>	Long white stems and dark green leaves	Trim core end, remove old outer leaves	Quick cooking methods, stir-fry, steamed. Use like spinach or cabbage. Miniature leaves in salad mixes
Flowering chinese cabbage <i>choy sum</i> <i>gai lam</i>	Long thin green stems about ¼cm in diameter, 15–20cm long with small green leaves. Choy sum – yellow flowers. Gai lam – white flowers, usually more bitter than choy sum	Use when flowers are in bud. Prepare like broccoli	
Garland chrysanthemum <i>tung ho</i> <i>tong ho</i>	Leafy stalks look like Chinese cabbage, but leaves are bluntly lobed and stalks are more like lettuce and slightly rough in texture. Leaves have a subtle distinct floral flavour	Wash and treat like spinach	Quick cooking methods, stir-fry, steamed, soups
Mustard cabbage <i>gai choi</i> <i>dai gai choy</i>	Leafy ribs and stems, impart a mustardy flavour.	Choose fresh bright green cabbages. Leaf ribs should be well developed. Wash well and cut crossways into bite-sized lengths	Stir-fry, pickled, soups, fermented
Peking cabbage <i>wong nga pak</i> <i>wong nga baak</i> <i>wong bok</i>	Elongated head with crinkly pale green leaves that form a compact head	Select heavy compact heads with crisp pale leaves and crisp juice stalks	Raw in salads, quick cooking methods, stir-fried, steamed
Shanghai cabbage <i>Like bok choy with a more tender stem</i>	Thick crisp white stems that broaden at the base. Rounded light green leaves	Trim core end, remove old outer leaves	Quick cooking methods, stir-fried, steamed. Use like spinach or cabbage. Miniature leaves in salad mixes
Water spinach <i>ong choi</i>	Stems are hollow with arrow-shaped leaves. The shorter the stalks, and larger the leaves at the tip, the more tender the leaves	Discard the lowest 5–6cm of stem. Chop, but keep leaves and stem separate so tougher stems are cooked longer	Cook stem first. Quick cooking methods, stir-fried, steamed, soups, leaves raw in salad mixes

INDIAN VEGETABLES

Some vegetables used in Indian cookery

Name	Description / edible part	Preparation	Cooking method / uses
Amaranth leaves	Tender leaves and stem	Remove leaves and discard mature stem	Leaves as a vegetable, or in soups
Bitter melon	Vegetable	Discard seeds and spongy centre. Cut into strips	Frying can minimise bitterness. Curried with spices, or used in salads
Breadfruit	Fruit	Peel skin and discard centre. Slice into cubes for boiling	Boiled, baked or curried using coconut milk. Thin slices fried and eaten as crisps
Chilli, Hungarian	Vegetable	Whole or sliced	Curried or stuffed, battered and crumbed, then fried, pickles
Indian pennywort	Leaves		Eaten fresh or cooked. Dried leaves as a herbal tea
Curry leaves	Leaves and stems		Flavouring curries. Young leaves can be eaten fresh in salads. Dried leaves in curry powder
Drumstick	Vegetable	Peel outer skin and slice	Curried, leaves as a vegetable, in shellfish dishes
Jakfruit	Fruit	Peel fruit and slice into pieces	Curried or pickled, inner segments boiled or cooked. Seeds resembling Brazil nuts can be boiled or roasted. Ripe segments used as fruit
Ladies' fingers (okra)	Vegetable	Used whole or cut crossways into bite-sized lengths	Boiled, sautéed, fried or curried, used in gumbo and soups
Long bean	Fruit	Snip off stem ends, cut into bite-sized lengths	Cooked as a vegetable, curried, or fried with spices. Seeds of mature pods can be prepared as a dry bean
Ridged gourd	Vegetable	Peel skin and slice flesh	Curried
Snake bean	Vegetable	Scrape off skin. Slice flesh into pieces. Discard seeds and spongy centre	Curried, young fresh gourds in salads. Cylindrical pieces stuffed, battered, crumbed, fried
Indian taro leaves	Vegetable	Sliced into pieces. Make pea flour paste with curry spices, then roll up, steam then fry	Steamed, boiled, curried or used as wrapping for steamed food

PACIFIC ISLAND VEGETABLES

Name	Description / characteristics	Culinary use / part used
Banana and plantain	A staple food of the South Pacific, cultivated and grows wild. A few species indigenous to the western South Pacific produce edible fruit. Choose firm, unbruised fruit and do not refrigerate unless already ripe. Store for a few days in a plastic bag in crisper, however, the skin may darken	Various types and sizes of bananas. Unripe: boil, fry, grill or bake to provide a starchy vegetable. Use leaves to wrap food to be cooked. The flower and the inside of the trunk are used as a vegetable. Plantain, a close relative of the banana, is cooked when under-ripe; steam, boil, bake or chip to serve as a vegetable
Ivi nuts <i>Tahitian chestnuts</i>	The ivi is a large, cream-coloured nut with a brown skin, used to make some traditional Fijian dishes.	Has a high starch content which requires lengthy cooking before eating. Characteristic strong smell and flavour is reduced by changing cooking water twice when boiling or steaming. Cooked ivi has a pleasant smoky flavour with a smooth crunchy texture
Jackfruit	Large yellowish-green fruit with a tough skin and rough surface. Choose unblemished fruit of uniform shape	To prepare, oil hands, knives and boards to prevent the gluey sap from sticking to everything. Peel off the skin and cut fruit into manageable portions. Used green in Indian curries. Eaten raw when ripe
Soursop	Similar to cherimoya or custard apple, soursop has soft spines over its green to yellowish-green skin. Flesh is white and segmented. Very juicy with a rich lemon-pineapple taste and aroma	Eaten raw, made into drinks, sorbet or icecream
Tahitian apple	Green to yellow colour, oval shape with a crisp apple-like texture	Fruit salads, chutneys, stewed or poached in syrup
Vanilla	The seed pod of an orchid. Tahiti, Tonga, Vanuatu and Fiji produce vanilla which is cured and dried for the market	Pods are infused in liquid or stored in sugar to impart flavour

FRUIT AVAILABILITY

As at 7 April 2015

Fruit	When available	Most plentiful
Apples, Braeburn	March – December	April – December
Apples, Granny Smith	April – December	May – December
Apples, Royal Gala	January – September	February – August
Apricots	November – March	December – February
Avocados	All year	July – April
Babaco	November – July	November – July
Bananas	All year	All year
Blackberries	December – March	December – March
Blackcurrants	November – March	December – February
Blueberries	November – April	December – February
Boysenberries	November – January	November – January
Cherries	November – February	December – January
Feijoas	April – December	April – June
Gooseberries	November – December	December
Grapes	All year	All year
Grapefruit	May – January	May – January
Keriberries	April – November	April – October
Kiwifruit	All year	April – November
Lemons	All year	All year
Limes	March – May	March – May
Mandarins, satsuma	April – August	May – July
Mangos	March – December	March – September
Melon, honey dew	January – March	February – March
Melon, prince	January – March	January – March
Melon, rock	December – April	January – March
Melon, water	December – April	January – March
Nectarines	December – March	January – February
Oranges, navel	June – December	June – December
Oranges, Valencia	November – February	November – February
Passionfruit	January – September	March – May

Fruit	When available	Most plentiful
Pawpaws	All year	All year
Peaches	December – March	January – February
Pears	All year	February – November
Pears, Nashi	February – July	March – April
Persimmons	April – August	May – June
Pineapples	All year	All year
Plums	December – March	January – February
Raspberries	November – May	December – March
Redcurrants	January	January
Strawberries	September – March	October – March
Tamarillos	March – November	May – October
Tangelos	August – December	September – November

*Please contact your supplier for availability, as variations in supply will occur depending on region, season and weather.
For more information: www.5aday.co.nz*

Our first handbook was produced in 1991, with the purpose of providing a reference tool that in turn would establish standards for New Zealand food writers. In 1999 the handbook was updated to reflect the growing needs of members.

Food Writers New Zealand is indebted to our hardworking, talented, innovative and active contributors who provided their specialist input for this latest edition.

Thank you to Pip Duncan for her many hours co-ordinating this project.

KATHY PATERSON, PRESIDENT, 2016

FOOD WRITERS NEW ZEALAND ACKNOWLEDGES THE ASSISTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE;

Catherine Bell, Jan Bilton, Margaret Brooker, Lesley Christensen-Yule, Dr Roger Cook, John Corbett, Andrea Crawford, Marion Cummings, Pip Duncan, Anne Else, Laurence Eyres, Ginny Grant, Sarah Hanrahan, Helen Jackson, Lauraine Jacobs, Lisette Knight, Robyn Martin, Innes Moffat, Trudi Nelson, Lisa Olsen, Karen Olver, Leanette Rea, Anne Scott, Tracy Scott, Fiona Smith, Andre Taber, Mary Taylor, Gail Todd, Nancy Vallabh, Jenny Yee.

HANDBOOK DESIGN

Katherine Habershon habershon@xtra.co.nz

COVER IMAGES

Images supplied by Tam West

ORGANISATIONS

[5+ A Day](#)

[Auckland Regional Public Health Service \(ARPHS\)](#)

[Beef + Lamb NZ](#)

[Deer Industry of New Zealand](#)

[Ministry for Primary Industries \(MPI\)](#)

[Ministry of Health \(MoH\)](#)

[New Zealand Pork](#)

[Seafood New Zealand Ltd](#)

[Potatoes NZ Inc](#)

[Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand](#)

[Vegetables.co.nz](#)

First edition 1991. Second edition 1999. This edition published 2016.

Copyright © New Zealand Guild of Food Writers 1999

New Zealand Guild of Food Writers, PO Box 74 262, Market Rd,
Auckland, New Zealand.

ISBN 0-473-06220-8