

## Farm Fresh

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*These days the buzz around Farmers' markets is that they are the place to find the latest growing sensations. These markets are the best at providing locals with a profusion of peak-season crops.*

### Midwest Produce Calendar – July produce at it's peak:

Asparagus    Beets    Blueberries    Cucumbers    Fresh Figs    Haas Avocados  
Red Peppers    Spinach    Strawberries    Watermelon    Zucchini

### Freezing Food to Preserve Local Flavor

#### Hints:

- Freeze in pre-measured quantities: Put 1 T into each division of an ice cube tray. Recycle plastic containers you may have on hand by putting 1 c or 2 c in appropriate containers.
- Wrap oddly shaped items, or items that need to freeze fast, in plastic wrap.
- Label everything with identity and date. Use adhesive labels, or write using a china marker or similar indelible pen.
- Use your senses to determine whether something is good. Freezer burn has a distinctive appearance and aroma.
- Experiment! You may discover a new secret to freezing the deliciousness and nutrition of local, sustainably produced organic produce.

**Applications:** Because texture is often a victim of freezing, the use of these products must be well-considered. The vegetables are great in quiches, risottos, soups, gumbos, savory bread puddings/stuffings/dressings, or as a side dish or sauce with pan-fried fish . The fruits work in muffins, quick breads, cakes, pies, gelatos, ice creams and sauces.

## Watermelon-Mint Cooler

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Adapted from: *Real Simple*, July 2009

Serves 4

4 cups seedless watermelon chunks (about 1 pound)  
1 ½ cups lemonade (Lakewood, agave sweetened)  
½ cup fresh mint

- In a blender, puree the watermelon and lemonade; strain if desired.
- Stir in the mint and serve over ice.

## Gazpacho Salsa

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Adapted from: *Real Simple*, July 2009

Makes 3 cups

1 ½ cup grape tomatoes, cut into quarters or 1 ½ cups tomato, seeded and diced  
1 small organic yellow bell pepper, diced  
1 seedless cucumber, diced  
½ cup red onion, diced  
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon each: Sea salt and black pepper  
Dipper, such as whole-wheat crostini\* or veggie sticks

In a medium bowl, combine the tomatoes, bell pepper, cucumber, onion, vinegar, oil, sea salt and black pepper. Serve with the dippers.

*\*To make your own crostini: Arrange whole-wheat baguette slices (ask the bakery to pre-slice the bread to save time) on a baking sheet and lightly brush with olive oil. Bake at 350°F for about 10 minutes, until bread is lightly browned. Flavored olive oil can also be used.*

## **Tart Cherry Sauce**

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*Adapted from Gourmet Magazine  
Makes approximately 2 cups*

*Tart cherries are packed with disease-fighting antioxidants. In fact, they have among the highest levels of antioxidants – containing about the same as blueberries. These cherries have an anti-inflammatory effect in the body and work as mild pain relievers. Eating cherries can also be a natural way to boost your body's melatonin levels to help with sleep.*

3 cups tart cherries, washed and pitted  
1/3 cup agave nectar  
1/2 cup water  
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon water

### Directions:

1. In large heavy saucepan, bring cherries, agave nectar, and water to a boil.
2. Stir cornstarch mixture and add to sauce, stirring.
3. Simmer sauce 2 minutes, then remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature.
4. Serve over fruit-sweetened frozen dessert (Try Soy Delicious or Rice Dream) or cake.

*Chef Hint: This fruit can easily be pitted by pressing a chopstick through the center of each cherry.*