

Green Grocer

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify the seasonal availability of fruits and vegetables.
- Understand the cost benefits of buying fruits and vegetables in season.
- Select, store, and handle a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Distinguish high-quality produce from low-quality produce.
- Use the expertise of produce department staff at a grocery store.

MATERIALS

- *Dr. Richter's Fresh Produce Guide*
- The *Seasonality Guide* handout (p. H – 18)
- Samples of ripe and unripe produce
- Samples of high- and low-quality produce
- Small plates and napkins
- A knife



PREPARATION

1. Arrange a date, time, and location for a produce representative (such as a store manager, produce manager, or produce industry representative) to visit the class. Communicate the learning objectives of this lesson to the representative.
2. Buy the produce samples, or ask your local grocery store or farmers' market to donate them.
3. Photocopy and become familiar with the sections of *Dr. Richter's Fresh Produce Guide* that describe the produce you'll feature in class.
4. Photocopy the *Seasonality Guide* handout for each participant, and become familiar with the content prior to implementing the lesson.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduce the produce representative to the class. Ask the representative to describe his or her job and discuss resources that are available in the grocery store to help consumers choose fruits and vegetables, such as the produce department staff, in-store signage, recipes, and other aids.

2. Distribute copies of the *Dr. Richter's Fresh Produce Guide* and the *Seasonality Guide* handout to each participant.
3. Ask the representative to discuss the seasonality of different fruits and vegetables. For example, why are some fruits and vegetables available year round, while others are only available during the winter? Refer to the *Seasonality Guide* handout for discussion and clarification.
4. Ask the representative to discuss the cost benefits of buying produce in season and using frozen and canned produce when fresh items are out of season. For example, why are some fruits and vegetables more expensive during certain times of the year? Are frozen and canned fruits and vegetables just as nutritious as fresh produce? When is the best time to choose different fruits and vegetables? Use the *Seasonality Guide* handout again for class discussion and clarification.
5. Ask the representative to explain how to select and store fruits and vegetables. For example, how do I choose a melon? A potato? Lettuce? How do I store my produce at home to keep it fresh? Refer to the copies of *Dr. Richter's Fresh Produce Guide* for class discussion and additional examples.
6. Ask the representative to discuss the characteristics of ripe and unripe produce and to describe how to ripen different fruits and vegetables at home. Let participants taste samples of ripe and unripe produce.
7. Ask the representative to discuss the characteristics of high- and low-quality fruits and vegetables. Let participants look at samples of each.
8. Conclude by summarizing the produce resources that are available to consumers at their local grocery stores (e.g., recipes, selection and storage tips, produce department staff). Encourage participants to share any tips about how they select, store, and ripen fruits and vegetables. Encourage the class to ask the representative additional questions.

Expansion Ideas

1. Contact a local store and arrange for a store tour and presentation from a produce department representative.
2. If you take a store tour, incorporate the *Walking on the Path to Better Health* lesson. Have the class walk to the store before meeting the produce representative and touring the produce department.
3. Incorporate one of the recipes from the *Healthy Recipe Demonstration and Sampling* lesson to illustrate a fun, quick, and tasty meal that can be made with seasonal produce.

Tip

If a produce department representative is unable to address the class, contact the store dietitian or a local produce wholesaler and invite him or her to speak.