

## **METABOLIC NUTRITION PROGRAM**

### **Essentials of a Low-Protein Kitchen**

#### **UTENSILS**

##### **Vegetable Peeler**

The best rated by Cook's Illustrated for high performance or easy to use are:

- Kuhn Rikon original Swiss peeler, model 2212 (\$3.50)
- Messermeister Pro-Touch peeler, model 800-58 (\$10.00)



##### **Vegetable Steamer**

- Bamboo Steamer Basket (\$20.00)
- OXO GOOD GRIPS Pop-up Steamer (\$20.00)



##### **Locking Tongs**

##### **Measuring Cups**

##### **Measuring Spoons**

##### **Liquid Ingredients Measuring Cups**

##### **Mixing Bowls**

##### **Colander or Fine-Mesh Strainer**

##### **Wooden Spoons**

##### **Vegetable Cutting Board**

##### **Spatulas or Flippers**

##### **Can Opener**

##### **Salad Spinner**



#### **STANDARD HOUSEHOLD MEASUREMENT EQUIVALENTS**

Liquid and Solid Measures:

- 3 teaspoons equal 1 tablespoon
- 2 tablespoons equal 1/8 cup equal 1 fluid ounce
- 4 tablespoons equal 1/4 cup equal 2 fluid ounces
- 5 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon equal 1/3 cup
- 8 tablespoons equal 1/2 cup equal 4 fluid ounces
- 10 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons equal 3/4 cup
- 16 tablespoons equal 1 cup
- 3/8 cup equal 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons
- 5/8 cup equal 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons
- 7/8 cup equal 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons
- 1 cup equal 1/2 pint equal 8 fluid ounces
- 2 cups equal 1 pint equal 16 fluid ounces
- 4 cups equal 1-quart equal 32 fluid ounces

## DRY GOODS



### **Low-Protein Pasta and Rice:**

- Aproten Pasta: Anellini, Ditalini, Rigatini, Spaghetтини, Tagliatelle
- Promin Flat Noodle
- Phe-No-Menal Tagliatelle Pasta
- Dietary Specialties Long Spaghetti Nests
- Dietary Specialties Imitation Rice
- Cambrooke Foods Short Grain Rice

### **Low-Protein Bread**

- Cambrooke Foods Home Style White Bread
- Dietary Specialties White Wheat Starch Bread
- Ener-G Tapioca Loaf
- Schar Classic White Bread

### **Low-Protein Baking Mix**

- Taste Connections Low Protein *Multi-Baking Mix*
- *Tapioca Flour*: Ener-G Tapioca Flour or Bob's Red Mill Tapioca Flour. Also known as tapioca starch is white flour with a slightly sweet flavor. Use as an alternative to wheat flours in baking. It improves the texture of baked goods, crispness to crusts and chew to baked goods. It is a great thickener in sauces, pies and soups. It can be used to replace corn starch (use 2 Tbsp tapioca flour for each 1 Tbsp corn starch). It contains 0.2gm protein in 100gm or 0.3 gm protein in 1 Cup (152gm). Also in 100gm: 4gm phe, 6mg leucine, 5mg valine and 19mg arginine.
- *Rice Flour*: white rice flour. It is light and mild. It can be used to bake cakes, cookies, dumplings and breads. It contains 5.95gm protein in 100gm or 9.4 gm protein in 1 Cup (158gm).
- Dietary Specialties Low Protein *Wheat Starch*: If a recipe calls for a small amount of flour for thickening, substitute cornstarch or arrowroot or quick-cooking tapioca. 2 tablespoons flour = 1 tablespoon cornstarch, or arrowroot, or tapioca. Mix with cold liquid, being sure the result is free of lumps, before heating or adding to hot mixtures.

- Substitute wheat starch for regular flour in equal amounts otherwise. If batter is too thin, try adding more wheat starch. Some recipes such as cookies, may take up to twice as much wheat starch as the amount of flour originally called for.
- Try mixing a small portion of cake flour (1 or 2 Tbs.) mixed with wheat starch as a replacement for regular flour.
- Cambrooke Foods Baking Mix: Use for pancakes, waffles, tempura, baking mix, white sauces

## **Brown Sugar**

### **Honey**

- Honey absorbs and retains moisture which retards drying out and staling in baked goods. Since products made with wheat starch tend to dry out quickly, you may want to substitute honey for sugar in baked products. To replace sugar with honey in a cake or cookie recipe, reduce liquid called for by 1/4 cup for each cup of honey used. Reduce baking temperature 25 degrees to avoid overbrowning.

## **Baking Aids**

- Corn Starch: good thickener for sauces. It tends to form lumps. Mix it with a small amount of liquid to make a paste before using it.
- Arrow root starch: a good thickener and is also used in cookies and other baked goods. It contains 0.3 gm protein in 100gm or 0.38gm in 1 Cup.
- Guar Gum is a white flour-like substance made from an East Indian seed. It is a good thickener, binder, and volume enhancer.
- Xanthan Gum: a plant-based thickening and stabilizing agent. It increases the viscosity of liquids and batters. It is a great emulsifier (allows liquids that normally don't like one another to mix together). It gives great creamy texture but the best use of xanthan gum is in baking. It makes dough "doughy", giving elasticity and viscosity. It holds the shape together while it bakes and enables cakes and breads to hold onto the gas bubbles that form inside them. A property found in regular flour with gluten.

## **Leavening Agents**

- Baking Soda: a plain bicarbonate of soda, used in baking
- Baking Powder: a combination of bicarbonate of soda, cornstarch, and calcium phosphate. Good for all quick breads, waffles, pancakes, cakes-all your non-yeast baking.

## DAIRY

### **Butter/Margarine**

#### **Egg Replacers**

- Dietary Specialties Egg Replacer
- Ener-G egg replacer. Use strictly for baking. Substitution chart:
  - 1 egg = 1 1/2 tsp dry Egg Replacer plus 2 tbsp water
  - 1 egg white = 1 1/2 tsp dry Egg Replacer plus 2 tbsp water
  - 1 egg yolk = 1 1/2 tsp dry Egg Replacer plus 1 tbsp water
  - Per 100gm: Phenylalanine (1.2mg), Leucine (2.1mg), Isoleucine (1.2 mg) and valine (2mg)
- **Other Egg Replacement Options**
  - 1 egg = 2 Tbsp. potato starch
  - 1 egg = 1/4 cup mashed potatoes
  - 1 egg = 1/4 cup canned pumpkin or squash
  - 1 egg = 1/4 cup puréed prunes
  - 1 egg = 1/3 cup applesauce (in brownies, muffins and cakes)
  - 1 egg = 2 Tbsp. water + 1 Tbsp. oil + 2 tsp. baking powder
  - 1 egg white = 1 Tbsp. plain agar powder dissolved in 1 Tbsp. water, whipped, chilled, and whipped again

#### **Egg Replacement Tips**

- If a recipe calls for three or more eggs, it is important to choose a replacer that will perform the same function (i.e., binding or leavening).
- Trying to replicate airy baked goods that call for a lot of eggs, such as angel food cake, can be very difficult. Instead, look for a recipe with a similar taste but fewer eggs, which will be easier to replicate.
- If you want a lighter texture and you're using fruit purées as an egg substitute, add an extra 1/2 tsp. baking powder. Fruit purées tend to make the final product denser than the original recipe.
- If you're looking for an egg replacer that binds, try adding 2 to 3 Tbsp. of any of the following for each egg: tomato paste, potato starch, arrowroot powder, whole wheat flour, mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, instant potato flakes. Read more:

#### **Milk Replacer (Rice, Almond, Coconut milk)**

- Rice Dream
- Westsoy **rice** milk. Be careful not to buy the Westsoy, **SOY** milk
- Good Karma rice milk
- Almond Breeze
- So Delicious Dairy Free coconut milk

## **Yogurt Replacer**

- So Delicious Dairy Free (Coconut milk yogurt)
- Almond Dream Yogurt

## **Imitation Cheese**

- Cambrooke Foods Cheese Shreds
- Ener-G Imitation Cheese
- Follow Your Heart Vegan Cheese
- Whitehall Specialties Shredded Imitation Cheese
- Whitehall Specialties Vegan Sour Cream Alternative
- Vegan Rella Cheese
- Schreiber Co. Shredded Imitation Cheese
- Daiya Cheese Shreds
- Daiya Cream Cheese Style Spread

## **OTHER**

### **Oils, vinegars, mustard Canned Vegetables**

## **HERBS**



The inclusion of herbs in a recipe can literally transform a meal. Whenever possible use fresh herbs because they will add flavor, vitamins and antioxidants to your meal. Dry herbs will add flavor. For more usage of herbs and spices, see our spices chart.

**Basil:** Well-known for its affinity with tomatoes, it is a green herb from the mint family but there are other varieties like purple (Opal Basil), lemon basil, anise basil, clove basil and cinnamon basil. Basil is a good source of vitamin A, magnesium and potassium. A summer herb (June to September) can be found year round in stores. Easily perishable and it is best kept in the refrigerator wrapped in damp paper towels and plastic bag for up to 4 days. If dried, keep in a cool dark place for 6 months. Use in eggplant, egg substitute, onions, low pro pasta/pizza, potatoes, salads, soups, sweet peppers, tomatoes, vegetables, vinegars, zucchini, tomato sauce. 1 tsp dried basil = 1 tbsp chopped fresh basil.

**Bay Leaves:** Whole or crushed dried leaves are most useful in long-cooking recipes, like soups and vegetable stews, in order to allow the flavor to permeate, but remove before serving. Use in potatoes, risotto, soups, stews, tomatoes. 1/4 tsp crushed bay leaf = 1 whole bay leaf.

**Chives:** A member of the onion family, chives look like grass. Chives are good source of vitamin A, C, K, and folate. It is best kept if stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week. Fresh chives add flavor to baked potatoes, dips, dressings, sauces, or just sprinkled on vegetable salad, low protein eggs or soups. 1 tsp chopped green onion tops = 1 tbsp chopped chives.

**Cilantro:** Cilantro has a pungent flavor and aroma and it is a great source of vitamin A, C, K. The fresh herb, cilantro is available year-round. The seed of the cilantro plant is known as coriander and it cannot be substituted in recipes because their flavors are very different. Cilantro can be easily confused with flat-leaf parsley in appearance. Store cilantro in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week. It goes well with avocado, mayonnaise, peppers, rice, salads, salsas, tomatoes, low protein yogurt.

**Dill:** Dill is a good source of vitamin A, C, iron, manganese and folate. Dill has a special affinity with tomatoes and cucumbers. Dill is also an excellent herb in hot and cold soups. Use dill when making breads as well.

**Marjoram:** From the mint family, marjoram is slightly sweeter with a mild, oregano-like flavor. Marjoram is a rich source of vitamin A, C, K, iron, calcium, and copper. It is available year-round. For best results, add it near the end of cooking or the heat will destroy its delicate flavor. It goes well with carrots, low protein eggs, mushrooms, potatoes, salads, soups, spinach, squash, tomatoes and zucchini. It can be used in conjunction with other dried herbs to flavor vegetable dishes, tomato sauces, soups, grain dishes and salad dressings.

**Mint:** Fresh scent and menthol flavor of the mints are delightful. Mint is a good source of vitamin A and iron. There are many types but most common are peppermint and spearmint. In a pinch, use dried mint as a substitute for fresh mint, but the effect will not be the same. Fresh mint is available year round but the season is from June to August. Keep it in the refrigerator in plastic bag with a damp paper towel. It goes well with carrots, eggplant, fruit, ice cream, oranges, peppers, salsas, tomatoes, vegetables, low protein yogurt.

**Oregano:** Oregano is similar to marjoram, but pungent and not as sweet. It is a rich source of vitamin A, E, K, calcium, copper, iron, and manganese. Available year-round, refrigerate fresh oregano in a plastic bag up to 3 days. It goes well with artichokes, eggplant, mushrooms, low protein pasta, peppers, low protein pizza, potatoes, salad dressings, soups, tomatoes and zucchini. Fresh, is especially nice in green salads and tomato salads.

**Parsley:** Fresh, mild flavor of parsley is used widely in cooking. Parsley is a great source of vitamin C, A, K. The most common are curly-leaf and Italian (flat-leaf parsley) which is preferred for cooking. Wash and wrap it in paper towel and then a plastic bag. Refrigerate it to last for one week. You can also freeze parsley! Just clean, chop and let dry; then put in little baggies and seal. Use the leaves however the stalks are good for adding flavor to vegetable stock. It adds flavor to salad, salad dressings, soups, vegetable dishes, and herb bread. It also goes well with eggplant, egg substitute, mushrooms, low protein pasta, potatoes, low protein rice, tomatoes and zucchini. 1 tsp dried parsley = 1 tbsp fresh parsley. Chewing parsley will help with bad breath from food odors such as garlic.

**Rosemary:** With its Needle-like leaves, rosemary is used to flavor vegetable stews, herb bread, tomato soups and sauces. Rosemary is good source of vitamin A and iron. Use it sparingly, as its strong, piney flavor can be overwhelming. Rosemary stems, stripped of their leaves, can also be used as skewers for vegetable kabobs. Dried rosemary is an excellent substitute for fresh. It goes well with mushrooms, onions, oranges, potatoes and spinach. 1 tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried.

**Sage:** Sage is a rich source of vitamin A, K, calcium, iron, and magnesium. Use sparingly as it can easily overpower a recipe. Fresh sage is less bitter than dried sage. Sage pairs well with fat-rich recipes. It is available year-round. Refrigerate fresh sage wrapped in a paper towel and sealed in a plastic bag up to 4 days. Fresh sage can also be frozen up to 1 year: Wash and dry the leaves, discard the stems, and pack loosely in freezer storage bags. It goes well with eggplant, vegetable roasts, tomatoes, apple, salad dressings and soups, particularly, pumpkin or squash soups.

**Savory:** Savory imparts a subtle flavor that tastes like a cross between parsley and thyme. Savory is a great source of vitamin A, calcium, iron, and manganese. It goes well in soups.

**Tarragon:** It has a sharp-sweet, anise-like flavor and scent. It can easily dominate other flavors, so use it sparingly. Tarragon is a good source of vitamin A, C, calcium, iron, and manganese. Only the leaves are edible. It adds a distinctive touch to fresh green vegetables and green salads. It goes well also with fruits, low protein eggs, most vegetables potatoes and sauces. The aroma of dried tarragon is very weak. It is available year-round.

**Thyme:** Thyme imparts a vivid flavor and aroma even when used sparingly. Thyme is a great source of vitamin A, C, and iron. Soups, salad dressings, grain dishes and tomato sauces all benefit from the distinctive flavor of thyme. Buy fresh thyme whenever possible as it is superior in nutrients and rich in flavor.

**SPICES:** Make your meal extra flavorful with different spices.



**Anise:** Anise is an aromatic spice that imparts a distinctive flavor of licorice. It is a great source of manganese, copper, and iron. Buy it in small quantities that would last for 3-4 months, as the seeds tend to lose their flavor. Anise is used in cookies and cakes, and a sprinkling of the seeds adds an unusual twist to fruit salads, particularly those using citrus fruits.

**Cardamom:** These aromatic seeds have a flavor that is appropriate for both sweet and savory dishes. In ground form, cardamom may be used in baked goods with squash, pumpkin, or sweet potato. It is a great source of iron and manganese.

**Cayenne Pepper:** Cayenne pepper is the hottest of ground spices. A small amount goes a long way. Cayenne pepper lends itself to vegetable stews, curries, chilies, spicy cold noodle dishes, and hot-and-sour dishes. Cayenne pepper is a great source of vitamin A, C, E, and iron.

**Chili Powder:** It is a blend of spices with dried, ground red chili pepper as its base. Use it to flavor different soups. It can be added to tomato-based sauces.

**Cinnamon:** A sweet, aromatic spice, cinnamon is often a component of curry blends and is a fixture in many baked goods. It is readily available year-round either in the form of sticks or powdered. In order to keep the fragrance and flavor intact, cinnamon spice is generally ground just before preparing dishes and added near the end of cooking.

**Cloves:** Pleasant, sweet spice like cinnamon, but cloves have a stronger flavor and a sharp aroma. Ground cloves are often used in conjunction with cinnamon in baked goods, fruit pies, and squash, sweet potato, and pumpkin recipes and occasionally used in curries and chutneys.

**Coriander Seeds:** It's usually one of the three main components of curry mixes along with cumin and turmeric. Good quality coriander seeds should release pleasant, slightly peppery flavor when squeezed. Keep the seeds in cool, dry, dark place in airtight containers. Seeds are generally ground just before preparing dishes, as they lose their flavor rather quickly.



**Cumin:** Cumin's spicy and pleasantly hot flavor makes it a favorite seasoning in several ethnic cuisines. Its zesty quality reduces the need for salt. Use cumin in soups, tomato-based sauces and vegetable stews. Cumin is a rich source of iron and manganese.

**Curry Powder:** It is a blend of spices used in Indian cuisine. Use curry to add zest and color to simple grain dishes.

**Fennel:** Fennel seeds impart a subtle licorice flavor. They are used in some traditional Italian bread recipes and they add a pleasant flavor and aroma in Indian cookery. Ground fennel seeds should be stored inside the refrigerator in airtight containers and should be used quickly.

**Fenugreek Seeds:** Its somewhat bitter flavor and strong aroma warrant subtle application. Fenugreek is used as an element of Indian curries and chutneys. The seeds should feature bright golden-yellow color and hard to touch. Store whole seeds in airtight glass container and place in a cool, dark place where it will stay fresh for several months.

**Garlic:** Garlic has long been esteemed equally for its medicinal properties and its culinary qualities. Use it crushed, chopped, pressed, pureed, minced or roasted. 1 clove = 1 teaspoon chopped garlic = 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic = 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder = 1/2 teaspoon garlic flakes = 1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic = 1/2 teaspoon garlic juice.

**Ginger:** It takes about nine months to reach maturity. After the flowers appear, the tops begin to die, leaving the ginger rhizomes ready to harvest. It can be used grated, ground and slivered. Ground ginger is a hot-sweet. It is available year-round. Buy smooth skin (wrinkles indicate that the root is dry and past prime) with a fresh spicy aroma. Unpeeled and tightly wrapped ginger will keep in the refrigerator for 3 weeks; frozen for 6 months. For older roots, remove the thick outer skin before cooking. It goes well with carrots, fruit, ice cream, melon, onions, pumpkin, rice, tomatoes and baked goods. 1/8 tsp ground ginger = 1 tbsp fresh grated ginger (though the flavor of ground ginger can be significantly different from fresh).

**Mustard Seeds:** The flavor of the mustard seeds is subtly hot and slightly biting. Use dry mustard in soups, salad dressings, grain dishes, chilies, and curries. Mustard powder and seeds should be kept in a tightly sealed container in a cool, dark and dry place. Prepared mustard should be refrigerated.

**Nutmeg:** A sweet spice, nutmeg is a familiar flavoring in pumpkin and sweet potato recipes. It is often one of the spices used in curry mixes and has a special affinity with winter squashes and spinach. Store the whole nuts as well as ground form in an airtight container and place in cool, dry and dark place where it will keep well for several months.

**Saffron:** It lends its golden-yellow color to any food it touches. Its flavor is delicate and it is most often used in grain dishes. A common substitute for saffron is turmeric. Store in airtight container and keep it in cool and dark place, as light offsets its flavor.

**Turmeric:** Turmeric is prized for its brilliant yellow color, much as saffron, but turmeric is not nearly so expensive. It has a unique, “woody” flavor and scent and it is almost always one of the main components of curry mixes. Use it to brighten the dishes. Fresh roots can be kept in the refrigerator for up to a month. Ground turmeric should be stored in the refrigerator in airtight containers and should be used rather quickly.

## FRESH VEGETABLES



**Asparagus:** Asparagus spears have an intense, rich flavor. It is a very low calorie vegetable. 100 g fresh spears give only 20 calories. Although asparagus is available year-round, it is most flavorful in the spring. Select firm, straight, smooth, uniform-sized, dark green/purple stalks with tightly closed tips.

**Broccoli:** Broccoli is one of the very low calorie vegetables. 100 g fresh broccoli provides 34 calories. It is exceptionally rich source of vitamin C. 100 g fresh broccoli provides 2.82 g protein, so consume in moderation. Quick and easy to prepare, it can be eaten raw with dips, or cooked.

**Cabbage:** Cabbage is very low in calories. 100 g of leaves provide just 25 calories. Care should be taken not to overcook this vegetable. Choose fresh, compact, firm, medium-sized head heavy for its size.

**Carrots:** Carrots have a naturally sweet flavor. Fresh carrots are available year-round. Look for young, tender, bright-colored roots with firm consistency. Avoid very large-sized roots as they indicate over maturity. They are just as delicious eaten raw as they are cooked.

**Cauliflower:** 100 g cauliflower head provides only 26 calories. Cauliflowers are available year-round, but they are at their best during winter months.

**Celery:** With its distinctive strong aromatic flavor, celery is an ideal ingredient for soups. It is one of the very low calorie herbal plants, providing only 16 calories per 100 g weight.

**Chayote:** Known as the vegetable pear, chayote is light green in color and pear shaped. Chayote can be very simply prepared, peeled, cut into quarters, drained, buttered and seasoned with fresh lemon or lime juice. Other possibilities include using it in place of potatoes for a unique chilled salad, marinated in salad dressing, combining with other fresh vegetables in a stew.

**Cucumber:** Cucumber has a crisp, refreshing taste. Buy fresh ones that feature bright green color, firm and stout in texture. Do not buy those with wrinkled ends as they indicate over maturity and state of dehydration. It can be eaten alone, or added to salads.

**Eggplant:** Differing in color and shape, eggplants have a smoky flavor when cooked. Buy firm, shiny, bright colored eggplants that feel heavy and solid. If the stalk is stout, firm and green that means it is fresh.

**Fennel:** Fennel has a delicate and sweet anise-like flavor. Fresh bulb fennels are available in early autumn or spring. Choose fresh pearly white fennel bulbs that are compact, heavy in hand and attractive anise-like sweet flavor. Very large and overly mature bulbs are stringy and have a less intense flavor. Thinly sliced fennel bulbs can be eaten alone, served with dip or added to vegetable salads. It can also be steamed, braised or added in various dishes.

**Garlic:** Fresh garlic is very pungent, but when cooked, it mellows into sweet and nutty flavor. Dry bulbs can be stored at room temperature placed in a dark, cool and dry environment where they will keep well for several weeks. Garlic paste should be stored in the refrigerator.

**Leek:** Leeks are cylindrical, leafy stalks with a subtle, oniony flavor. Leeks are at their best during spring season. Choose uniform, long, firm, white stalks with healthy root bulb as it signals fresh farm produce. Avoid stems with withered, yellow discolored tops.

**Lettuce:** Crispy, green/crimson red colored, lettuce is one of the most commonly used greens in salads. There are many varieties of lettuce available. Lettuce leaves are one of the very low calorie vegetables. 100 g fresh greens provide just 15 calories. Choose leaves that feature crispy texture and bright color. Avoid sunken leaves with spots or discoloration. Use lettuce in salads, sandwiches and in various dishes.

**Mushroom:** Mushrooms have rich, earthy flavor and most often they are cooked to bring out its delicate flavor and velvety texture.

**Onion:** Onions come in many different varieties. Look for clean, have no opening at the neck, and feature crispy and dry outer skins. Store them in cool, dark place away from moisture or in the refrigerator. They can be sautéed, roasted or eaten raw in salads.

**Parsnip:** Parsnip is a sweet and succulent root vegetable with a distinct earthy flavor. Select fresh, firm, fleshy, medium-sized, smooth parsnips. Avoid long, thin and tail-like roots. Raw parsnips add unique sweet taste to salads. They can be cooked and mashed with potato, leeks and cauliflower. They can also be used in breads, pies, and casseroles.

**Pepper:** Green peppers have a fresh, “raw” flavor, whereas red, yellow and orange peppers are sweeter. Their firm, crunchy texture together with delicate sweet flavor makes them one of the most sought-after vegetables. Avoid excessively soft, lusterless, and pale color peppers.

**Pumpkin/Squash:** These have a fibrous flesh with a mild, slightly sweet flavor. They are an excellent source of beta carotene/vitamin A. Look for mature product that features woody note on tapping, heavy in hand and dry, stout stem.

**Shallot:** Shallots are in the onion family, but they have less intense flavor. They add a sense of oniony subtlety in dishes. Fresh shallots are available during spring and early summer season. Wet and humid conditions hamper their flavor and storage life.

**Spinach:** Spinach is best available during winter months. Buy fresh leaves featuring dark green color, vitality and crispiness. Avoid those with dull/sunken leaves, yellow discoloration and spots. Spinach can be eaten raw in salads or cooked along with other vegetables.

**Tomatoes:** These come in a variety of sizes. Fresh ripe tomatoes feature beautiful bright red color and have a rich fruity flavor. Buy fresh, firm, uniform sized fruits. Firm green/yellow fruits can be placed in cool, dark place at room temperature for 2-3 days. However, ripe tomatoes are easily perishable and should be stored in the refrigerator.

**Turnips:** Sweet and nutty flavored, turnips range from very small to large, mature vegetables. Fresh turnips are available in October through March. Look for fresh roots that are small, firm, round and impart delicate sweet flavor. Avoid large and over matured roots, as they are woody in texture. Young turnips can be used in salads and vegetable stews and top greens are used in soups, curries, and stews with other vegetables.