



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

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## **Brighten up with fresh spring produce**

New season produce makes it easy to create delicious, healthy meals for spring, says 5+ A Day.

From delicate new potatoes and the creamy goodness of avocados to sweet, tender asparagus, spring's produce offers a bountiful harvest of delicious options.

Colour is key when it comes to in-season fruit and vegetables, as this is a sure-fire way to provide your body with all the antioxidants and phytochemicals it needs to stay healthy.

Here is 5+ A Day's guide on how to make the most of fresh spring produce.

### **Asparagus**

#### **How to buy**

The appearance of asparagus in shops is a sign that warmer weather is on its way. Go for straight, bright green stalks with firm tips. Avoid any with brown spots or blemishes.

#### **How to store**

Asparagus will keep for about a week but is best eaten within a couple of days of buying. At home, keep asparagus refrigerated and either wrap in wet paper towels, or stand upright in a jar of water.

#### **How to prepare**

The quickest way to get rid of the tough woody ends of asparagus is to snap them off. With asparagus that is a little too thick, you can remove some of the tough outer layer with a vegetable peeler. These delectable green spears are delicious blanched, steamed or roasted. Keep it simple and serve asparagus sprinkled with a little sea salt, a drizzle of olive oil, a spritz of lemon juice and Parmesan shavings.

### **Avocado**

#### **How to buy**

The best way to tell if an avocado is ripe is by its colour. Don't be tempted to squeeze an avocado to check if it's ripe as this causes bruising. Brown-green or purple-brown avocados indicate they are ready to eat. If the avocado is black, it is over ripe and past its best.

#### **How to store**

Ripe avocados can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days. Cut avocados should be eaten within a day or two and kept in the fridge in an air tight container. A sprinkling of lemon or lime juice, or white vinegar will help prevent it turning brown.

#### **How to prepare**

Avocados can be eaten at breakfast, lunch, dinner and even dessert. Mashed, smashed, blended or blitzed, avocado is rich in monounsaturated fats which can lower the risk of heart disease and cholesterol levels. From salads to salsas or simply smeared onto toast, avocado is a healthy addition to the diet.

### **New potatoes**

#### **How to buy**

Choose new potatoes that are firm, dry and blemish-free. Unwashed potatoes last longer as the dirt protects them from bruising and general deterioration.

#### **How to store**

Store new potatoes in a cool, dark and well-ventilated place. They should be used within a few days of purchase.

#### **How to prepare**

New potatoes don't need to be peeled; simply rinse to remove any dirt and cook whole. Boiled or steamed till tender, new potatoes make a substantial addition to any salad. For a healthy spring lunch

or barbecue salad, cook new potatoes, halved, in a pot of boiling water until tender. Drain and mix with a dressing made of olive oil, Dijon mustard and chopped fresh chives. Cool slightly, then add baby beetroot, baby spinach leaves, red onion and pumpkin seeds.

## **Mushrooms**

### **How to buy**

All varieties of mushrooms should be firm and dry with a good colour. Avoid any that are bruised, damaged or have wrinkles. Check the gills are fresh and upright.

### **How to store**

If you have bought pre-packaged mushrooms, remove them from the plastic and store in the refrigerator in a paper bag. Mushrooms continue to grow after harvesting and they will respire or 'sweat' in plastic bags. Brown paper bags will absorb moisture and keep mushrooms fresher. Use within a few days of purchasing.

### **How to prepare**

There is no need to wash mushrooms. A gentle wipe of the cap and stalk with a paper towel or soft brush is all that is required. Brimming with earthy flavours, mushrooms are great in seasonal salads, quick-fire stir fries, or a comforting risotto. Mushrooms can be barbecued, grilled, baked or eaten raw.

## **Tropical fruit**

### **How to buy**

For an exotic flavour burst, mix up your spring selection with sweet and juicy tropical fruit. No matter what tropical fruit you choose, look for firm, fragrant fruit free of bruises and blemishes.

### **How to store**

Most tropical fruit is best kept at room temperature to preserve its delicate flavours, but eat within a day or two of purchase. Like any other fruit, once it is cut it should be covered and refrigerated.

### **How to prepare**

Tropical fruit such as mango, pineapple, banana and papaya are perfect for spicy salsas, fruit-based desserts and delicious when added to smoothies. As the variety of tropical fruit available here grows, the best way to try new fruit is to first try it on its own to discover the texture and flavour before using in recipes.

## **Avocado and salmon salad platter**

Serves: 6

Preparation: 10 minutes

### **Ingredients**

3 ripe avocados, halved and stones removed

6 handfuls salad greens

Fresh coriander, finely chopped

2 tablespoons black sesame seeds

2 tablespoons toasted nuts, chopped

1 tablespoon chilli flakes

2 tablespoons chia seeds

150g feta, cubed

100g smoked salmon

Juice of 1 lemon

### **Dressing ingredients**

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon finely grated lemon rind

**Method**

Prepare each topping in a separate saucer:

1. Chilli flakes with fresh coriander
2. Crushed nuts
3. Fresh coriander
4. Black sesame seeds
5. Chia seeds

Squeeze lemon juice over each avocado half and place each one face down into a different topping. Place avocados evenly among salad greens on a large platter. Arrange salmon and feta around the avocados. In a jug, mix dressing ingredients together and drizzle over salad. Serve immediately.

**ENDS**