



DEAR DEB - MAY



Dear Deb: I just bought some beautiful berries at the farmers' market. How do I keep them from going bad before I can eat them all? - *Monica G. Pinole*

Great timing Monica, the berries are so good right now! I'm glad you picked up some to enjoy this spring. Berries of all kinds are highly perishable – it's just the nature of the fruit. They're high in moisture content, have thin skins, and continue to ripen rapidly after harvesting. This is the perfect environment for mold and bacteria to grow. So consume those luscious berries as soon after purchase as possible!

Can't eat them right away? To make them last longer, we need to slow down the development of mold and bacteria by creating a dryer environment in which to store them.

- Purchase the freshest berries you can find. Of course, that would be the farmers' market! Farmers pick these gorgeous berries right before bringing them to markets so you know they're as fresh as possible. Handle them with care!
- Only buy what you plan to use in 3 or 4 days so you don't have leftovers.
- Look over your berries when you get home and remove any that seem too soft or leaning toward getting

moisture.

- Don't wash your berries until you're ready to prepare and eat them! Washing adds more moisture to their already high moisture content.
- Store them in a shallow, ventilated container with paper towels on the bottom to absorb any added moisture. The fewer layers you have, the less likely mold will develop – store in a single layer if you can. Don't store in the refrigerator for more than 3 days.
- Eat them as soon as possible after purchase to get the full flavor and nutrition of your berries.

Still have berries left over and worried about them going bad? Freeze them in a single layer on a baking sheet for later use. Or break out the canning jars and make some jam! There are many easy recipes for making your own jam. Learn how to [preserve fruits and vegetables](#) by learning to can and preserve the season's harvest! It's a great hobby and leads to less food waste. Try this [Blueberry Jam](#)!

Other ways to use your berries are innumerable! Try [Frozen Berry Bites](#) or [Strawberry Lemonade](#). There are many more ideas on how to use your berries on our website under [Recipes](#).

If you'd like to learn how to select and store other fruits and vegetables, visit our website under [In Season](#) and read in depth about individual products.

TAGS

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