

Soft Fruits of Summer

It's one of the sure signs of the pending summer – the arrival of soft fruits. We're talking about peaches, nectarines, apricots, plums... and there are yellow and white flesh peaches and nectarines, and plumcots and apriums – hybrids of plums and apricots. The varieties list on and our mouths are just watering at the thought of it all.

Soft fruit are sweet treats that you can indulge in and feel good about eating – they're super healthy. This lineup is low in fat (with the plum containing no fat), sodium-free, cholesterol-free, and high in vitamin C. These soft fruits all have a different taste profile and while all are juicy and sweet when ripe, their skin color isn't an indication of how ripe (and how sweet) it is; the color is only an indication of the variety. They ripen until the moment they're picked from their tree, with the exception of plums, which continue to ripen at room temperature after being picked. All can be refrigerated for around a week to maintain how hard or soft it is without damaging the eating quality.

The season has just begun and Fresh Direct Produce will offer a full array of fresh soft fruit all season as they make their way from California to BC.



Apricot

It is seemingly the baby of the bunch, given its size, but where it may lack in size, it sure doesn't lack in satisfaction. Sinking your teeth into your first apricot of the season is like unleashing summer. Look for a plump apricot that is firm, but gives ever-so-slightly under a bit of pressure of your thumb. Underneath that velvety blush-orange skin is delectable, soft, flesh that is sweet with a slight tang.

Cherries

It is again the season of abundant cherries from California, Washington, and BC.

Cherries are a member of the same fruit family as peaches, plums, apricots, and almonds. Juicy, and wonderfully tasty, cherries are loaded with health-benefiting nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Due to the high nutritional value, cherries are recognized by nutrition experts as a "super fruit".

Cherries can be used in a variety of recipes: eaten as snacks, making tarts and pies, or juice. Cherry fruit season lasts from May until August. Choose cherries that have bright, shiny, and firm skin with stalk attached. Fresh cherries can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 10 days.



Apricot, Cherry, and Graham Cracker Crumble

Apricot, Cherry, and Graham Cracker recipe - <https://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/apricot-cherry-and-graham-cracker-crumble-56389648>

TOTAL PREP TIME: 60 MINS / SERVINGS: 6

INGREDIENTS:

- ❖ 2-½ pounds apricots, halved, pitted
- ❖ 10 oz fresh sweet cherries, pitted (about 2 cups)
- ❖ 2 tbsp. cornstarch
- ❖ 4 tbsp. light brown sugar, divided
- ❖ Kosher salt
- ❖ ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- ❖ 4 graham crackers, finely crushed
- ❖ 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into small pieces, room temperature
- ❖ 1/3 cup unsalted, roasted almonds, coarsely chopped

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine apricots, cherries, cornstarch, 2 tbsp. brown sugar, and a pinch of salt in a large bowl. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; reserve pod for another use. Toss to combine and transfer to a shallow 1-½ - qt. baking dish.
2. Combine crackers, butter, and a pinch of salt in a medium bowl. Work butter into crackers with your fingers until mixture comes together. Add nuts and remaining 2 tbsp. brown sugar and work in with your fingers until combined. Scatter over fruit.
3. Bake crumble until topping is golden brown and fruit is bubbling, 35–45 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.



Organic GRAPES



The latter half of May is when our Mexico and California organic grape grower partners will be starting their harvest. We are expecting the first shipment of organic grapes to arrive around May 20th at our Vancouver facility. The season will start off with green, black, and red seedless grapes from Mexico and California. We expect to have green and black organic grapes first, followed by red seedless grapes about 4-7 days later. Other varieties include the red globe organic grapes, as well as the much smaller, limited crop of organic Cotton Candy grapes that we will have in stock at the end of May or first week of June. If you have never tried the organic cotton candy grapes, you need to check these out and give your customers a real treat!

Our grower partners are Fresh Farms of Mexico, who pack the “Molina” label, and Anthony Vineyards of California, who packs the “Anthony” label.

Fresh Farm’s total volume of organic grapes is doubling this season to 10% of their overall grape production. Due to this increased volume we are expecting to have some great organic promotional opportunities this season. Fresh Farms started in 1980 with 40 acres of conventional grapes and they have grown sustainably to have sales of over 1.2 million cartons (CV and organic) grapes last season. Fresh Farms also supports their team and communities where their grapes are produced. They have social enterprise programs that provide work and vocational training, educational services, health services, and they also provide healthy nutritious food and have their own dedicated bakery! They give back to their community and provide community to the areas that their teams live.

Anthony Vineyards has been growing grapes since the 1940’s and has been growing organically since 2002. Their label is well trusted and their fruit is very high quality. Anthony has a long season and stable supply, and should have grapes available for our customers from May until December. Their goal isn’t to be the biggest grape shipper, but to simply be the best. Ask your Fresh Direct Sales Rep about when we will have Anthony’s Organic grapes available this summer!

Grapes are packed with nutrients as well as being very sweet and delicious. They are a great source of phytonutrients, and other important vitamins such as Vitamins K, A, C and B6. They are rich in thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, and minerals potassium, calcium, magnesium and phosphorus. Grapes have a high-water content; they contain dietary fiber and flavonoids that help slow down the aging process. Some sources claim that grapes can help reduce high blood pressure and grape juice can relieve pain from migraines. They can also boost your immune system and help eliminate fatigue.

Contact your Fresh Direct Sales Rep and let’s plan some organic grape promotions that your customers will really enjoy.

2018 CPMA Tradeshow Highlights



April was full of excitement. The CPMA Convention + Trade Show, Canada’s largest event dedicated to the fruit and vegetable industry, was just held in Vancouver. At the same time, we were also commemorating 15 years of growth at Fresh Direct. Amidst our celebrations, we also participated at the trade show by featuring our newly rebranded “Simply” lines: Simply Fresh®, Simply Fresh® Organic, Simply Hot®, Simply Exotic®, and Simply Ripe®.

The “Simply” line originated in 2010, and we revamped the brand this year with a fresh and crisp look. Like previous years, we always try to capture the market by creating something new. This year, we were privileged to present two new products, the bagged Simply Fresh® Asian vegetables and organic Shanghai Bok Choy.

To set us apart from the crowd, our Tradeshow team created a micro farmers’ market that highlighted our brand on the backdrop, and a booth that embodied mother nature’s talents.

You cannot find more delightful colors than mangos blended with dragon fruits, peppers mixed with pineapple, or green vegetables integrated with papayas . . . all were exhibited in custom made wooden bins, which fully unveiled the spirit of produce at this year’s Trade Show.

Of course, we cannot miss mentioning our array of delicious food samples. It did not matter if it were made from passion fruit, dragon fruit, papaya or mixed greens, they successfully attracted crowds and created a greater presence at our booth. Thank you to our creative culinary team Master Chef Ana, the Ocati Team, and Lovena!

We also congratulate Juliana Wong and Kevin Yuen for being selected as two of the Passion for Produce candidates. Throughout the three-day program, they were immensely impressed with the passion that the organizers and participants demonstrated. The insights Juliana and Kevin gained from this experience will definitely take them extra miles.

Thanks to all for creating another unforgettable page this year!



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