

MODULE 2: SHOPPING & STORAGE | TRANSCRIPT

LESSON 5

# Produce & Ethylene

According to the National Resources Defense Council, **Americans throw away 40 percent of the food they buy!** Yep, you heard that right, 40 percent! Go ahead and pick your jaw up off the floor. The craziest thing about that amount of waste is how preventable it is. If you learn how to store produce properly, every bit of it can be enjoyed.

Step one in mastering produce storage is understanding what causes it to go bad in the first place. Science tiiiime! Ethylene is a naturally occurring gas that certain produce gives off in the ripening process. That means ethylene is super-helpful when we want to hurry the ripening process of a hard avocado, let's say, but if there's too much of it hovering around, it can make already ripe produce go bad fast.

So, let's learn which fruits and veggies are ethylene producers and which ones are compromised by ethylene. Storing ethylene producers near non-ethylene producers can either kick-start ripening or speed up decay, so when you get the hang of this, you can use ethylene to your advantage!

And don't forget to use the Ingredients Index when shopping and organizing to help you understand everything you need to know about particular ingredients.

## Ethylene Producers

*Ethylene producers include:*

- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocado
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Citrus fruit (not grapefruit)
- Figs

- Grapes
- Green onions
- Kiwi fruit
- Mangoes
- Melons
- Mushrooms
- Nectarines
- Papayas
- Passion fruit
- Peaches
- Pears
- Peppers
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

If any of these items make it home unripe, seal them in a paper bag for 1–3 days to ripen—ethylene gets trapped and speeds things up for us. Placing ethylene producers together on the counter will also help, but definitely keep them separate if you want them to last longer.

Also know that the warmer it is for produce, the faster the ripening process will take place so move them to parts of the kitchen depending on how you want them to ripen—slowly (cool) or quickly (warm).

## Ethylene Sensitive

*These ethylene-sensitive fruit and veggies can become spotted, dark, mealy, or soft and wilted if stored near ethylene producing fruits and veggies:*

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Green beans
- Kale
- Leafy greens
- Lettuce
- Parsley
- Peas
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Romaine lettuce
- Spinach
- Squash
- Sweet potatoes
- Watercress
- Yams

We know it's hard to memorize a list like this, so we've made an Ethylene Cheat Sheet that you can reference (in the Resources for this module) when you're storing perishable goods.

## Lesson Actions

Spend some time diving into the Ingredient Index to learn more about the produce we've just discussed—how to shop for it, how to store it, what it goes well with, how to prepare it, the works.

Share with friends, family, or the course community one thing that surprised you.

Write down your thoughts in your cooking journal.