



“Buy produce that is in season. It should look and feel alive. When you handle food that is alive and living, it will inspire you... I am always following the rhythms of nature and eating what Mother Nature most wants to serve us at a particular time of the year.”

SUBCHAPTERS

Meal Planning After the Market

Unpack, Imagine, and Plan Your Meals

CHAPTER REVIEW

You don't need to be a cook or own a restaurant to find delicious ingredients. Go to the farmers' market, ask questions, and try as many fruits and vegetables as you can to help develop your tastes and knowledge. Ask questions at the market about ripeness, perishability, recommended preparation, and the farmers' upcoming season of fruits and vegetables. If you can't get to a farmers' market, apply Alice's advice at your local grocery store. Ideally, you want ingredients that are both organic and local.

CONSIDER ASKING:

- ♦ Where did it come from? How far away?
- ♦ Are the animals certified organic and completely grass fed?
- ♦ Are the eggs certified organic from pastured hens?
- ♦ Is the fish sustainably caught?

For Alice, the farmers' market was the foundation of her edible education.

FOLLOW ALICE'S GUIDELINES WHEN SHOPPING:

- ♦ Engage: Ask farmers about ripeness and for help picking the best produce.
- ♦ Follow the seasons: Buy produce that is in season and has been freshly harvested. It should look and feel alive.
- ♦ Taste: Ask to taste the produce—it is the best way to evaluate it.
- ♦ Connect with your senses: Take pleasure in the beauty of food. Pick it up, taste it, smell it—it will help guide your intuition about what produce is at its peak.

Don't go to the market or store with a shopping list. Buy what looks alive and inspiring, and plan your menus when you get home.

At Chez Panisse, Alice and the chefs do not work from recipes. The chefs collaborate with farmers and growers—they cook with what the farmers send. They choose what looks the most alive and plan their menus from there. Alice does the same at home.

When you return from the market, ask yourself: What is the most perishable? As Alice unpacks and surveys her basket, she pauses to take in the beauty of the live and vibrant produce she has received from the hands of the farmers.

THE FARMERS' MARKET / LEARNING FROM THE SOURCE

ALICE'S WINTER SHOPPING BASKET:

Whole chicken	Olives
Delicata squash	Raspberries
Persimmons	Fingerling potatoes
Pears	Brown rice
Carrots	Treviso chicory
Plain yogurt	Radicchio
Goat cheese	Tokyo turnips
Raw almonds	Olive oil

She sees that the raspberries (the last of the season) should be used the same day that she brings them home. The pears need a day or two to ripen, and the chicken can wait for an upcoming dinner party to be served along with the potatoes. The brown rice and Delicata squash can be cooked ahead and eaten in various dishes throughout the week. Alice starts to visualize the meals she can make with the ingredients, planning as many meals as possible with the ingredients she has.

LEARN MORE

♦ To learn how to use chicken bones and any trimmed parts to make stock, refer to the recipe in the Learn More section of Chapter 5: A Well-Stocked Pantry.

