



Greetings from the field —

THE FLORIDA U-PICK ALMANAC

*A seasonal guide to picking your own — what's
ripe, when, and what to make of it — across the
Sunshine State.*

A note from the field

Pick like a Floridian.

Here, the seasons run backwards. While the rest of the country waits out winter, Florida is at its most generous — strawberries reddening in January, citrus heavy on the branch, greens sweetened by a cool snap. Come summer, when northern fields hit their stride, ours hand the spotlight to mangoes and avocados in the steamy south.

This almanac is our field guide to that upside-down calendar: when each crop comes ripe, how to pick it well, and the simplest, best thing to do with it once you're home. Use the chart opposite to plan, then find an open farm near you on Farm Hop Florida.

One rule above all — call ahead. A U-pick depends on sun, rain, and how many neighbors got there first.

The Picking Calendar

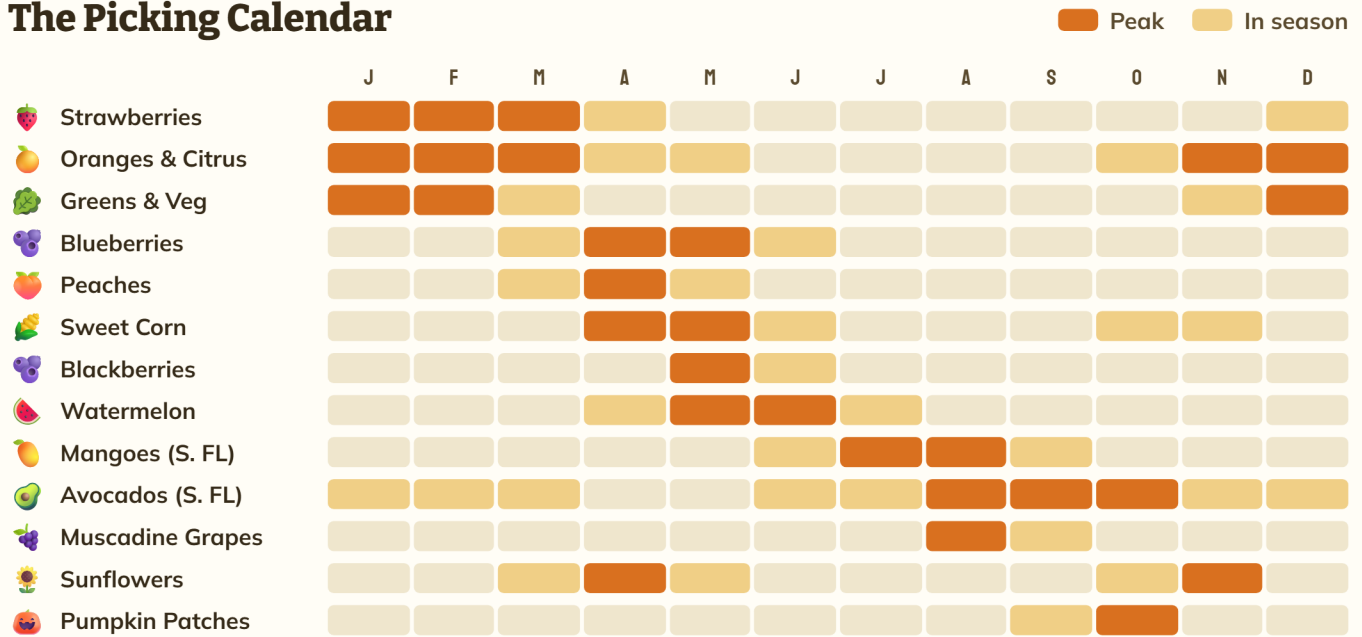




Photo: Jason Leung / Unsplash

Oranges & Citrus OCT–MAY · PEAK DEC–MAR

Florida's signature fruit. Navels and tangerines sweeten by the holidays; the prized Honeybell tangelo arrives for a fleeting few weeks in January; Valencias carry juice season clear into June. The Indian River groves are the gold standard.

AT THE PATCH

Twist, don't tug — a clean twist keeps the fruit keeping longer.

IN THE KITCHEN

Supreme over bitter greens, or candy the peels.

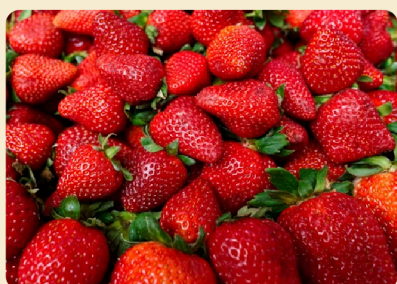


Photo: Colin Watts / Unsplash

Strawberries DEC–APR · PEAK JAN–MAR

While the country waits for June, Plant City — the Winter Strawberry Capital — picks from December. Look for berries red all the way to the shoulder; they will not ripen further once pulled.

AT THE PATCH

Pick into a shallow basket so the bottom layer never bruises.

IN THE KITCHEN

Shortcake, or a quick balsamic-and-black-pepper macerate.



Photo: Heather Barnes / Unsplash

Greens & Cool Veg NOV–MAR

Florida's winter is the vegetable's summer. Collards, kale, lettuces, and broccoli share the cool months with the berries — this is peak farm-stand season statewide.

AT THE PATCH

Pick greens after a light cold snap; the chill turns them sweeter.

IN THE KITCHEN

A long pot of collards with a smoked ham hock.

“In Florida, winter is the harvest. Bring a cooler — you will leave with more than you planned.”



Photo: Eric Prouzet / Unsplash

 **Blueberries** MAR–MAY · PEAK APR

Florida's berries beat Georgia's to market by weeks. Southern highbush varieties ripen across April and into May; the best ones practically fall into your palm.

 **AT THE PATCH**

Roll, don't pull — a ripe berry releases on its own.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

A cornmeal buckle; freeze the rest on a sheet tray.



Photo: Mesha Mittanasala / Unsplash

 **Peaches** MAR–MAY · PEAK APR

Yes, Florida peaches — low-chill varieties bred by UF ripen weeks ahead of the Georgia crop. Small, fragrant, and honeyed; central Florida around Dade City is peach country.

 **AT THE PATCH**

A ripe peach gives slightly at the shoulder and smells like summer.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

Grill cut-side down; serve with cold farm cream.



Photo: Roger Starnes Sr / Unsplash

 **Sweet Corn** APR–JUN & OCT–NOV

Florida grows sweet corn twice a year, spring and fall. The Glades and Zellwood are corn country — Zellwood's super-sweet is the stuff of local legend.

 **AT THE PATCH**

Full to the tip with dark silks; pick the morning you'll cook it.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

Six minutes in the pot, a knob of butter, done.

“Spring moves fast here. A field that's green one weekend is finished the next — go early and go often.”

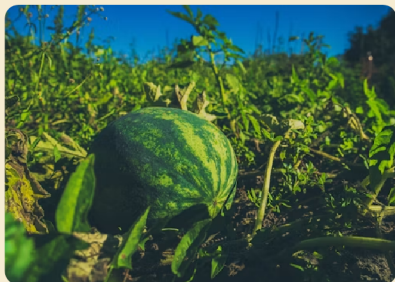


Photo: Олександр К / Unsplash

 **Watermelon** APR-JUL · PEAK MAY-JUN

Florida leads the nation's spring melon harvest. In the field, read the ground spot: creamy yellow means ready, white means give it another week.

 **AT THE PATCH**

Thump for a deep, hollow tone — high and tight isn't ripe.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

Cube with feta, mint, and a hard squeeze of lime.

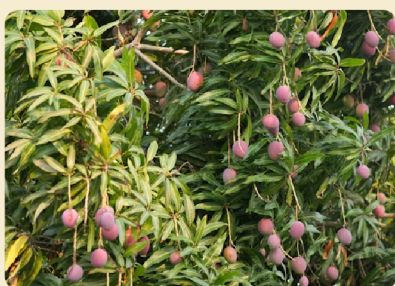


Photo: stephan hinni / Unsplash

 **Mangoes** JUN-SEP · S. FLORIDA

South Florida's summer obsession — Hadens, Kents, and the prized Glenn. The Redland around Homestead is mango country, with festivals to match the harvest.

 **AT THE PATCH**

Pick when the shoulders fill and color blushes; finish on the counter.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

Green-mango slaw, or simply sliced over sticky rice.

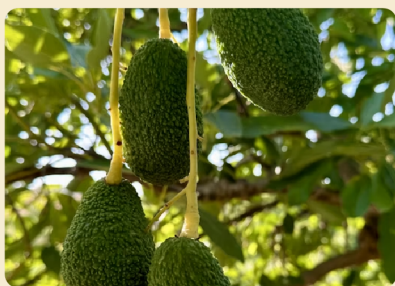


Photo: John Cameron / Unsplash

 **Avocados** JUN-MAR · S. FLORIDA

Florida “green-skins” are bigger, lighter, and far less oily than California Hass — a clean, mild butter. The long season runs from summer deep into winter.

 **AT THE PATCH**

They never soften on the tree; pick mature and ripen indoors.

 **IN THE KITCHEN**

Whip with lime and flaky salt; it asks for little else.

“When the heat arrives, the south takes over. This is the season Floridians drive for.”



Photo: John Cameron / Unsplash

Muscadine Grapes AUG–SEP

The native Southern grape — thick-skinned, musky-sweet, and built for Florida heat where wine grapes wilt. U-pick vineyards open in the late-summer lull.

AT THE PATCH

Ripe muscadines roll off with a gentle touch and a sweet snap.

IN THE KITCHEN

Old-fashioned muscadine jelly — the skins carry the pectin.



Photo: Andrii Motygullin / Unsplash

Sunflowers & Flowers MAR–MAY & OCT–NOV

Cut-your-own fields bloom in waves, spring and fall. Bring shears; the farm supplies the field, the photographs, and a very good afternoon.

AT THE PATCH

Cut stems at an angle in the cool of the morning.

IN THE KITCHEN

Not for the table to eat — for the table to admire.



Photo: Kateryna Hliznitsova / Unsplash

Pumpkin Patches & Fall Fun OCTOBER

Florida's heat means most patch pumpkins are trucked in — but the hayrides, corn mazes, petting pens, and fresh cane syrup are pure local autumn.

AT THE PATCH

Choose a pumpkin with its stem intact; it will last far longer.

IN THE KITCHEN

Roast the seeds with salt and a little cane sugar.

“Florida's autumn is quiet but real — found in a vineyard row, a sunflower field, and a glass of fresh cane juice.”



Now go pick something.

Find an open U-pick farm near you.

85 hand-vetted Florida farms, sorted by what's ripe and how far you'd drive — updated the day you visit.

[FARMHOPFLORIDA.COM](https://farmhopflorida.com)

