

How to Buy Hass Avocados



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For many years, I tried to buy Hass avocados at just the best ripeness but failed too often and, at one time, gave up buying avocados. The ones I selected were either not completely ripe or too ripe with too many brown defects in the fruit. Yet when I went to sushi restaurants, the cook would open one avocado after another that was perfectly ripe, with no defects. So I suspected that there must be a way to pick the perfect ones. I think I have found the reason why I failed and this has led to a practically fail safe way to pick the right ones.

This avocado is picked green, at which stage it is hard and withstands the rigors of transportation to stores very well. Once at the store, it stays green for a time and then suddenly turns dark in a matter of days. About one to three days after turning completely dark, it is in the best condition for eating. After that, it quickly deteriorates. Thus the optimum days are short, less than three days, yet the appearance is the same (dark), making it difficult to pick the right fruit by just looking at it. It softens continually from hard to soft during this dark stage, but it is already tasty when still quite hard, so hardness is not a good way to pick the best fruit.

The best way I found was to pick fruits that are starting to turn dark, but still mostly green. You can pick ones that are completely green but then you don't know how long they will take to ripen, and also risk the possibility that they were picked too early, in which case they might never ripen properly. At home, leave the fruits in a plastic bag at room temperature and monitor them daily until they turn completely dark, which takes two to three days after darkening starts. Eat the fruit one to three days after it turns completely dark. Eat it earlier if you like firmer fruit, later if you prefer it creamier. If you like it cold, place it in the fridge one to two days after it turns completely dark. These avocados are picked by cutting the stem. Therefore, there should be a short piece of stem attached to the fruit. If the stem has been knocked off, the fruit will usually decay prematurely from this damage. Therefore always try to pick fruits that still have this stem attached.

To open the fruit, knock off the stem and cut it lengthwise all around the center seed with a knife. Then I grab each half in each hand and rotate them against each other; this will free half of the fruit from the seed, as shown above. To remove the seed from the other half, implant the knife firmly into the seed (I hold the fruit in my left hand and whip the blade into the seed with the other) and use the knife, now stuck in the seed, to rotate the seed against the fruit, and the seed should pop out. I use a spoon to scoop out the fruit.