

# Meijer Produce Team Offers Fresh Fruit and Veggie Picks for Chinese New Year Dishes

## Meijer chefs share simple recipes to help you celebrate the Year of the Dog

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The Spring Festival of Chinese New Year kicks off on Feb. 16, celebrating the Year of the Dog. Although celebrations vary by region and household, they all have one custom in common: creating dishes that give blessings in the New Year. Vegetables are staple items in many Chinese New Year dishes because they symbolize the coming of spring.

If you are looking to create your own celebration, the Meijer produce buyers and Meijer Test Kitchen Chefs Chad Beuter and Brian C. Williams put together a list of great fruits and veggies that are featured in many Chinese New Year dishes and created four easy-to-make recipes to try.

- **Bok Choy:** This vegetable is a variety of Chinese cabbage with smooth, tapering leaves. Bok Choy is a variety of Chinese cabbage that's high in vitamins A and C, and tastes great in a stir-fry, soups or served steamed as a side dish. The leaves have a hint of spice, while the stalks are crisp and sweet.
- **Kumquat:** This fruit is quintessential to a Chinese New Year celebration. The Chinese were the first to cultivate the Kumquat. According to a post on [SFGate.com](http://SFGate.com), the Chinese often display Kumquats in their home during the Chinese New Year celebration because they symbolize prosperity and are often presented as gifts. As for taste, the [Kumquatgrowers](http://Kumquatgrowers) states that Kumquats have a distinct flavor that is both sweet and tart. It is the only citrus fruit that can be eaten "skin and all."
- **Opo Squash:** According to [CooksInfo.com](http://CooksInfo.com), Opo Squash is not actually a squash but a gourd. Its skin can be yellow to green and stays tough after cooking. Inside, it has white, firm flesh with edible seeds, similar to zucchini. Smaller and young Opo Squash are sweeter. Peel the skin from the Opo Squash before cooking and prepare it as you would a zucchini.

Try Bok Choy, Kumquats and Opo Squash together in [Chilled Opo Squash Noodles with Spicy Shrimp & Bok Choy](#) recipe. Watch the recipe demonstration video [here](#).

- **Chinese Eggplant:** Although often thought of as a vegetable, eggplant is actually a fruit. Chinese eggplant is long and thin in appearance, with dark purple skin that is tender and cooks fast. Its flesh is white, semi-firm and nearly seedless. Of all eggplant varieties, a Chinese eggplant is described as having a sweet and mild flavor. Chinese eggplant is known for its antioxidant properties due to containing rich levels of anthocyanins, a pigment that is responsible for the fruit's deep purple skin coloring. Chinese eggplant is versatile and taste great braised, in stir fry, grilled, fried and baked. Recipe to try: [Sweet & Sour Eggplant](#). Watch the recipe demonstration video [here](#).
- **Chinese Long Beans:** Chinese long beans are different from the common green bean. They grow as a vine and can grow more than a yard in length, hence the nickname, "yard beans." Although, Chinese Long Beans have a similar taste to green beans, they have a different texture. Plus, green beans can be boiled, which doesn't work for Chinese Long Beans. According to [Serious Eats](#), Chinese Long Beans are best cooked with oil: sautéed, stir-fried or deep-fried. Their flavor intensifies and their texture remains tight and juicy. Recipe to try: [Chinese Long Beans with Spicy Pork](#). Watch the recipe demonstration video [here](#).
- **Ginger Root:** Ginger Root is a common ingredient used in most Asian dishes and folk medicine. It adds a hot and fragrant kick, and is used to flavor many Chinese seafood, meat and vegetarian dishes. It is also widely recognized that Ginger Root aids in digestion. Recipe to try: [Ginger & Shiitake Braised Chicken Thighs with Scallion Pancakes](#). Watch the recipe demonstration video [here](#).

### About Meijer:

Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 235 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel, home decor and pet departments, and garden centers. For more information on Meijer, please visit [www.meijer.com](http://www.meijer.com). Follow Meijer on Twitter [@twitter.com/Meijer](https://twitter.com/Meijer) and [@twitter.com/MeijerPR](https://twitter.com/MeijerPR) or become a fan at [www.facebook.com/meijer](https://www.facebook.com/meijer).

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