

Eat Seasonally for Good Health

By Mary Germanotta Duquette

mary@maryduquette.com

Published on www.ehow.com

Along with the seasons of the year, food – specifically produce - swings around in a continuous circle. Food goes from “in season”, to “out of season,” and back again. But what does that really mean to you? Why should you buy produce when it’s in season?

In the first place, produce that’s “in season” is much fresher - and because of this, it’s most often tastier. And research suggests that freshly picked produce is also higher in nutrients, which makes it a better choice for you and your family. So, if you pay attention to the seasonal offerings and choose your fruits and vegetables accordingly, you’ll eat more healthfully and really be able to enjoy your food.

Educate yourself as far as what produce is the freshest according to the season. Since it’s not possible to tell just by looking, you can make up a list of foods and their corresponding season.

- **Spring** . Think frogs in the pond. Dewy grass in the morning. Buds slowly taking shape on the trees. Think green. Look for green vegetables like lettuces, chard, spinach, and fresh herbs.
- **Summer**. Think of those sweet little morsels hanging from bushes. Strawberries in late spring to early summer, blueberries in the middle of summer, and raspberries in late summer are all fresh and delicious during the summer months. Also, melon, cucumber, zucchini, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and corn are sweet summer babies.
- **Autumn**. In autumn, the apple orchards are heavy with falling fruit. Also, pears ripen and fall to the ground, juicy and sweet. You can also enjoy beets, eggplant, carrots, sweet potatoes, onions, and garlic.
- **Winter**. During the winter, think root vegetables - like potatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, and squash. Roast a myriad of root vegetables in your oven at 450 degrees, tossed with some olive oil and herbs, until they’re nicely caramelized. It’s a comforting and delicious winter treat.

Further tips for buying seasonally:

- Shop for foods that are in season where you live, rather than for foods that may be in season somewhere else. Pay attention to what is freshly picked in your area, and check labels to see where the produce you’re about to purchase came from.
- Obviously, it’s not possible to buy *everything* locally and seasonally. Try to buy locally as much as possible - but if, for example, you are a New Englander really craving that orange or grapefruit during the winter months, then by all means, go

for it!

- Find recipes that feature seasonal foods. There are a lot of them around - and even some cookbooks are fully dedicated to seasonal cooking. “The Farmer’s Market Cookbook” is a wonderful book with recipes using the freshest ingredients according to season. Or you can try Molly O’Neill’s cookbook, “A Well-Seasoned Appetite: Recipes for Eating with The Seasons, The Senses, and The Soul.” Do your own research and see what you can come up with. Visit your local library, or search online. There are plenty of recipes out there that are devoted to cooking according to the seasons.
- Try to plan out your proteins by season, if you can. For example, some fish is most often the freshest during the summer months. And beef can be a warm addition to a meal during the cold winter. Roast turkey for fall, chicken wings on the grill in the spring. Meats can be seasonal, too.
- When buying locally, don’t let the beautiful, shiny, perfect produce fool you. Chances are that the more visually appealing fruits and veggies don’t pack as much punch when it comes to flavor. Your best bet is to go for locally grown, organic foods, when you possibly can – spots and all.

###