

Seasonal Food

Take a look at the fresh produce in any supermarket today and you would be forgiven for thinking that the British climate had no seasons at all. Fresh strawberries are available in the depths of winter, apples in late spring and early summer and farmed meat and fish are available all year round.

Our food industry has, it seems, conquered the seasons at last. Today, we can have pretty much what we want, whenever we want it.

But do strawberries bought in winter really taste (and look) any where near as good as gorgeous British strawberries bought in June and July? We think not.

In addition, the number of miles and days (or weeks) they have travelled in a controlled atmosphere container have nothing but a detrimental affect on their nutrient content. Eating food out of season means it is probably imported and has travelled thousands of miles to reach your plate.

Eating seasonal food has many advantages:

- Quality – the taste is unbelievably better and the vitamin and mineral content is invariably higher
- Price – much cheaper because you are not paying to have the food flown half way around the world.
- Buying UK produce means supporting the local economy and helping local farmers.
- You're not stuck with the familiar 'favourites' all year round.

When we visit the supermarket we are bombarded by choice, but do we really need that much choice? We often have a few fruits and veggies we like to eat and stick to them all year round Iceberg lettuce, broccoli, potatoes, onions, apples, carrots, tomatoes and cucumbers are old favourites and we keep going back to them regardless of the season, and how far away they were grown.

By making good use of your freezer, you can buy fresh produce when it is in season, cheaper, more abundant and more nutritious and use it to brighten up winter days.

Make farmers markets your first port of call on any food shopping trip. Food is locally produced and picked fresh – therefore fresh foods are more nutritious, taste divine, have less packaging and cost less. Take a look at the National Association of Farmers' Markets website to find your nearest one:

<http://www.farmersmarkets.net/>.

If you are not sure what foods are in season and when, check out <http://eattheseasons.co.uk> . There are also tons of recipes and links to other useful websites.

Remember, when you eat fruits and vegetables that are in season - you're getting them at their very best. They are packed with nutrients and bursting with flavour.