
Eating Seasonally and Locally

Contributed by Steve Nakon

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The foods that we choose every day have important impacts on our health and the environment!

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "eating seasonally and locally" and wondered what that means. Eating seasonally is simply eating those foods that are harvested in the current season. Eating locally means to eat food that is grown in the part of the country, or the area, where you live. Eating seasonally and locally benefits both your health and the environment.

Health Benefits

The secret to health and well being is to live in harmony with nature. Nature provides the foods that keep our bodies in balance at certain times of the year. By eating the food that grows around us from season to season, we receive the best nourishment to support and balance us.

In the spring, cleansing and revitalizing foods, like leafy greens and sprouts, help harmonize the body with this season of rejuvenation and growth.

During the summer, cooling foods such as corn, cucumbers, and melons help to keep the body cool. During autumn and winter, when it's cold out, we need to add fuel to the furnace. The focus is on storing up energy with strengthening, warming foods such as whole grains, squashes and root vegetables.

Eating in season also leads to a heightened sense of taste. Once you've tasted a juicy, local vine-ripened tomato at the peak of the season, the pale, hard tomato you find in stores in the middle of winter may not be as appealing. This is the natural wisdom of your body guiding you toward nourishment. Eat what is harvested in the present season, align yourself with nature and keep your body healthy!

Environmental Benefits

How does what I eat affect the environment? The convenience of having foods shipped from across the country and around the world creates hidden costs, including costs to the environment. When we buy food that is produced in distant areas, transporting the food requires a significant amount of energy, or fuel, not to mention the impact on air pollution. In addition, the refrigeration needed to keep food fresh when it travels long distances uses energy and may require chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) or other ozone-depleting gases. When you choose foods that are locally grown and in season you not only make a contribution to your good health you also support clean air and a healthy environment!

How to Get Started

An easy way to incorporate seasonal eating into your life is to join a community supported agriculture group (CSA). These local groups provide an opportunity to purchase a portion of a small organic farm's produce before the season begins. By joining a CSA you can get fresh produce, right off the farm, delivered to a local pick up spot once a week! How easy is that!

Whether you grow food in your own garden, purchase food at the grocery store or a farmer's market, or join a local CSA, eat what is harvested locally in the present season to stay connected to nature and keep your body, and the environment, healthy!