

All fruits and vegetables have a particular time of year when they are at their peak. Eating according to the seasons is an important part of a healthy and sustainable diet: it has a host of benefits for your health, your hip pocket, the environment, and local business. It's also fun, delicious, and very, very easy!

Until quite recently, seasonal eating was universal – without modern technology or transport, we relied on our skills to take advantage of the best growing seasons for each food, and to last through the times of scarcity. Today, the globalised food market has given us the “convenience” of being able to buy any food at any time of the year. This has greatly reduced our awareness of the seasons and the environment, at a time when this awareness is most badly needed.

Foods that are not in season locally will have been shipped from another part of the world, unnecessarily using up energy and emitting greenhouse gases through transportation. Eating seasonally encourages you to buy local produce, which will not only reduce your carbon footprint, but also save you the labour costs of transport and storage, as well as supporting your local economy. You can heighten these benefits by boycotting the supermarket and buying from farmers' markets and food co-ops instead! As well as paying less, you will be helping local farmers to build a very sustainable food industry.

Eating seasonally brings amazing variety to your diet. Once you can break out of the rut of buying the same foods all year round, you will begin to enjoy a sense of celebration every time a new food comes into season. You will have a deeper appreciation for the uniqueness of each season, and for the range of tastes, colours and textures it provides. The seasons give us a long-forgotten sense of the wonderful natural cycles that Western rationalism ignores.

Seasonal food also plays a role in holistic health - generally, fruits and vegetables appear during the season in which they are best for your body. Rich, full-bodied apples and pumpkins are winter foods, while light, juicy, refreshing mangos and cucumbers are suited to summer.

Most importantly, though, fresh food in season is unbeatable in terms of taste, nutritional value and variety. Most out-of-season food has been grown in artificial conditions, picked prematurely and shipped halfway around the world, giving it ample time to deteriorate and lose nutrients; this food is also limited to those varieties that can survive long-distance travel. The vitality and freshness of seasonal food is a pleasure to which very little can compare.

On the next two pages are visual diagrams of seasonal fruit and vegetables in Australia. These are a guide only and will vary according to climate and location, as well as from year to year.

Fruits

	Spring			Summer			Autumn			Winter		
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Orchard Fruit (Pome / Stone)				Pear (Red Sensation, Williams)			Pear (Beurre Bosc, Packham)					
				Nashi								
	Ap (LW, Sun)						Apple (Jonathon, Gala, Bonza)			Ap. (Lady Will., S'downer)		
	Loquat			Cherry			Apple (Golden/Red Delicious, Granny Smith, Fuji)					
				Apricot			Quince					
				Peach, Nectarine								
			Plum									
Citrus Fruit	Lemon, Yellow grapefruit (all year)											
	Tangelo						Lime			Tangelo		
	Cumquat						Cumquat					
	Mand. (Ellend)									Mandarin (Ellendale)		
	Ma. (Murcot)									Mandarin (Imperial)		
	Pink grapefruit									Pink grapef.		
	Orange (Valencia)						Orange (Navel)					
	Or.(s)									Or. (Seville)		
	Blood orange									Bl o.		
Berries and Nuts	Cashew nut			Gooseberry			Pistachio					
				Strawberry			Peanut					
				Mulberry			Hazelnut					
				Blueberry			Almond					
				Blackcurrant			Chestnut					
				Redcurrant			Walnut					
				Blackberry			Pecan					
				Raspberry			Macadamia nut					
Tropical Fruit	Pineapple			Mangosteen						Pineapple		
	Papaya / Pawpaw			Prickly pear			Custard apple					
	Mango											
	Lychee											
	Banana											
	Passionfruit											
			Rambutan									
Other Fruit	Rhubarb (all year; peaks in Autumn-Winter)											
				Melon (Watermelon, Rockmelon, Honeydew)			Persimmon					
				Grape								
				Fig			Tamarillo					
							Feijoa / Guava (Cherry guava)					
						Kiwifruit						
						Pomegranate						

Vegetables

	Spring			Summer			Autumn			Winter		
	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Brassicacae and Leafy Greens	Broccoli, Caulifl.									Broccoli, Cauliflower		
	Savoy cabbage						Red cabbage			White cabbage		
	Asian greens (most)						As. greens			Brussels sprouts		
	Lettuce (bu, cos, ice, la)						Lettuce (butterhead, cos, iceberg, lambs lettuce)					
	Spin., Silv.			Vine leaves			Spinach, Silverbeet					
	Sorrel / Cress (Watercress)						Chicory (endive, witlof, radicchio)					
	Rocket									Kale		
Herbs	Chervil			Marjoram								
	Basil, Mint											
Bay leaves, Chives, Coriander, Dill, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme (all year)												
Pods	Broad b.			Runner and Snake beans						Broad beans		
	Green beans											
	Borlotti beans											
	Peas			Okra						Peas		
Fruiting Vegetables				Avoc. (reed)			Avocado (fuerte)					
	Avocado (hass, sharwil)			Squash (pattipan)						Avo. (hass, sharwil)		
	Sweet corn											
	Artichoke			Zucchini flower						Artichoke		
	Zucchini											
	Choko			Pumpkin								
	Cucumber			Olives (green, black)								
	Capsicum, Chilli											
	Eggplant											
Roots and Tubers	Gin.						Ginger					
	Car., Pars.			Radish			Carrot, Parsnip					
				Daikon radish			Horseradish					
							Potato, Sweet potato					
							Turnip, Swede					
							Celeriac, Jerusal. artichoke					
	Beetroot									Beetroot		
Shoots, Bulbs and Mushrooms	Spring onion			Brown onion								
	Garlic, Salad onion			Shallot								
	Red onion											
	Leek											
				Celery								
	Asparagus						Fennel					
	Mush. (morel)						Mushroom (bolet, field, pine)					