

# Eating Seasonally

**A**s the leaves change and the air turns crisp, many people mark the fall season by transforming their diet to accommodate seasonal selections. Eating with the seasons is a great way to enjoy produce at its best.

Depending on your location, eating seasonally could be as easy as checking out your local farmers market and downtown grocer, or growing fruits and vegetables in your own garden. Each region throughout the country — and your specific part of the state, for that matter — has different growing zones that are determined by many factors, including climate, soil type and regular precipitation expectancy.

Chat with your local university's agricultural center or farmers group to find out more about the freshest foods available to you this fall. Then dig in with a seasonal menu every night of the week.

## WHY EAT SEASONALLY?

Many fruits and vegetables are ripe for the picking in the fall, which across the country is the traditional harvest season. When picked at its peak, fresh produce is packed with nutrients, flavors and crispness that may not be as evident even a few weeks into the harvest season.

It's important to learn about your growing zone so you can perfectly time your entry into seasonal eating. Vegetables such as arugula and artichokes are ready in the cool weather and can make unique additions to a fresh fall salad. Traditional and sweet potatoes also are prevalent in the fall and can be diced for homemade baked fries.

Another cool-weather staple is broccoli, which generally can be grown year-round in moderate climates but is at its peak in the fall season.



## BUY NOW, EAT LATER

Many fresh produce options make for great ingredients for meals you can freeze for later. This can include tomatoes for pasta sauces and potatoes for frozen casseroles. Choose fresh fruits such as apples and blackberries, which

are best in the fall and can be incorporated into pies or jams that you can preserve for later.

Carrots and celery also are fall-season vegetables that can be sliced or grated into homemade comfort soups. Don't forget the garlic, which generally is at its

most plump and tasty in the fall.

Not sure where to start when it comes to eating seasonally? Talk with your local growers about joining food-sharing programs that can help you gain access to fresh baskets of food on a weekly basis.