

## Eating with the seasons

Eating seasonally means eating foods that are "in season," or being grown and harvested at the time of the year when you buy and cook them. For example, that means stone fruit in summer and pumpkin in autumn. There are real benefits to eating seasonally, both for you and for the planet.

Perhaps the biggest tangible benefit is that you'll save money. When produce is in season, the relative abundance of the crop usually makes it less expensive. Think of the price of avocados at the height of their season compared to the middle of winter when they're imported.

Eating seasonally can also mean that you get the best tasting, healthiest food available. When the food you buy is not in season locally, it's either grown in a hothouse or shipped in from other parts of the world, all of which affect the taste. The same reasons that keep the cost of seasonal food down also drive its quality up. Some people also think that food eaten as close as possible to the time of harvest contains more nutrients than produce that has been transported long distances or kept in cold storage.

Seasonal eating is likely to ensure you get a broader variety of foods in your diet too, making your meals more interesting and probably more appropriate for the weather. Who wants to eat watermelon in winter or hot pumpkin soup when it's sweltering outside?

So how DO you eat in season? One way is to grow it and pick it yourself, another is to become a regular visitor to our fabulous Otago Farmers Market - everything sold at the market is in season, and local. If shopping at the supermarket, take note of the way prices are trending, and if you notice there's an abundance of something specific, and they're on sale (like potatoes in autumn) that's also a good indicator they're in season.

If you want to know more, a Google search will throw up plenty of information about what is naturally harvested at what time of the year. Healthy Food Guide has produced a handy chart you can print out and put up on your pantry door, you can find it on their website:

<http://www.healthyfood.co.nz/resources/whats-in-season>

Eat in season and you'll be rewarded with high quality produce, packed with nutrition, at a lower cost. And your taste buds will definitely thank you for it!