

Each color of produce offers unique health benefits. Red fruits like tomatoes, watermelon, and cherries are rich in vitamin C, vitamin A, and antioxidants that support heart health. Darker fruits, such as blackberries and blueberries, can reduce stroke risk and improve memory. Green vegetables like spinach, cucumber, and zucchini are packed with potassium, vitamin K, and antioxidants, which promote strong bones, vision health, and immunity. Yellow and orange produce, such as mangoes, carrots, and squash, deliver vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium, which bolster the immune system and strengthen teeth and bones.

By embracing the vibrant colors and flavors of in-season produce, you not only elevate your meals but also ensure you're reaping the maximum nutritional benefits. From the bright zest of summer fruits to the earthy richness of fall vegetables, seasonal eating enhances your diet and connects you to the natural rhythms of the year.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

### ✓ Sustainability

Eating seasonally reduces the environmental impact of food production. Growing out-of-season crops often require artificial resources like heated greenhouses and excess water, which strain the environment. Additionally, seasonal eating minimizes the carbon foot-print associated with transporting produce from far-off regions.

### ✓ Supports Local Farmers

When you buy seasonal produce from farmer's markets, you help support local agriculture. Building a connection with local growers allows you to learn about your food's origins and even discover heirloom varieties you might not find elsewhere. Talking to farmers has introduced me to incredible new flavors and varieties of fruits and vegetables I never knew existed. Supporting local markets also keeps tax dollars within the community and strengthens the local economy.

### ✓ More Cost-Effective

Seasonal foods are often less expensive because not only are they the freshest, but they are also more abundant and not being grown against the elements. Local farmers harvest large quantities of in-season crops, which drives down prices. In contrast, off-season produce costs more due to transportation, refrigeration, and import fees. Farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs can offer additional savings while giving you access to high-quality, fresh produce. I always save on my grocery bills when I eat from the local farmer's markets and add nutritional value to my diet at the same time!

## CULINARY BENEFITS

### ✓ Inspires Culinary Creativity

Seasonal eating encourages you to explore new recipes and experiment with different flavors. Incorporating fresh, vibrant produce into your meals allows you to try dishes that highlight the unique tastes of each season. For example, spring's tender asparagus and peas can inspire light pasta dishes or refreshing salads, while summer's

bounty of berries may lead you to create colorful desserts. This spring you can enjoy local and abundant superfoods like fresh asparagus on the grill or artichokes made into a fun, yummy, dip! I absolutely love creating a new meal with fresh produce from the market because it's fun, absolutely delicious, and cheaper!


## SPRING SEASONAL FOOD GUIDE

*Spring is a season of renewal, and the produce available during this time reflects that energy. Here are some highlights to look for in March, April, and May:*

- **Vegetables:** Asparagus, peas, radishes, spinach, artichokes, and fennel.
- **Fruits:** Strawberries, apricots, cherries, and citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruits.
- **Herbs:** Mint, chives, and parsley.

*To discover what's growing in your area, visit a local farmers market or use an online seasonal food guide. Shopping locally not only supports your community but also helps you become familiar with the freshest produce available.*

Embracing seasonal eating offers countless benefits — from superior taste and enhanced nutrition to environmental sustainability and community support. By incorporating spring's vibrant produce into your meals, you're choosing a healthier, more mindful way to nourish your body and the planet.

So, as you plan your next meal, consider the flavors of the season. Your taste buds, wallet, and overall well-being will thank you. Nature's bounty awaits — embrace it and savor the benefits! 

As always, consult a medical professional before beginning any new protocol.