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Mid-Late Summer CSA Veggies



Seasonal Eating Made Easy

Here is a bit of the revised information for the some day to be published, second edition of my book [Hands On Health](#). I have been amazed at the responses from clients and workshop participants who state that they really are not sure what constitutes a seasonal food; what foods grow and are eaten in what seasons.

This is certainly understandable when we can walk into a grocery store produce section and pretty much buy any fruit or vegetable year round, thanks to the global growing and shipping of food. I ask you to try this visualization (if your mom and dad, grandparents, or neighbors had a garden when you were growing up): close your eyes and stand beside that garden. Now think about what your family served you from that garden throughout the growing season; what were the first foods harvested in spring, the things you longed for to grow faster, your favorite fruit or vegetable from the home gardens? Now, take a walk into that garden and look at all the lush plants vying for space in the soil (no, not the weeds, although some are very yummy, nutritious, and edible foods!) and get a feel for the what is growing at this time of summer. Often when we think back to family gardens, our recollection of seasonal foods awakens.

I live in Northern NY State and our growing season is approximately May through September. I describe seasonal as this: vegetables that grow up and out of the ground are late spring, summer and early fall foods (Examples would be: peas, asparagus, greens, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, summer squash...) and vegetables that grow into the ground are late fall, winter and early spring foods. (Examples would be root vegetables of any kind. Try a Google search for "root veggies" to learn how many root veggies there are besides carrots and potatoes!)

Obviously, there are exceptions to these "rules." Early root veggies are eaten in summer: young carrots, beet greens and baby beets, early parsnips, and many other root vegetable. There are winter keepers like cabbage and Brussels sprouts that grow above ground but are later season

vegetables and will keep well into winter. I leave my Brussel sprouts in the garden and just harvest all winter until they are all eaten.

Squash also grow above ground and there are winter keeper varieties to enjoy well into the winter season and early spring, if stored correctly. I am thinking that storage will be under my bed this winter.

Fruits follow a seasonal plan as well: berries in the late spring and summer, late summer apples / pears / peaches and plums, and fall harvest apples and pears that are winter storage fruits.

This is a quick explanation to get you thinking in terms of eating seasonally, remembering what things grow and store best in what seasons. Ask your grandparents; our elders have much wisdom around what was growing in gardens at what time of the growing season and what foods store best for winter eating.

Winter CSA Veggies



Cooking is Simple in the Seasonal Kitchen

Another area people stumble around food is cooking meals: what to cook, how to do it in less time, meals to satisfy everyone in the family... These are real issues for most of us. The days of a Mom being the center of the home with no other professional duties is a rarity indeed. When Mom was vigilant about keeping good food in the home through gardening or wise shopping of whole foods, cooking meals from “scratch”, and feeding the families’ needs through

kitchen nourishment, we were all healthier because of it. Food *is* medicine; the best medicine.

Moms are now out in full force, an active part of the work world. Having the time to garden, shop, cook, and clean up the kitchen is not easy to fit into a 40 hour (plus) work week. The era of food “products” was meant to help lessen time in the kitchen. The 50’s packaged foods have flourished into millions of food products that are far from healthy or healing. Easier and less time consuming to prepare, yes, healthier, no.

Eating seasonally makes the whole process simpler. When we have fewer choices, it makes preparing meals pretty cut and dry. I garnered much information about this from my Grandmother Page, who grew up on a self-sustaining farm here in northern NY. From her stories of foods eaten, there was a definite seasonal rhythm to the family food stuff.

Besides the seasonal produce, people also had certain proteins that were more readily available in each season: chicken and locally caught fish in summer and into early fall; preserved pork,

beef, and wild game in the late fall and winter months; dried beans in winter, whatever was still left in the early spring until the summer poultry was big enough to eat. There were nuts through late summer and fall and they were also stored for winter use.

I will give examples of seasonal meals:

Spring Meal Ideas: Asparagus, early salad greens, spinach, wild leeks, dandelion greens, and peas served with a nice side of protein: meat, beans, nuts & seeds, cheese, eggs.

As we move into summer: more garden produce becomes available as it grows and matures: baby carrots, green onions, beet greens and baby beets, radishes, turnips, rutabagas, peppers, tomatoes, summer squash....

Summer Meal Ideas: Serve up the readily available produce with the seasonal protein that is abundant. Lots of light proteins and salads loaded with summer produce.

These foods all blend and blur, there is no black and white line drawn. The seasons meld into the next and different foods become available. **Fall brings mature root vegetables** of all types and varieties, cabbages; winter squash...These pair well with heavier protein sources in soups, stews, and stir fries. Roasted meats and root vegetables were always a **fall and winter staple food**. Serve them with a raw cabbage and grated root vegetable slaw and it is food fit for a family! Blog post on fall/winter slaws: [Gospel of the Slaw](#)

Vegetarian Options: beans are a hearty source of warming and filling protein. Pair the roasted veggies with eggs, cheese, nuts and seeds, and/or roasted tofu (organic & Non-GMO certified) .

Then there is the **seasonal flow of Northern NY fruits:** early summer strawberries followed by blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and other berries that are rarely heard of anymore: June berries, currants, gooseberries, on & on! We get early summer apples and apples that extend into later fall, pears, and some areas are now growing peaches! Then there are the plums, succulent and juicy, but coming quickly and ending abruptly.

My basic point is that when we eat the foods, in the season they are naturally available, we have seasonal food choices. Each season's transition welcomes in foods we have not had since the last year's season. (I so look forward to asparagus in the spring but am equally glad to be done with it as summer marches on! I love summer's green salads and yet look forward to saying goodbye to them in late fall and welcoming the raw cabbage and root veggie slaws.) We are not standing in the kitchen (or supermarket) lamenting over the myriad of choices and what we are going to do with them. Eat seasonal food, the choices are seasonal, and our dishes and cooking takes on a more simplified seasonal rhythm.

I hope this helps you to get re-oriented with seasonal foods. Your body feels best when it is in sync with the rhythms of nature. Nature's Rhythmic Blessings to You, Paula

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