

# Seasonal Eating

## A Guide to Illinois Produce



### What's in Season?

If you want to make the tastiest, healthiest, environmentally positive choice of produce, then buy what's in season! Here is a handy wallet guide that you can refer to in the market in order to make sure your produce is in season close by, and not across the world. Why buy seasonally? Because it supports the economy, the community, and provides environmental and nutritional benefits. Find out more below!

### December through March: Winter Seasonal Eating

In the months when fresh produce is not available, there are still many choices for those wishing to eat locally. Canning, preserving, freezing and drying produce when it's fresh is a great way to keep the flavors at their peak and have a taste of summer during the coldest winter days. Nuts, dried beans, eggs, cheeses, and other animal products are a good way to support local farmers at your local farmer's market during the off season. Some squashes, gourds, onions, potatoes, garlic and hearty root vegetables will keep for quite awhile in a cool, dry place. It takes some planning, but you can eat in harmony with the natural seasonal cycles, remaining independent from food shipped from halfway across the world and other country's crop fluctuations. After all, people have lived through the winters for hundreds of years before the global food trade was available.

### Economy and Community

Buying seasonally supports local farmers and creates incentive to keep open lands in urban and rural areas. Going to local markets and farmer's markets creates a community gathering space and allows you to find out how, where and by whom your food is grown. Keeping money within the local community is important to create a strong, thriving economy.

### Nutritional Benefits

Food that is not grown locally needs to be shipped from its country of origin to your grocery store shelves. The produce is picked well before it is ready so that the produce does not arrive over-ripe. The result is that the food does not provide its full nutritional value. Food that is grown locally and seasonally is picked as soon as it ripens, at the height of its flavor and nutritional value. At local markets there are varieties of fruits and vegetables that are not found at grocery stores. In this way, eating seasonally and locally can also promote good dietary variety and the best possible nutrition. It also generally comes with no bioengineering and little to no pesticides. Bon appétit!

### Environmental Benefits

Produce at your grocery store travels an average of 3,000 miles before it gets to your plate. Buying from a farmer's market ensures that your produce is grown locally and saves a huge load of carbon from being released into the atmosphere. Fruits and veggies harvested in season also require fewer additives to keep the plants fruitful and local producers generally use far less pesticides than giant factory farms. Buying in season keeps you in touch with your areas natural cycles, is beneficial for the environment, and for your personal health.

Guide created by the TEENS program.  
teens.naturemuseum.org



Cut out, then fold accordian style at dashes

### April

**Veggies**  
Asparagus  
Lettuce  
Onions  
Peas  
Spinach

### May

**fruit**  
Cherries  
Strawberries  
**Veggies**  
Asparagus  
Cabbage  
Onions  
Peas  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Salad Greens  
Spinach  
Squash

### June

**fruit**  
Apples  
Berries  
Cherries  
Melons  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Plums  
Strawberries  
**Veggies**  
Asparagus  
Beans  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Eggplant  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Salad Greens  
Spinach  
Tomatoes

### July

**fruit**  
Apples  
Berries  
Cherries  
Grapes  
Melons  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Plums  
**Veggies**  
Artichokes  
Beans  
Bell Peppers  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Corn  
Eggplant  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Squash  
Tomatoes

### August

**fruit**  
Apples  
Berries  
Grapes  
Melons  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Plums  
**Veggies**  
Artichokes  
Beans  
Bell Peppers  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Corn  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Salad Greens  
Squash  
Sweet Potatoes  
Tomatoes

### September

**fruit**  
Apples  
Berries  
Grapes  
Melons  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Plums  
**Veggies**  
Artichokes  
Bell Peppers  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Corn  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Salad Greens  
Squash  
Spinach  
Sweet Potatoes  
Tomatoes

### October

**fruit**  
Apples  
Grapes  
Plums  
**Veggies**  
Bell Peppers  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Corn  
Cucumbers  
Eggplant  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Radishes  
Rhubarb  
Salad Greens  
Spinach  
Squash  
Sweet Potatoes  
Tomatoes

### November

**fruit**  
Apples  
**Veggies**  
Bell Peppers  
Cabbage  
Garlic  
Onions  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Spinach  
Squash  
Sweet Potatoes

