

Eat the Seasons

Seasonality

Seasonality is the time of year when the harvest or flavour of a type of food is at its best. It is often when the item is at its lowest cost and freshest on the market.

Different foods are at their best in different seasons; for example, apples are freshest between September and February, and carrots between June and September.



Benefits of seasonal eating

Taste

Food that has grown and ripened naturally tastes best.

Freshness

Local, seasonal food will be fresher than foods transported thousands of kilometres from where they were grown.

Nutrition

A food's nutritional value drops after it has been picked, so eating freshly-picked, seasonal foods provides more nutritional value.

Carbon footprint

It uses a lot of energy to grow food in heated greenhouses or transport it over long distances. This use of energy releases carbon into the atmosphere which contributes to climate change. Local, seasonal foods do not need to be grown in heated greenhouses or transported long distances so they have a smaller carbon footprint.

Supporting local farmers

Buying locally grown foods supports local farmers and local shops.

Cost

Locally grown food is usually cheaper as transport costs are lower.

Nutritional value of food

Nutritional value is the amount of protein, carbohydrate, fat, minerals and vitamins in a food or a meal. It is important to eat a balanced diet to provide all the nutrients the body needs in the correct quantities. Meals need careful planning to provide the right balance of nutrients and make use of seasonal ingredients.

Food hygiene

Food hygiene is important to prevent the spread of disease-causing bacteria. Health and safety rules include:

	Wash hands thoroughly before, during and after preparing food and handling raw meat.
	Clean all work surfaces with antibacterial spray.
	Use different-coloured chopping boards for different foods.

Food preparation techniques

Dicing

Cutting food into small cubes measuring approximately half a centimetre.



Peeling

Removing the skin of a fruit or vegetable, either with your fingers or with a knife or peeler.



Grating

Rubbing food against a grater to create small, shredded pieces.



Cooking techniques

Boiling

Water is heated on a hob, so it moves vigorously and bubbles burst and roll on the surface. This method is used for cooking potatoes and pasta.



Steaming

The steam from boiling water rises and cooks food held above the water by a perforated pan. This method is used for cooking fish and vegetables.



Sautéing

A small amount of butter or oil is used in a shallow pan over high heat to fry vegetables or meat until brown.



Glossary

carbon footprint The total amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere by an individual or organisation.

food hygiene The conditions necessary to ensure safe handling of foods to avoid the spread of bacteria.

