

Eat Seasonably to Save Our Health and Planet

— Wisdom in Traditional Chinese Culture

What is the biggest environmental concern facing our planet today? You may be thinking pollution or car emissions, but you'd be wrong. The actual culprit is something you contribute to every single day.

Food waste is now the number one environmental concern. Many studies have shown that unless we change our habits, this trend will continue to grow.

According to market research company Good Business Sense (GBS), Australian shoppers are buying plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. GBS' 2014 national survey found that most shoppers fill at least 50 percent of their grocery baskets with this seasonal food - that is, foods that are fresh locally that time of year. However the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) reveals that only 7 percent of Australians are eating the recommended daily intake of vegetables. There is a great discrepancy between those two numbers. Where is the rest of those vegetables going? Most of them end up in the bin, rather than our stomachs.

"Perhaps this explains that 40 percent of the average Australian household bin is made up of food," says Roze. "Food wastage is a fast becoming a major problem globally, and it seems education in how to incorporate seasonal food into our diets will really help solve this problem."

One place we can look for help is traditional Chinese culture where harmony lies at the core, encompassing the fundamental principles of nature, society and humanity. Therefore, it's not surprising that when it comes to eating, the Chinese diet is focused on maintaining the balance of the seasons and is based on time and nature.

The Chinese healthy diet focuses on balanced meals - based largely on eating whole foods, foods from natural sources (not chemically preserved), a variety of foods, ideal food portions (in moderation), and food in balance with one's body constitution. Not only will this decrease food wastage, but it will also help you avoid many health problems. Through this ideology, it is easy to see how the Chinese culture has thrived since ancient times.

At Yummy Times we embrace this same philosophy. Without making any other changes, just eating seasonably can reduce a large portion of food wastage. Out-of-season foods (like tomatoes in winter, for instance) have to be grown in

artificial conditions, or grown far away, picked prematurely before they are ripe and transported long distances to get to local shops. The tomatoes would have been kept in cold storage, which uses extra energy and resources. Now we're using up gas, energy, money, and time just to eat foods which aren't even fresh or rich in vitamins anymore. If we would just wait a few months, we can easily eat them again when they're back in season. And foods always taste better when they're fresh! So why bother with all this waste for subpar fruits and vegetables?

Do yourself and the planet a favour. Eat seasonably.

What are in season for Autumn

Autumn is an exciting time for fresh produce. The treats that need a long ripening time over the warmer months are at their best early in the season. Tomatoes are sweet and still plentiful, available in varied colours and sizes from mini to massive. Pumpkins are ready and eggplants are a bargain.

Bountiful beans, carrots, sweet corn, potatoes, zucchinis, capsicum, celery, lettuce, onions, peas, white turnips bring the colour of the season to our table.

As the season builds, rains trigger wild mushrooms such as pine mushrooms, porcini and slippery Jacks to sprout. A dish of wild mushrooms serves a tasty reminder of seasonality.

Cooler weather brings on celeriac, horseradish, fennel and brussels sprouts. This is also the season for nuts. Cooks are spoiled by fresh walnuts, almonds, pistachio, pecans, macadamias and chestnuts. With a soft, crumbly texture and an earthy sweetness, chestnuts can be eaten in main dishes, sides or desserts, or simply as a snack.

Autumn's fruit basket is varied and delicious. Apples are at their fresh best in Autumn. The harvest starts in mid to late summer with royal galas, and continues until the last sundowners are picked in May. Pears are also at their peak, with a variety of flavour options, from the soft, golden-hued Williams, to the firmer beurre bosc, and the bumpy yet flavourful packhams.

While we begin to lose access to apricots, peaches and plums, grapes are still good and local pomegranates, kiwifruits, figs and persimmon appear to take the reign.

Recommended Recipe for March

Sweet Stuffed Baked Apples (serves 6)

This dessert doesn't require anything unnatural and the flavours blend together to create a taste sensation so good you'll be wanting seconds, thirds and fourths! It's healthy and can be made to be as sweet as you like.

Ingredients

- 18 apples (washed) - note, the apples should not be too firm (use red or green apples)
- 2 cup walnuts
- 2 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 4 tablespoons honey (can be varied depending on how sweet you want it)
- 4 tablespoons butter

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C fan forced.
2. Using an apple corer, remove the core of the apple - making a 3-4cm opening at the top - leave the apple whole.
3. Crush the walnuts; then add the cinnamon, honey, and melted butter. Mix until well combined for the stuffing.
4. Spoon stuffing into centre of apples, place in a deep baking dish, and add a small amount of water.
5. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the apple is tender and serve warm.

Great when served with custard.



About Yummy Time



As an advocate for healthy and fresh lifestyle, Yummy Times is dedicated to helping businesses and community to benefit from healthy eating by following the season of nature.