



Principle 9 - In-Season Principle

There was a time when we were more connected to the land and there was only one way to eat because what was in season was the food that was available. Now we can purchase foods that are grown far away and have been processed to make them capable of being shipped great distances and stored for many months to reduce waste. This raises a very big problem. They are not in-season and they are not local to our area.

Why does in-season matter? Nutrition is at its peak when a food is picked perfectly ripe and eaten that very moment. Perhaps you have noticed how much better a fresh tomato tastes than one from the store or how sweet and delicious a piece of fruit is that you harvest ripe off the tree and eat right now.

I grew up as a farmer's son. Our family was large and we ate out of a large garden. I loved walking through the garden and picking peas from the vine in the spring or a tomato or cucumber or pepper in the summer. I would eat them immediately. Nothing is better than a ripe apple straight from the tree in the fall. Eating it in the tree swinging upside down from a branch is the best. And digging carrots from the ground in the winter when they are sweet and crisp is heavenly.

Books have been written on this principle and may be worth your read. I will make just a few relevant points.

Less shipping means less fuel burned and less pollution of our earth. Eating local and in season also ensures you are getting what is needed in your climate. An Eskimo would not be healthy eating tropical fruits and the opposite is also true, an islander is not healthy eating the fat and meat diet of an Eskimo.

Eating in-season helps our body get what it needs for optimal well-being during that season.

Spring - This is a time for cleaning out the winter stories from the body. I remember my mother picking dandelion greens to make salads in the early spring. It turns out they are wonderful nutrition and also a powerful liver cleanser. The berries that grow in the spring are also cleansing. Properly planted you can eat asparagus, cabbage, kale, mustard greens, and radishes through spring, summer and fall.

Summer - The heat of summer means our bodies need lighter food that helps our body stay cool. In summer, we need a higher water content in our food, so the fresh fruits and vegetables such as peaches, tomatoes, peppers, and melons provide high nutrient value with higher water content.

Fall - In the fall, our body is preparing to deal with the cold of winter. We need higher nutrient value, but also more calories to help us maintain our body temperature when it is cold. Root vegetables, and fruits that are easily stored, such as apples, are perfect to help us be healthy at this time of year and prepare for the winter cold.

Winter - In most of the non-equatorial countries, winter is much colder, and even in some places, frigid! It is good to have the root vegetables stored from fall, as well as some nuts and seeds that provide a good source of fat that were harvested and put away for the winter.

If you can grow some or all of your own food you also get the benefit of knowing that you have used no chemicals, you get the benefit of being out in the sunshine and fresh air and you are eating in season.

In the next principle, we will learn that food is medicine.