

Balancing Healthy Lifestyles

Yoga & Spa

Summer 2010



The Bar Method
Jessica Prasse

**Tranquil
Garden Spas**

Men on the Mat
Featuring
St. Louis Blues
Erik Johnson

Seasonal Eating

RELAX
Top 5 Ways



Seasonal Eating at it's Best

by Maya F. Bradstreet

Summer is upon us, full throttle! Before we knew what hit us, temperatures increased, school let out, camps and activities got going...

Perhaps you are outside more: at the pool, the park or in the garden? More than likely, you are indoors with your air conditioners cranking.

Throughout all of these changes, have you been in touch with your body's response to them? Are you aware of how the added sunlight, fresh air, and heat - or even the cold blasting from the AC - have affected how you operate? Have you paid attention to your cravings or ailments, all of which are signals letting you know what you require in terms of food and fuel? Rather than resist the natural shifts our bodies go through from season to season, we do ourselves a service if we notice our surroundings. By being in tune with the weather, the local foods available to us, and our reactions to them, we can truly feel our best. Let's take a look at what "eating seasonally" really means, and why it is important.

Changing Seasons, Changing Bodies

Our body is a product of our environment. We have different mindsets and needs depending on whether it's the stressful holiday season versus the middle of a hot summer. We experience varied degrees of thirst, and hunger for particular foods as a direct result. Case in point: how often do you crave hot chocolate or a piping bowl of oatmeal in the middle of August? If you do, or if you are feeling out of sorts, your body may be trying to tell you something. Rather than resist these messages,

it is important to adequately listen to them and to understand what it is we truly want.

Just like the earth, our body is in a constant state of flux. Therefore we must respond appropriately with dietary choices that can best support these transitions. Luckily for us, nature has already made it easy: that which is 'local' and 'in season' is intrinsically full of the nutrients needed for exactly that particular moment in time. In the fall, the bountiful harvest of root vegetables, apples and corn fills us up and grounds us for the approaching winter. During the following months when daylight hours are at their shortest, we nourish ourselves with warmer and heavier foods. And, come spring, we want to lighten up with the greens and shoots abundantly available as the soil wakes up from its slumber. As we approach the longest day of the year, our nutritional needs shift once again...

Summer Nutrition Tips

Summer is synonymous with daylight, heat, and growth. In order to sustain our increased activity levels and to deal with the extremes of the season, consider these guidelines:

- Eat more produce; the earth is now in its prime, growing an abundance of delicious fruits, vegetables and herbs. Foods naturally high in water content such as melons, berries, cucumbers, and tomatoes keep us cool and hydrated.
- Play around with spice! Hot peppers, garlic and herbs (think mint, basil) actually help keep our body temperature regulated.



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- Minimize 'heavy' foods. By keeping your proportion of fried foods, dairy, meats and even complex carbs smaller (in comparison to raw), your digestive system won't be as taxed, and you will feel lighter, more energetic.
- How we prepare our food is equally important. Eating meals raw, room-temp or cold are truly appealing, not to mention cooling. Chilled soups like gazpacho, frozen desserts, minty cocktails...are all refreshing in their own right. They just wouldn't have the same affect or taste right during the holidays now would they?

Discovering New Tastes: Summer Foods to Add to your Shopping Basket

I consistently urge clients to try something new (preferably produce) every single time they go to the supermarket or farmer's market. The latter is a place where you can certainly find varieties and heirlooms full of unique flavors and nutrients. Really and truly, you risk very little. You may indeed be short a few dollars if the ingredient doesn't end up appealing to your taste buds. However, you may be surprised and discover a new, fantastic appreciation and desire for this once unknown fruit or vegetable. Here are some of my favorites:

Japanese Eggplant – White and purple variegated, they are more slender, less seedy and not as bitter as the average store-bought eggplant. They don't require as much cooking time, and almost melt in your mouth with their sweetness.

Heirloom Tomatoes – They may not be as pretty and perfectly round as those hydroponic red spheres at the grocery store, but the flavor they impart is unlike anything your tastebuds have ever tried. At once juicy and satiating, the rainbow hues of tomato are amazing anyway you chop, slice and dice them – not to mention saute, stew or broil them. My favorite way to eat them is raw, like an apple, maybe sprinkled with some sea salt.

Pattypans – These flying-saucer-looking squashes are sweeter and more tender than their traditional counterparts. Roasted, steamed or sautéed, they are as delicious as they are delicate.

Okra – Not just to be enjoyed in a gumbo, these beautiful, ever-so-slightly slimy green veggies are filling and differently delectable. Seasoned simply with salt, steam or sauté them whole with garlic and olive oil.

SIMPLE SUMMER RECIPES MAKING THE BEST OF SEASONAL LOCAL PRODUCE

Ratatouille

4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 large yellow or Vidalia onion,
chopped into 1 inch chunks

1 medium eggplant, chopped
into 1 inch chunks
2 bell peppers, any color, chopped
into 1 inch chunks
2 medium zucchinis or summer squashes,
chopped into 1 inch chunks
3 large tomatoes chopped, or
2 cups cherry tomatoes
½ cup coarsely chopped basil
½ cup coarsely chopped parsley
Sea salt & ground black pepper to taste
Red pepper flakes optional

Add olive oil to hot sauce pan and sauté garlic & onion (and red pepper flakes if using) over medium high heat. Add eggplant and sauté, adding more oil if necessary. Season with salt & pepper. After about 5 minutes or when eggplant becomes soft, add remaining vegetables and re-season. Cover, but stir occasionally for 5-10 minutes. Turn off heat and add basil, parsley.

Very Berry Rice Pudding

1 quart berries of choice: blueberries, raspberries, blackberries
½ cup raw (local) honey, plus 2 tbsp
1/8 cup water
1 cup coconut milk
1 cup rice milk (variations: almond milk or water)
1 tsp vanilla, optional
6 tbsp Arborio rice

Dissolve ½ cup honey with 1/8 cup water in small pot, and bring to gentle boil. Reduce heat, add vanilla and half the berries. Simmer for 10-15 minutes. Cool.

In a separate pot, bring coconut and rice milk to boil. Add Arborio rice, lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes, or until rice is cooked but still al dente. Stir in remaining 2 tbsp sweetener. Cool.

Stir in remaining fresh berries and cooled berry mixture to rice pudding. Serve as is or with more berries on top. Y&S

Maya F. Bradstreet, MS HHC founded A Recipe for Wellness, llc as a way to inspire & promote well-being in others through food choices. She teaches cooking classes and leads seminars in a variety of settings throughout the St. Louis Area, and works privately with clients around nutrition. A graduate of Brown University, she received her food and nutrition training at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York City, and a Masters degree in Health Promotion from Indiana University. She is a holistic health coach certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. You can contact her with any food and health-related questions at maya@arecipe4wellness.com