

Eating with the Seasons

by Inna Shapkina

Summer is almost over, and here we are enjoying its last delicious gifts – fresh crispy apples, sweet corn and beautiful warm sunny days.

Growing up in the Ukraine, where fresh fruits and vegetables were available only in season, I remember so eagerly anticipating summer. It gave us a very short-lived season of delicious strawberries, followed by decadently sweet cherries that tempted us from our perches in the trees until we picked the last mouth-watering specimens. Just a few weeks later, the first crop of apples signaled the onset of autumn.

A pleasant surprise of coming to the United States was the abundance and availability of every possible fruit and vegetable you can dream of. Disappointed by how distasteful most of the produce was, I continued thinking that we are still very lucky to have all that available to us. Not until I was immersed in my professional studies that I realized there is a price we pay for this luxury and convenience.

The human body was designed to ingest real food. Anything other than that causes it to riot and ultimately leads to disease. Similarly, eating foods out of season can take a toll on our well-being. There is a reason nature provides certain foods at a particular time of the year.

In his book *The 3-Season Diet*, Dr. J. Douillard notes that sprouts, greens and bitter roots all come in the spring. They have the ability to break up mucus that we accumulate during the winter while eating heavy, fatty foods to keep us warm. Greens also aid in liver cleansing, a much needed task since our livers get overworked from processing heavy winter foods and are in dire need for detoxification. Summer provides us with plenty of cooling fruits and vegetables to help lower the body temperature. This is the time when the days are longer and we typically use more calories and are most active. High in carbohydrates, the fruits and veggies so abundant in the summer will provide us with the energy we need. In the winter, when our bodies are most cold and dry, they naturally crave heavier foods – nuts, oils, soups and stews, meat, and sweet veggies like winter squash and beets for comfort and to calm the body. Working with thousands of patients, Dr. Douillard was able to help restore their health by simply tuning their bodies to their own wisdom and the wisdom of seasons, this realignment resulting in restoration of overall health.

Our ancestors lived without epidemics of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Although they were unaware of such things as nutritional science, calories and carbohydrates, and never went on any diets, they lived in harmony with nature and lived their lives mostly free of chronic diseases. Isn't that food for thought? They breathed fresh air, ate real food and did so in accordance with seasons.

What else do we gain from eating fresh, seasonal, locally cultivated food? We get the best possible quality nutrition while also keeping our planet cleaner. By the time food is transported to us from hundreds or thousands of miles away, it loses much of its nutritional value. In addition, it must be sprayed with sulfites and other chemicals to give the appearance but not the taste or nutritional value of ripe produce. This generates more toxins for our immune system to deal with and more pollutants for our water and air which ultimately end up in our bodies, again causing good health to give way to disease. All of this plus the environmental and economic costs of burning all the gasoline to fly

apples or lamb from New Zealand to New York exposes the illogic of our modern food system and its devastating effects.

Frequently we like to challenge the wisdom of nature and try to outsmart it thinking that it will put us further on the road of civilization and progress and improve the quality of our lives. Too often we find out later that we actually harm ourselves more by doing so, because nature has already designed and orchestrated everything we need to function optimally on this planet. Following its laws and staying in sync with our environment is sometimes all we need to keep our bodies in balance and maintain well-being while respecting our planet at the same time.

Summer is coming to an end, and I am looking forward to my fresh apples from the local orchards. What about you?

Inna Shapkina is a Certified Holistic Health Counselor with accreditation from the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. She counsels young women who want to improve their health by addressing their digestive and skin concerns via the most sensible approach by working with their diet and lifestyle. She is a member of the Forest Hills CSA.

To contact Inna, please visit www.WellnessWithInna.com