

Topic: Calendars

Eating with the Seasons
by Liz Gibbons

I have been adjusting my eating habits the last few months to eating more in tune with the seasons. I eat differently in the winter and summer to a great degree, but I still need to add more cooling foods in summer and some cleansing foods in the spring. About two years ago I learned of Dr. John Douillard, an Ayurvedic practitioner in Boulder. Several years ago he wrote a book, *The 3-Season Diet*. On his website he offers a monthly grocery list of foods in season plus recipes and other pertinent information related to that month. He suggests you adjust the list to take into account your own individual body needs. I registered to receive the monthly list, bought his book, and sort of followed it for awhile. In July when the monthly download arrived I looked at his 3-season diet plan more deeply, and it made perfect sense.

You may think his book title is strange as there are four seasons in a calendar year. The seasons he is referring to are the three growing seasons and their subsequent harvests. The first harvest in the spring is mainly sprouts, bitter greens, and roots such as garlic, onion, golden seal, burdock root, chicory, and echinacea. Most of us have stopped eating many of these roots. After a winter of eating heavy foods, nature provides these low-fat and highly alkaline foods as a way to flush out toxins that tend to overtax our liver. These foods cleanse the body of any residue left from the fat and protein we ate during the long winter. This is a low-fat, low-calorie diet.

Summer harvest provides an abundance of fruits and vegetables. Summer days are longer and our body needs more energy, so nature provides a high-carb diet for boundless energy. Summer foods have a cooling nature to counteract summer's heat. Then comes the autumn harvest with root vegetables, grains, and nuts to see us through the cold winter months. The winter months are more of a high-protein diet.

When we were an agricultural society people ate more naturally, partaking of the foods available in different seasons. Now we see various kinds of diets recommended. One will be popular for awhile and then be replaced by another diet craze. Dr. Douillard observes that most of these diets can be categorized as low-fat, high-carb or high-protein. In other words each diet is similar to one of his seasonal diets, but if eaten year round may miss certain necessary nutrients. He says the best research lab is nature that has been successfully feeding humanity for eons.

Dr. Douillard further says we have not only lost sight of what to eat but also when to eat. In France, Italy, Spain, and many parts of the world the big meal of the day is eaten at noon. This is when our digestive fire is stronger and works more efficiently. People in those cultures eat this big meal in a relaxed and unhurried manner. I have switched to having my biggest meal at noon. It has meant an adjustment in my daily activities in order to take time to prepare more food in the morning. If the meal is large enough it carries me through the afternoon. Then all I need for supper is something simple such as a bowl of soup and a small salad. I particularly find eating a larger meal at noon and less toward evening helps me sleep better at night.