

Fun Fact of the Week

Top Hydrating Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables for Summer*



Summer is a time for enjoying delicious fruits and vegetables that are not always available year round. A healthy diet consists of seasonal produce that not only tastes great, but also helps to keep us hydrated during the warmer months.

Take a stroll through your local farmer's market and see the wonderful offerings on display, many of them organic and most of them locally grown. Fresh peaches, plums, cucumbers, summer squashes, cherries, and strawberries await, to be enjoyed as a snack or as part of a refreshing meal.

Why Buy Seasonal?

I love that when I buy summer produce at my neighborhood market, the food has usually travelled a short distance to get to my plate. Nearby farmers most often come from less than 100 miles away to sell their goods to eager patrons.

Buying seasonal means that you're choosing to eat fruits and vegetables that are native to a specific area. Seasonal foods thrive in conditions where the climate is most perfect and appropriate for that particular species. Therefore, these foods are nutritionally ideal and flavorfully robust.

Would you rather enjoy a beautiful, organic heirloom tomato that grew naturally, from the Earth's rich bounty of soil and sun? Or, one that was genetically produced across the country, sprayed with pesticides to keep bugs away, and harvested early so that it would not spoil on the way to the grocer?

Produce loses its nutrients once picked. That's why it's imperative to shop for goodies that are grown in your hometown, and possibly gathered just hours prior to consuming. Fruit that is too ripe has a higher sugar content, and if it's not ripe enough it doesn't contain the abundant amounts of beneficial vitamins and minerals that are inherent when chosen in its prime.

Summer's Best Hydrating Foods

It thrills me to think about all of the wonderful dishes and cool drinks I'll make with what I take home from the market. For those of you who live in cities without a farmers' market, stop into health food store or cooperative, or inquire about direct purchasing produce directly from farms in your area. Don't be shy about asking each vendor about their growing practices, what chemicals may be used on their crops, and when the fruits and vegetables were harvested.

Choose one or a few of these hydrating summer foods, and prepare a decadent salad, smoothie, or raw food entrée that will feed your body and your spirit!

- **Cucumbers** – Cucumbers taste great raw, sliced thin and dipped in vegan ranch dressing or hummus. They are made of mostly water and are one of the best foods to hydrate the body. You can even float them in some filtered water for a unique, refreshing drink.

- **Watermelon** – Again, this fruit is mostly water. I love a huge slice of watermelon, but it's also fun to blend it with ice and a little coconut palm sugar, and make a frozen granita for a light dessert. Watermelons contain essential hydrating salts, calcium, magnesium, and potassium.
- **Cabbage** – Cabbage has tons of Vitamin C, and is packed with fiber. This summer vegetable is rich in natural probiotics, which help to keep the digestive system working efficiently.
- **Lettuce** – Most lettuces are about 90% water. I adore a spicy mix, or a mesclun salad, which are filled with a nice blend of the best lettuces and herbs of summer.
- **Tomatoes** – Heirloom tomatoes are those that are cultivated for more than 50 years, and come from some of the most dynamic plants. Growers save the top-quality seeds, which then produce incredibly colorful tomatoes of all shapes and sizes. Tomatoes ripen on the vine, so be sure to purchase those that flourish locally.
- **Berries** – Raspberries, blueberries and strawberries are at their peak during the summer. These super fruits are chock full of antioxidants and Vitamin C, and are great for detoxing the entire body. Who doesn't like to munch on a basket of fresh, sweet berries as a pre-meal snack? One of my favorite ways to eat berries is for breakfast or dessert, as a parfait with a little non-dairy yogurt.
- **Figs** – These summer beauties taste so indulgent on coconut milk ice cream, or mixed in a shake or smoothie. Make a fig chutney, with some medijool dates, and enjoy it on whole grain crackers as a potassium and fiber filled treat.
- **Cherries** – Cherries have more antioxidants and Vitamin C than almost any food on the planet. Rainier cherries are so flavorful, with their candy-like yellow flesh cut open and placed on a salad or just eaten plain.
- **Grapes** – These hydrating balls of goodness are known for their extremely high content of Resveratrol, a substance that acts as an antioxidant and is heart-friendly. Take your pick from green, red, black, and purple, and revel in one of summer's most delicious fruits.
- **Carrots** – Many people don't realize that carrots are almost all water. Summer offers some the tastiest carrots, surprisingly grown in more colors than just orange, such as yellow and green. Carrots are natural sources of beta-carotene.

Shop nature's supermarket this summer, filling your basket with fruits and vegetables that fight premature aging and combat disease. Your body and taste buds will thank you.

* <https://renewedlivinginc.com/2012/08/28/top-hydrating-seasonal-fruits-and-vegetables-for-summer/>