

Eating local and seasonal

By Ellie Stonestreet

What the Covid-19 crisis has taught us is that in times of need we rely on the essentials and other things that we often take for granted such as popping to the shops for an ingredient become more challenging. In my case, I felt an urge to support independent stores, to buy local and try to avoid very busy supermarkets. There are many benefits to buying food locally and eating seasonally which have been outlined below.

Reduced environmental impact

This may seem like an obvious one but if you are shopping locally and lucky to be close enough to walk or cycle to your local store this saves on carbon emissions compared to driving somewhere to pick up shopping. However, the main way to reduce your environmental impact when food shopping is to buy food that is in season to reduce the miles your food has travelled. There is a good seasonality chart [here](#) from the BBC which will help you make decisions about what food we should be eating at which time of the year.



British Strawberries from a local farm shop (excuse the plastic- it was recycled!)

Supporting the local economy

Did you know 70% of the UK is farmland? Buying food seasonally has a positive impact on British farmers, especially small-scale farms.

Costs less

When produce is out of season in your area, it will either be grown in managed conditions or transported long distances to get to you, which comes at a price. The price of this can be passed onto you the consumer, so eating seasonally means produce is grown naturally and easily transported to where you purchase food from.

Better deal or good advice

Local market stall owners or independent shop owners may be able to negotiate prices and provide recommendations to suit your needs.

Tastes better

As food travelling out of season is often picked before it is ready it has not reached full flavour yet and it is a lot less fresh.

Opportunity to try new things

Eating locally gives you a chance to try foods you may not have considered before. Get creative with ingredients and try out some new recipes.

Tips:

Forage

This tip may not be appropriate for everyone, but during lockdown I found myself taking more time in nature. While elderflower was in season, I made elderflower cordial out of elderflower heads that I found locally. Also, now blackberries have come into season, they are great to pick up on walks. A beginners guide to foraging from the BBC [here](#).

Pick your own

Picking your own food is a fun activity and means you know exactly where your food is coming from. Time Out article [here](#) about the best pick your own farms in and around London.

Grow your own

There is no food more local than growing it in your own garden or windowsill! Read our gardening tips with Regent Street's gardener Jo Ryan on our website.



Making elderflower cordial