

When Food is in Season

Knowing the time of year and its relationship to what foodstuffs are in season is vital in the living historian's portrayal. Whether the impression is that of an American farmer, grocer or consumer, it is always good to know what would be on the table for the time of year portrayed.

This article is from my family's recipe book pg. 433-436 this book has been with my family circa mid 1860's to the early 1870)

Apples are in season all year and are cheapest from August until spring
Artichokes (Jerusalem) are ready for use in September
Asparagus from the first of May until the middle of June
Bass, of which there are a dozen varieties at all times of year
Beans, string, June to November, Lima from July throughout the year
Beef is good at all seasons of the year
Beets from June through the year
Blackberries from July to September
Blue Fish, a popular sea coast fish from June to September
Brant, a choice wild fowl, April and May, September and October
Bream, a fish sometimes known as Dace, in winter months
Broccoli, a kind of cabbage, from September to November
Buckwheat cakes in cold weather
Butternuts ripen in September
Cabbage, May and June. lasts throughout the winter
Carrots from the South, in May and last until November
Cauliflower, from June until spring
Celery from August until April, but is better after being touched by frost
Checkerberry in winter and spring
Cheese all the year round
Cherries from the South in May and continue till August
Chestnuts after the first severe frost
Chocolate is best in cold weather on account of its richness
Chub a fresh water fish, in fall and winter
Clams from May until September
Conger eels from November to April
Corn green, from June to September
Crabs from June to January, but are more wholesome in cold months
Cranberries from September until April
Cucumbers in the South, April (in the middle states) June to November
Currants, green, June to July ripe July to August
Damsons a small black plumb, July to December
Doves, the turtle, one of the best games birds in August and September
Ducks, domestic, are best in June and July. Wild in spring and fall
Eels April to November
Eggs are always in season but are cheap in spring and high in winter
Elderberries August and September
Fish as a rule are in the best condition just before spawning
Geese wild, from October to December; tame at four months old
Gooseberries from June to September
Grapes from September till winter
Guinea fowl, best in winter when they take the place of Partridges
Haddock from November till December and June and July
Halibut in season all the year

Herring in season all year
Herring from February to May
Herbs for seasoning should be gathered just as they begin to flower
Horseradish is always in season
Lamb in March but from June to August is best as well as the cheapest
Lemons arrive fresh from the West Indies in winter
Lobsters are plentiful in market except winter months
Mackerel from May through the summer
Mushrooms are most plentiful in August and September
Muskmelons from July to the middle of September
Mutton is in season all the year but is not so good in the fall, the meat being drier and strong flavored
Onions, new, from the South in June and those of home raising in the middle states the middle of July
Oranges from Florida and the West Indies are in market from October until April
Oysters are in season from September until May; May, June, and July being the spawning months
Partridges, pheasants or ruffed grouse are in season in most markets from September to January
Pawpaws are ripe about the middle of September
Peas, green, from the Bermuda's about May 1st from the South May 15, home grown in the mid states about June 15
Peaches come from the Bermuda's in May; from the South July 1st; plenty in market from August to November
Pears which are best for eating are in season from August to October
Pickerel is best from September to March
Pigeons wild are plentiful in September and October
Pork should never be eaten in warm weather
Potatoes new arrive from the Bermuda's about April; From the South June to August
Potatoes sweet are in season from August to December after which they lose their flavor
Prairie chickens are in season from August to October
Prunes arrive fresh from December to May
Pumpkins are in season from September to January
Quail (Partridge in the South) from November and December
Quinces are in season from October to December
Rabbits are in the best condition in November, but are in season from September till January
Radishes are in season from April till cold weather
Rail an excellent little game bird is best in September and October
Raspberries are in market from the middle of June till September
Reed birds are best in September and October
Rhubarb from April to September.
Salmon from March till September
Shad appear in the market from February 20 to June
Smelts are abundant from October to April
Snipe are in market from March 20 to April 20, and again in October
Spinach is the earliest vegetable used for greens and is continued through the season
Squash, summer, from June to August: winter from August through winter
Strawberries from the South appear as early as April 1, but are not plentiful until June and the season is over in July
Sturgeon from April I to September
Suckers from October to April
Tomatoes are not plentiful in northern markets until June
Trout, brook, are in season from March till August; lake trout from October till March
Mackinaw trout in the winter months
Turkeys are best in fall and winter, though in market at all seasons
Turnips, new, are in market about June 1, and last through the year
Turtles are in market from May to winter
Veal is in season except in hot weather, when it keeps badly
Venison buck is best from August to November, doe, from November to January
Watermelons are in season from July to October
Woodcock is in season from July to November, but is best in October.