

Caruthers seasonal news



The majority of the UK population grow up in urban areas, with little or no awareness of when and where various foods are produced. Imports from around the world ensure that supermarket shelves look the same week in week out. We at Caruthers aim to promote an understanding of food seasons. Each month we will focus on the fruit and/or Veg, which is currently in season, and share enlightening facts, useful tips and enticing recipe ideas picked from the web and our favourite publications. When a food is in season its quality can vary dramatically. Food produced locally, e.g. bought from a farmers' market, is likely to be a lot

fresher than its supermarket equivalent. Each fruit or vegetable has a prime time when it's at its seasonal best. Some are great for over half of the year; others only hit their peak for a month. Sometimes in the UK we eat/use fruit and vegetables linked to seasonal traditions. A prime example of this is the pumpkin which is primarily grown in America yet there are increasingly more home grown producers of pumpkins. With Halloween at the end of October we have a simple guide to making a pumpkin lantern and a delicious recipe for pumpkin soup.

So what's in season this month!

September/October



Other Seasonal fruit and veg in October

Aubergine, Beetroot, Butternut, squash, Chicory, Fig
Elderberries, Fennel, Globe artichoke, Pear, Plum, Radish
Raspberry, Rocket, Sweetcorn, Watercress, Apple, Cabbage
Celeriac, Kale, Pumpkin, Sloe, Swede, Swiss chard
Wild mushrooms.

Eat greener

Thanks to its fertile and rich land, Britain has a reputation for producing some of the finest quality food in the world. From tender lamb in spring and fresh summer berries to autumnal game meats and winter's seafood harvest, there are plenty of seasonal dishes to enjoy.

Many root vegetables such as parsnips, squash and turnips come in to season in September, October and November ensuring that heart-warming soups become a firm fixture on menus.

Autumnal fruits include apples and elderberries, as well as damsons, pears and plums which are often used in warm crumbles and stewed puddings.

By choosing food in season you are choosing the greener option as well as a tastier and more nutritious meal. Food that's been grown at the right time of year is bursting with flavour. Eating greener is a great way to help achieve a balanced diet that includes '5 a day'

of fruit and veg. So eating greener can also make for a healthier way of life as well as well as better for the environment if you chose locally grown produce.

5 a day

If we eat well, we feel better too. Getting a good balance of the five main food groups can help to maintain a healthy weight and stay fighting fit. Fruit and vegetable are one the most important food groups.

Current recommendations are that everyone should eat at least 5 portions of a variety fruit and vegetables each day, to reduce the risks of cancer and coronary heart disease and many other chronic diseases.

It has been estimated that eating at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day could reduce the risk of deaths from chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer by up to 20%.

Healthy Tip

Encourage children to have a least 3 of their 5 a day in their lunch box to eat between 9am and 3pm.
Eg. Apple, carrot sticks, lettuce and tomato in their sandwich/wrap, fruit flakes, fruit salad!

October - Time for Halloween



How and when did Halloween originate?

According to the best available evidence, Halloween originated as a Catholic vigil observed on the eve of All Saints Day, November 1, in the early Middle Ages.

It's roots can be traced even further back in time to a pagan festival of ancient Ireland known as Samhain. The prehistoric observance is said to have marked the end of summer and the onset of winter, and was celebrated with feasting, bonfires, sacrificial offerings, and homage to the dead.

Pumpkins

Pumpkins are the most famous of all the winter squashes, and are most associated with Halloween lanterns. Inside the hard orange or yellow skin, the bright orange flesh is sweet and honied. They are a particularly good source of fibre, as well as a range of vitamins and minerals.

British season runs from October to December. If you are unable to get british grown pumpkin then the traditional Scottish lantern was made out of a turnip. These lanterns represented the spirits of the dead and are the origin of the pumpkin lanterns that are now part of the Halloween festivities. The use of a pumpkin stems from when the tradition passed to America, where pumpkins were available, and, easier to carve out than turnips. One theory is that the tradition was adopted in America from the Irish immigration population in 19th Century.

How To Carve A Pumpkin

1. Choose a large pumpkin and use a sharp serrated knife to cut off the crown.



2. Using a large serving spoon, scoop out the seeds and fibres and discard. Then remove some of the flesh.



3. With a marker pen, draw a simple outline of a face on the pumpkin. Use a small serrated knife to cut out

the eyes, nose and mouth. Always cut away from you



in case the knife slips.

4. Pop a tea light inside the pumpkin, light it and replace the crown.



Pumpkin Soup



This velvety pumpkin soup recipe is great for Bonfire Night - it's served with a splash of sherry in a hollowed-out pumpkin.

Ingredients

1 x 4kg/8lb 13oz pumpkin
125g/4oz butter
2 medium onions, peeled, finely chopped
1 cinnamon stick
freshly grated nutmeg
salt and freshly ground black pepper
1.7 litres/3 pints chicken stock (vegetarians may substitute vegetable stock)
3 tablespoons sherry

Preparation method

Cut the top off the pumpkin and set aside. Scoop out the seeds and fibres from the middle and discard.

Using a sharp knife and a spoon, carefully hollow out the pumpkin, removing the flesh and setting aside. (It is imperative that you do not cut right up to the inside of the skin or pierce it. Leave 2cm/1in of flesh all around the inside.)

Roughly chop the scooped-out pumpkin flesh.

Melt the butter in a large pan with a lid over a low heat and add the onions. Cook the onions gently for 10-15 minutes, until they are softened and golden-brown.

Add the pumpkin flesh, the cinnamon and nutmeg, and season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Increase the heat to medium and cover with the lid. Cook for 40-45 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent the base from burning, until the pumpkin is cooked through.

Add the stock and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Transfer the soup to a food processor in batches and blend until smooth.

Return the soup to the pan and bring to a low simmer and cook for a further half an hour.

Forty-five minutes before eating, preheat the oven to 170C/335F/Gas 3.

Pour the soup into the hollow pumpkin shell, add the sherry and stir to combine.

Place the reserved pumpkin 'lid' onto the pumpkin and place onto a large baking tray. Cook in the oven for

about 45 minutes, to bring the soup up to temperature.

To serve, carefully remove from the oven and serve the soup in the pumpkin at the table. Ladle into bowls and serve.

Caruthers News

BUYING BRITISH IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Britain produces some of the best food and drink in the world.

Public sector procurers are not allowed under the European Treaty to restrict purchases to specific countries. However by specifying food that is seasonally available, buyers should be able to achieve value for money by buying in-season products at competitive prices without contravening EC rules.

The average proportion of British food used by Government departments, hospitals and schools is around 64%.

Heritage varieties are most likely to be sourced direct from a local farmer.

To source heritage potatoes contact Carroll's Heritage Potatoes Tel: 01890 883060; or see this link; or email - info@heritage-potatoes.co.uk.

To source heritage fruits contact Chief Guide Ted Hobday at Brogdale Horticultural Trust Tel: 01795 535286 option 5; or see this link; or email hobdayt@btconnect.com.

Asparagus Growers Association Tel: 01507 602 427; or see this link; or email - jayne.dyas@pvga.co.uk.

Bramley Apple Information Service Tel: 020 7808 9851; or see this link; or email - info@bramleyapples.co.uk.

British Tomato Growers Association Tel: 01243 554 859; or see this link; or email - tga@britishtomatoes.co.uk.

British Leafy Salads Association Tel: 01507 602 427; or see this link; or email - jayne.dyas@pvga.co.uk.

English Apples and Pears Tel: 01732 529781; or see this link; or email - info@englishapplesandpears.co.uk.

Leeks Growers' Association Tel: 01507 602 427; or see this link; or email - jayne.dyas@pvga.co.uk.

