

### **Menu Planning for January 2014**

#### **Plan for January:**

Full Moon – January 15<sup>th</sup>

- Known as the 'Old Moon' or Moon after Yule

- January 1<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Day
- January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Fruitcake Toss Day
- January 20<sup>th</sup> – Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

National Oatmeal Month

National Soup Month

- January 31<sup>st</sup> – Chinese New Year starts – Year of the Horse commences

#### **Plan ahead for February:**

Full Moon February 14<sup>th</sup>: called the Snow Moon or the Hunger Moon.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Groundhog Day</li> <li>• February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Super Bowl Sunday</li> <li>• February 14<sup>th</sup> – St. Valentine's Day (a Friday)</li> <li>• February 15<sup>th</sup> – Chinese New Year celebrations conclude</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February 17<sup>th</sup> – President's Day celebrated</li> <li>• National Grapefruit Month</li> <li>• Black History Month</li> </ul> |
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**New Year's Eve is a Tuesday night this year, New Year's Day is a Wednesday.**

*In January - citrus season is in full production, hothouse rhubarb begins and baby artichokes should peek through at the end of the month...*

Winter officially began on December 22<sup>nd</sup> and despite the incremental lengthening of each day we are smack dab in the middle of the darkest part of the year. There are some bright spots to remind us that flavor is available all around us – just not as readily available.

January is the month that hothouse rhubarb returns to the market to seduce us with rich, tart and ever-so-slightly sweet temptations. Baby artichokes should begin to reappear at the Farmer's market after their brief mid-winter gap and the larger chokes should be available but perhaps will be marketed as 'frost-kissed'. The hardy chicories and greens that provide our winter fiber and minerals are abundant and delicious. Winter squashes continue to provide beta-carotene to help us stay healthy through the next few months.

The biggest challenges with winter produce are weather and transportation. Most produce comes from California, Florida or what we call 'off-shore' - from Mexico, South and Central America. The added time required for shipping makes planning difficult and patience truly becomes a virtue. Another problematic factor to monitor is the weather, not only in harvest regions, but also in locales where trucks and planes are required to transport to – sunshine in California but snow in Montana or Wyoming often makes for a late – and over-chilled – delivery. Because there are such small harvest geographies in the winter, a regional frost can wipe out and impact the price of an entire crop of lettuce or citrus. Menus should be written with flexibility and orders should be placed knowing that markets and prices can change with a single storm front.

During the Chinese New Year (starts January 31<sup>st</sup>), serving a whole chicken symbolizes family togetherness. Noodles represent a long life; (an old superstition says that it's bad luck to cut them); clams and Spring Rolls symbolize wealth. Tangerines and oranges are freely shared during Chinese New Year as the words for tangerine and orange sound like luck and wealth, respectively. And Pomelos signify abundance because the Chinese word for pomelo sounds like the word meaning "to have". On Chinese New Year's Eve it is customary to serve a fish at the end of the evening meal, symbolizing a wish for abundance in the coming year. For added symbolism, the fish is served whole, with head and tail attached, symbolizing a good beginning and ending for the coming year.

In January – and all winter long - think about writing menus in a way that’s a little more open to variations on the item: winter squashes taste very similar; cooking greens can all be prepared with similar methods and results; root vegetable medleys are wonderful additions to most menus while keeping a lower cost base. The ‘soft’ herbs are generally less accessible too – expect to pay premiums for basil, tarragon, chervil and chives – because of their high water content and delicate structures, they are susceptible to frost and cold damage. The winter-hearty herbs are rosemary, thyme and some of the sages – all known as the ‘hard’ herbs. Use roasted tomatoes for an added depth of flavor and citrus juices can brighten up the earthy flavors that are available. Radishes make a wonderful addition to salads and spinach can be used with pears, roasted chanterelles and hedgehog mushrooms to create a delicious seasonal salad course.

Remember that the items in **BOLD** will prove to usually be better values as they are in their peak harvest period.

**Apples - Braeburn**

**Apples - Fuji**

**Apples - Gala**

**Apples - Lady**

Apricots - Chile

Artichokes

Asparagus

**Avocados – Calif.**

**Avocados – Imports**

**Baby Carrots w/ Tops**

**Baby Mixed Root Vegetables**

Baby Squash

Bananas

Beans - Dragon

Beans - French

Beans – Purple Wax

Beans – Yellow Wax

**Beets**

**Belgian Endive**

**Broccoli - Cheddar**

**Broccoli - Purple**

**Broccoli - Romanesque**

Broccoli Rabe

Broccolini

**Brussels Sprouts**

**Cabbage**

Cactus Leaves

**Cantaloupe – Off Shore**

**Cardoon**

Cauliflower

Celery

**Cherries - Chile**

**Chicory - Castelfranco**

**Chicory - Frisee**

**Chicory - Puntarella**

**Chicory - Treviso**

**Citrus – Bergamot orange**

**Citrus – Buddha’s Hand**

**Citrus – Cara Cara**

**Citrus – Finger Lime**

**Citrus – Kumquats**

**Citrus – Mandarin**

**Citrus – Meyer Lemon**

**Citrus – Pommelo**

**Citrus – Satsuma**

**Citrus – Seville Oranges**

**Citrus – Tangelo**

Cranberries

Eggplant

**Endive - Belgian**

**Grapefruit**

Grapes - Chile

Green Beans

**Greens - Beet**

**Greens - Kale**

**Honeydew – Off Shore**

**Kiwi**

Leeks

Lettuce-Baby (all)

Lettuce-Spring Mix

**Mangoes – Brazil**

Mushrooms - Chanterelle

**Nectarines - Chile**

**Onions – Spring Sweet**

**Oranges – Navel**

Papaya

**Parsnips**

**Peaches - Chile**

**Pears**

Peas

Persimmons - ending

Pineapple

**Plums - Chile**

**Potatoes - Sweet**

**Potatoes – Red**

**Potatoes – Yukon Gold**

Radicchio

**Radishes - Black**

**Radishes - Daikon**

**Radishes - Icicle**

**Radishes - Watermelon**

**Rhubarb - hothouse**

**Root - Burdock**

**Root - Celery**

**Root - Horseradish**

**Root - Lotus**

**Root - Parsley**

**Root - Taro**

**Root - Yucca**

**Rutabagas**

Shallots

Snow Peas

**Spinach**

**Spinach-Baby**

**Squash - Acorn**

**Squash - Butternut**

**Squash - Carnival**

**Squash - Delicata**

**Squash - Kabocha**

**Star Fruit**

Strawberries – Calif. new

Sugar Snap Peas

**Sun-dried Tomatoes**

**Turnips**