

Menu Planning for January 2015

Plan ahead for January:

Full Moon – January 5th

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

- January 1st – New Year's Day
- January 3rd – Fruitcake Toss Day

National Oatmeal Month

National Soup Month

- January 19th – Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

Plan ahead for February:

Full Moon February 3rd : called the Snow Moon or the Hunger Moon

- February 1st – Super Bowl Sunday
- February 2nd – Groundhog Day
- February 4th – Tu B'Shevat/ Tu B'Shevat
- February 14th – St. Valentine's Day (a Saturday)
- February 16th – President's Day (Monday)
- February 17th – Mardi Gras
- February 18th – Ash Wednesday
- February 19th – Chinese New Year commences, year of the Goat
- National Grapefruit Month
- Black History Month

New Year's Eve is a Wednesday night this year, New Year's Day is a Thursday.

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 22nd 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 New York 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.

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 and or smoked tomatoes for an added depth of flavor and citrus juices can brighten up the earthy root flavors that are available. Radishes (both tops and bottoms) make a wonderful addition to salads and spinach and arugula can be used with pears, roasted

chanterelles and hedgehog mushrooms to create a delicious seasonal salad course. Tri-coloré salad is a classic Tuscan combination of chicories that mix with lemon juice, olive oil and a cheese; because of their heartiness, all of the chicories can be grilled or roasted and combined for a delicious hearty winter salad.

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