

Menu Planning for June 2014

If you're planning your menu for June, there are a few holidays to consider and many fresh fruits and vegetables coming into their summer peak.

Full Moon on June 13th is called the *Strawberry Moon* because it traditionally indicated when the berries were ready for harvest (called the Rose Moon in Europe where strawberries were not indigenous).

June is National Dairy Month, Get Outdoors Month and National Fruit and Vegetable Month!

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| • June 13 th - Weed Your Garden Day | • June 21 st - First day of Summer (Solstice is celebrated, the longest day of the year!) |
| • June 14 th - Flag Day | • June 28 th – Ramadan starts |
| • June 15 th - Father's Day | |
| • June 17 th - Eat Your Vegetables Day | |
| • June 18 th – International Picnic Day | |
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Plan ahead for July :

Full Moon on July 12th, called the Full Buck Moon or the Thunder Moon. July is also the month of the Tour de France.

July is the National Month of: Blueberries, Hot Dogs and Ice Cream

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| • July 1 st – Canada Day | • July 20 th - National Ice Cream Day |
| • July 4 th - Independence Day | • July 25 th – National Culinarists Day |
| • July 7 - 11 - Nude Recreation Week | • July 27 th – Ramadan ends |
| • July 14 th - Bastille Day | |

Strawberries come into their warm weather deliciousness and can be beautifully complimented by the sharp flavors of rhubarb

Figs: Brown Turkey and Black Mission, followed by Kadota add subtle flavors to protein dishes and rich desserts

Exotic flavors of lychee and rambutan (the *hairy lychee*) balance the down-home goodness of sun-ripened Stonefruit of all varieties; now through September.... YUM!!

Great onion combinations – Torpedoes continue, the end of spring garlic and scapes, baby purple scallions and sweet onions from Georgia and Hawaii are available.

Culinary tidbit: The sweet onion is actually a variety called *granax*. The names attached to the allium - like 'Vidalia' or 'Maui' refer to the growing regions, not the variety of onion. Thus, sweet onions could also come from Bakersfield or Des Moines and the determining factor of their flavor and sweetness is the mineral base in the soil and the pylic acid content.

With June begins the parade of summer fruits and vegetables: legumes, melons, stonefruit and the traditional strawberry season. Gone are the earthy flavors of spring (Ramps, Morels and Miner's Lettuce) and what now begins to season our plates and our diets are flavorful bursts of sugar and starch. Summer Corn begins and this handheld delicacy contains all the starch and sugar anyone could wish for... The fig trees have an initial burst of fruit and then gap for about five weeks while the new fruit continues to ripen. Full harvest is generally more abundant mid-July.

The big option coming onto the marketplace is delectable chin-dripping stonefruit – *drupes* of all types (except the later harvested almonds) – are becoming available. Use the perfect orbs as a singular dessert or cut up the less beautiful but equally flavorful fruit for cobblers and compotes, or even as delicious sides with savory proteins. Apricots are the least plentiful so get them while they are fresh and ripe – they can be preserved or frozen to maintain that delicious flavor a tad longer. Cherries run through Father's day with a taper at the end of the month. There is usually a short supply of sour or Montmorency cherries just before the beginning of July. Santa Rosas lead the plum parade with Peaches available now through early October! Don't fall in love with just one variety as the options change weekly, especially with small farms. Keep peaches out at room temperature to ripen perfectly; cold will arrest their development, but they can be kept in a walk-in until ready to be tempered.

Fresh California Garbanzo beans and wild sea beans become available in June, right around the summer solstice (June 21st), also known as the first day of summer. Flowering herbs continue through the end of the month and lemon verbena becomes one of the favorite flavoring ingredients of the months – rich and aromatic with lemon flavor and scent, this herb makes an incredible simple syrup for desserts and an addition to vinaigrettes and marinades.

Summer squash becomes available in most locales in June and still has that 'new-kid' culinary appeal that makes it delectable. It's not until August that we are fed-up with this *cucurbit*! While in the same genus as Butternut, Hubbard and Acorn, all summer squash has a soft outer shell covered with nearly invisible hairs. These hairs are pest deterrents and keep bugs off of the squashes delicate skin as it develops. All summer squashes can be cooked (or not) in the same manner as they are interchangeable in flavor. A recipe for zucchini can be applied to patty pan or crook-neck, eightball or grey squash with the same success. The older the squash, the larger the seeds and internal seed pocket – this big specimen is better for bread and other applications where it's not a solo star.

Depending on the temperatures, this is when the first of the legumes start appearing – bush beans, pole beans and intermediate beans all need heat and time; they really hit their production in July. There are three stages in bean production and harvest: *fresh snap*, *fresh shelling* and *dried shell*. But more about this in July!

Start phasing out the last of the blood oranges (usually the San Guenielli variety by now), Meyer lemons and other winter based citrus. All Fiddleheads are done by the middle of June and we look for fruit and vegetables that absorb sunshine and thrive.

Planning for June:

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

Apples – New Zealand

Arugula

Asparagus - Washington

Avocados - CA

Baby Carrots w/ Tops

Baby Mixed Root Vegetables

Baby Pineapple

Bananas

Beans - Cranberry

Beans – Dragon Tongue

Beans – Fava

Beans – French Haricot Vert

Beans - Green

Beans – Purple

Beans – Yellow Wax

Belgian Endive

Bell Peppers

Berries – Blackberry

Berries – Blueberry

Berries - Raspberry

Berries - Raspberry, Gold

Berries - Strawberry

Berries, Wild Strawberry

Broccoli

Broccoli Rape

Broccolini

Cabbage, Red, Napa

Cactus Leaves

Cactus Pear

Cape Gooseberry

Carrots

Cauliflower

Celery

Celery Root

Chayote Squash

Chili Peppers

Corn

Cucumbers

Cucumbers - English

Eggplant

Elephant Garlic

Fennel

Figs

Garlic

Grapes – Perlette

Grapes – Red Flame

Herbs, leafy summer herbs

Honeydew

Horseradish

Jicama

Kiwifruit

Kiwifruit - Zespri Gold

Kohl Rabi (Green & Purple)

Lettuce-Baby (all)

Lettuces

Limes

Loquat

Lychee

Mangoes

Melons – Varietals

Mushrooms – Chanterelle

Mushrooms - Lobster

Okra

Onions – Granax varieties

Onions - Vidalia

Oranges

Papaya

Papaya – Mexican

Passion Fruit

Peas - English

Peas - Snow

Peas - Sugar Snap

Pepino Melon

Persimmons – Chile

Pineapple

Potatoes - Red

Potatoes - White

Radicchio

Radishes

Rambutan

Rhubarb

Shallots

Spinach

Spinach – Baby

Squash, summer varieties

Star Fruit

Stonefruit - Apricots

Stonefruit - Cherries – Bing

Stonefruit - Cherries - Rainier

Stonefruit - Nectarines

Stonefruit - Peaches

Stonefruit - Plums

Stonefruit - Pluots

Tomatoes

Tomatoes - Heirloom

Watermelon

Watermelon – Yellow Flesh