

Menu Planning for March

In like a lion, out like a lamb.....

Weather is a *HUGE* factor in this month and it can impact the availability of California berries, stonefruit and lettuces - it's a delicate balance between too much rain and that touch of hail or spring snow that might ruin the entire upcoming harvest.

Plan for March:

Full Moon on March 16th is considered the last full moon of winter. Called the Worm Moon, Full Crust Moon, Full Sap Moon and Lenten Moon.

- March 3rd – Peach Blossom Day
- March 4th – Mardi Gras
- March 9th – Daylight Savings time – Spring forward an hour for more evening sun!

Plan Ahead for April:

Full Moon on April 15th is called the Pink Moon.

National Garden Month, National Frog Month and National Poetry month!!

Flowers of April: Daisy and Sweet Pea

- April 7th – World Health Day

- March 11th – Johnny Appleseed Day
- March 15th – Ides of March
- March 16th - Purim
- March 17th – St. Patrick's Day
- March 20th – First Day of Spring

- National Nutrition Month

- April 15th - Tax Day
- April 15 – 22 Passover
- April 16th - National Eggs Benedict Day
- April 20th - Easter
- April 22nd - Earth Day
- April 25th – Arbor Day

Mardi Gras in March - When planning for colors for Mardi Gras, Rex, the King of Carnival, selected the Mardi Gras colors in 1892 and assigned meaning to them: Purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power.

To start the month, Mardi Gras foods are a wonderful part of the culture and no Mardi Gras celebration is complete without a King Cake, also known as Twelfth Night Cake. This cake is actually sweetened yeast bread baked in a ring shape. The cake is frosted with gold, green, and purple icing. Although this cake is colorful and tasty, the real fun hides within the cake as the baker of each King Cake has hidden a special token inside. The token is a dried red bean or a figurine of a baby, representing the Christ child. When the cake is cut and shared, the finder of the hidden treasure is said to enjoy good luck for the coming year. The lucky recipient may also be expected to bake the King Cake or throw the Mardi Gras party for the following year!

Full-flavored field rhubarb and artichokes are beginning to arrive - fresh California asparagus becomes abundant, fiddlehead ferns start as the snow melts (I prefer the Eastern fiddleheads that are about a month behind in harvest - April) and miner's lettuce pokes through in areas with high moisture and some sunshine. The first peas and baby carrots with a little butter and mint, the first of the torpedo onions, ramps and morels begin to creep into the marketplace. You can count on the following ingredients to fuel a strong spring menu: Carrots, Celeriac, most of the Chicories, Kales, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Nettles, Sweet Onions, Sugar Snap Peas, Radishes, Bloomsdale Spinach and Turnips Grapefruit, Kiwi, Kumquat, Meyer Lemons, Blood Oranges, Star Fruit and Strawberries.

Start phasing out Bergamot and Seville oranges, cocktail grapefruit, Buddha's hand and Chanterelles as this is usually their last month. Other items that start waning this month are Brussels sprouts, Puntarelle, Cardone and Salsify.

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

Apples
Artichokes
Artichokes - Baby
Asparagus – new CA
Avocados – Calif. new
Avocados - Chile
Bananas
Beans – Chinese Long
Beans – English Peas
Beans – Fava
Beans – French
Beans - Green
Beans – Snap Pea
Beans – Yellow Wax
Beets
Berries - Strawberries
Blossoms, Orange
Bok Choy
Bok Choy - Baby
Broccoflower
Broccoli
Broccoli Rabe
Broccolini
Brussels Sprouts
Cabbage
Cabbage Napa
Cactus Leaves
Cantaloupe
Cardoon
Carrots
Carrots Baby w/ Tops
Cauliflower
Celery
Celery Root
Cherimoya
Citrus – Blood Oranges
Citrus – Cara Cara

Citrus – Cocktail Grapefruit
Citrus - Kumquats
Citrus – Meyer Lemon
Citrus - Tangerines, Honey
Citrus Oranges - Navel
Corn
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Endive - Belgian
Feijoa
Fennel
Fiddlehead Fern - Western
Garlic – Elephant
Garlic – Greens
Ginger
Gooseberry - Caped
Grapefruit
Grapes - Chile
Hearts of Palm
Horseradish
Jicama
Kiwano (Horned Melon)
Kiwi
Kohl Rabi (Green & Purple)
Leeks
Lettuce - Iceberg
Lettuce - Leaf
Lettuce - Miner's
Lettuce - Baby (all)
Lettuce - Spring Mix
Mangoes - Imports
Melon - Honeydew
Mushroom - Black Trumpet
Mushrooms – Chanterelle
Mushrooms - Hedgehog
Nectarines - Chile
Onions
Onions - Boiler
Onions – Cipollini
Onions – Pearl
Onions - Spring
Onions – Spring Sweet
Onions - Torpedo start

Papaya
Parsnips
Passion Fruit - NZ
Peaches - Chile
Pears - Asian
Pears – Bartlett (imports)
Pears - Winter
Peppers - Bell, Green
Peppers - Bell, Red
Peppers - Chile
Pineapple
Pineapple – Baby (S.Africa)
Plums - Chile
Potatoes – Fingerling
Potatoes – Purple
Potatoes – Red
Potatoes - Russet
Potatoes – Yukon Gold
Potatoes-White
Radicchio
Radishes
Rhubarb
Root Vegetables, Baby
Rutabagas
Salsify
Shallots
Sno Peas
Spinach
Spinach - Baby
Squash – Hard Winter
Squash – Yellow Crookneck
Squash – Zucchini
Squash, summer, baby
Star Fruit
Strawberries
Sugar Snap Peas
Sunchokes
Sweet Potatoes
Tangelos
Tangerines
Tomatoes
Turnips