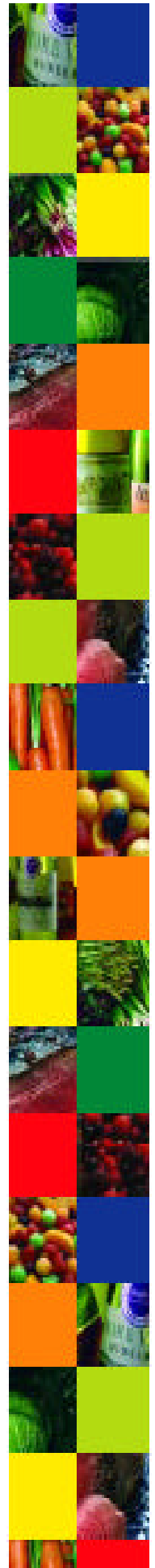




Extending Regional Hospitality



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Contents

1a: CREATING THE SUPPLY CHAIN TRADE NETWORK

1b: CREATING THE SUPPLY CHAIN TRADE NETWORK - SUPPLIER

2: SOURCING REGIONAL FOOD AND DRINK

3: SEASONALITY ISSUES ON MENUS

4: SPECIALITY COOKING USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS

5: SUSTAINABILITY AND THE BUSINESS CASE FOR BUYING LOCAL

6: INCREASING THE CONSUMPTION OF REGIONAL PRODUCE

7: LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK MERCHANDISING

**8: IMPROVING SERVICE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE
OF LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK**

9: MEASURING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

3: SEASONALITY ISSUES ON MENUS

“One of the delights of being in tune with the seasons is the effortless way we rediscover simple classic fare, turning the daily job of cooking into pure pleasure.”
Gary Rhodes, Cookery Year Autumn into Winter

Strawberries are available all the year round, sourced from many different countries. In having this expectation, have we lost the ‘joy’ of eating food that is at its best?

The ideas in this section are not meant to ‘lecture’! For those of you reading the information that are already aware of seasonal foods, some of the example dishes may inspire you, for others it may be the beginning of a new menu!

In this section you will:

- Identify reasons why seasonal foods should be used
- Use an example checklist of seasonal foods to link with your local suppliers
- Identify how foods can be used when in season
- Establish other ways to find out what is in season

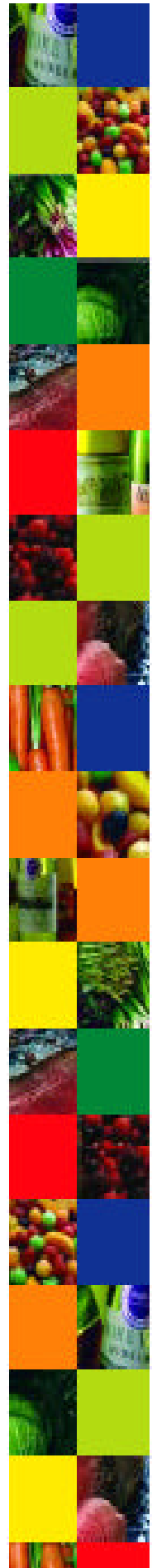
■ Why should food ‘in season’ be used?

All our dishes are freshly prepared using the best, generally local ingredients. Everything we serve, from the breads through to the “sweet things” served with coffee, is made in our kitchen by our team of chefs headed by Jonnie. Our printed menu changes seasonally whilst our boards change daily enabling us to take advantage of the freshest produce available to us.

The Roebuck Inn - Ludlow

National and international transport developments and technology mean that we have available most fresh foods all the year round. However, foods in season have their advantages:

- ◆ Their quality is at its best
- ◆ Their taste is at its peak
- ◆ Often the food is at its peak nutritionally
- ◆ Usually the food is cheaper when it is at its peak



■ EXERCISE:

Fill in below how food and products can be affected out of season and compare with in season.

	How food products might be affected out of season	How food products are affected in season
Quality	Skins tougher	
Taste	Sour	
Nutritionally	Low in vitamin C in winter	

■ Seasonal menus dishes

“Special dishes come and go as suppliers and seasons dictate. Whole side of wild boar, a clutch of rabbits or a basket of beetroot; each day along with our core menu we have to decide how to prepare and serve our latest findings. Our food aims never to be bland. Hearty but not heavy, unfussed but using skills to lift and enhance the ingredients and make the customer smile.”

Stuart Phillips, Head Chef, Hungry House Hotel, Norton Near Shifnal

The following are examples of dishes from businesses in the West Midlands region.

- The Merchant House, Ludlow
Roast quail with parsley risotto – as parsley is a key ingredient it could be offered when parsley is at its best – April - October
Rhubarb tart with ginger custard – ideal when rhubarb is in season – March - June

- Crown Country Inn, Munslow
Warm Spears of Bridgnorth Asparagus with Corvedale Quails Eggs and Lemon Salsa Verdi – asparagus is in season during May and June making this a reasonably priced dish to produce
Marbled Chocolate Pavé with English Strawberries – make the most of English strawberries when they are available – May – October

- Gary Rhodes, Cookery Year Autumn into Wiinter
Hot pear and chestnut sponge – use 2 seasonal fruits – October – December
Cheese and onion Jerusalem artichoke gratin – use a local cheese and locally grown onions and artichokes! – January – April / October – December

- Hundred House Hotel, Norton Near Shifnal
Cream of Celeriac Soup with Stilton croutons – celeriac in season 7 months of the year – great teamed with a local stilton
Venison casserole served with Herb Dumplings & Damson Cheese – damson cheese is a speciality of Shropshire teamed with local venison – ask your butcher when venison is at it's best

■ EXERCISE:

Using the checklist provided on the following pages, highlight what is seasonal at the present. Identify either a food you could use singly at the moment or a product that you might use within another dish. Identify a local supplier and research a dish that you could offer using this locally produced ingredient.

The Three Crowns Inn, Ullingswick, uses only seasonal organic vegetables from Wengall's Farm. It has won many awards for the food offered including a Special Achievement Award for Outstanding Excellence in 2002.

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3 - Seasonality issues in menus -
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SeasonalVeg.pdf

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■ Other ways of finding out what is in season

- ◆ Ask your supplier! They should be happy to advise you what they are planning to grow
- ◆ Recipe books
- ◆ Internet food websites
- ◆ 'Pick your own' adverts
- ◆ Food fairs and festivals

Work with your supplier to help you to plan ahead. You can also freeze any excess to use later in the year.

■ EXAMPLE

At the Stagg Inn, a long list of excellent local suppliers has been built up over the years. Meat and game come from local farms and estates through our vigilant butcher. Local fruit and seasonal vegetables, often organic, come from Titley and Pembridge. Organic rare breed pork and home-cured bacon comes from several small farms and our own garden is packed with herbs.

■ EXERCISE:

What other ways might you be able to keep track of what is in season or coming into season?

■ Summary

- Seasonal foods means that their quality is at its best, their taste is at its peak often the food is at its peak nutritionally, usually the food is cheaper.
- Local growers will produce what is the most suitable for the local environment.