

Seasonal Eating — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Seasonal Eating course and gives you the practical tools to move from knowledge to action. Complete each section alongside the corresponding module to build your personal seasonal eating system — a produce calendar, a sourcing plan, a meal framework, and a preservation toolkit tailored to your region and household.

Why Seasons Matter — Science and Systems

Map the nutritional and environmental case for seasonal eating to your own grocery habits and build your regional four-season produce calendar.

Exercise: Your Baseline Produce Audit

Before you change anything, audit what you are currently eating. Look at your last grocery receipt or recall your last seven days of produce purchases. For each item, note whether it was in season locally when you bought it — use the temperate seasonal calendar from the course as a guide.

- List every produce item you bought or ate this week. Mark each one as IN SEASON or OUT OF SEASON based on your local seasonal calendar.

- For the out-of-season items: where do you think they were grown? What is the likely transport mode (air, sea, truck)?

- Which out-of-season items are you most attached to? What is your plan for replacing them, reducing them, or accepting them as intentional exceptions?

- What is one seasonal swap you could make starting this week that would require no recipe change — just a different produce item in the same role?

Worksheet: My Regional Four-Season Produce Calendar

Fill in this calendar with the produce that is in peak season in your specific region. Use the temperate template from the course as a starting point, then refine it by visiting your local farmers market or checking your province/state agriculture seasonal guide. Leave space to add items as you discover them through the year.

My location (city/province or state):

My USDA or equivalent hardiness zone:

Last frost date (approximate):

First frost date (approximate):

Spring peak produce (list 8-12 items):

Summer peak produce (list 8-12 items):

Fall peak produce (list 8-12 items):

Winter storage and preserved items (list 6-10 items):

My nearest farmers market name and day/time:

CSA farms available in my area (names and contact):

Checklist: Module 1 Action Checklist

- Complete the produce audit for last week's shopping
- Find your USDA hardiness zone or regional equivalent online
- Download or request the seasonal produce guide from your province/state agriculture department
- Visit your nearest farmers market website and note the operating season and hours
- Fill in the four-season produce calendar worksheet for your region
- Identify one out-of-season produce item to replace with a seasonal equivalent this week

Sourcing Seasonal Produce

Design your personal seasonal sourcing system by mapping the channels available to you and building a practical weekly sourcing routine.

Exercise: Sourcing Channel Mapping

Every household has a different combination of sourcing channels available based on location, schedule, and budget. This exercise maps what is actually available and accessible to you — not an ideal scenario.

- List every sourcing channel available within a 30-minute drive or transit trip: farmers markets (with day/time), CSA farms, food co-ops, farm stands, community gardens you can participate in.
- For each channel: what is the cost range? What is the minimum commitment (e.g., CSA requires a seasonal payment upfront)? What is the scheduling requirement (e.g., Saturday morning market)?
- Which one channel, if you used it consistently this season, would have the greatest impact on how seasonal your diet is? Commit to trying it for four weeks.
- What is your realistic weekly budget for seasonal produce? How does this compare to what you currently spend?

Worksheet: My Seasonal Sourcing Plan

Build your personal weekly sourcing plan. This is the logistical skeleton of your seasonal eating practice — who you will buy from, when, and how much.

Primary sourcing channel (farmers market / CSA / co-op / other):

Market or pickup day and time:

Weekly produce budget (\$):

CSA farm name (if applicable):

CSA share size and weekly cost:

CSA pickup/delivery day:

Secondary sourcing channel (backup for weeks you miss primary):

Top 3 trusted vendors or farms I want to build a relationship with:

Produce items I plan to grow at home (container or garden):

Community contacts for surplus sharing or buying club:

Checklist: Module 2 Action Checklist

- Search LocalHarvest.org or equivalent for CSA farms in your area
- Attend your local farmers market at least once this month
- Speak to at least two vendors and ask what they recommend this week
- Research one food co-op in your area and review membership terms
- Check Falling Fruit (fallingfruit.org) for forage locations in your neighbourhood
- Identify one herb or salad green to start growing in a pot or window box
- Complete the sourcing plan worksheet with realistic commitments

Meal Planning with Seasonal Anchors

Build and practice the anchor meal planning method across one full week, using your seasonal produce calendar and a pantry bridge strategy.

Exercise: One Week of Anchor Meal Planning

Run the anchor meal planning method for one full week. This exercise is designed to be done with real produce in hand — either from a market visit, CSA delivery, or what is currently in your fridge. The goal is to practice the full cycle once, imperfectly, before refining it.

- List 2–3 seasonal produce items you have on hand or will receive this week. These are your anchors. Write them down before doing anything else.

- For each anchor, assign a cooking format: raw/salad, roasted, soup/broth, or stir-fry/saute. Write one specific meal idea for each format assignment.

- Plan 5 dinners for the week using only your anchors and pantry staples. Write the full list of 5 meals — no recipes required, just a description (e.g., roasted squash grain bowl with tahini, kale soup with white beans and lemon).

- Write your shopping list from what is missing — only the pantry staples you need to replenish, not produce. Compare the length of this list to a typical recipe-first shopping list.

Worksheet: Recipe Conversion Practice Sheet

Choose one recipe you make regularly that uses at least one out-of-season ingredient. Walk through the five-step conversion method from the course to adapt it to a currently seasonal version.

Original recipe name:

Out-of-season ingredient(s) to convert:

Step 1 — Produce role (sweet / acidic / bulk/starch / herb / bitter):

Step 2 — Seasonal equivalent ingredient:

Step 3 — Cooking time adjustment (minutes added or removed):

Step 4 — Seasoning adjustment (acid / spice / sweetness changes):

Step 5 — First-try result notes (what worked, what to change):

Revised recipe name for the seasonal version:

Season this version applies to:

Checklist: Module 3 Action Checklist

- Complete the one-week anchor meal planning exercise with real produce
- Write 6–8 format recipes (basic roast, grain bowl formula, pureed soup, frittata, stir-fry, slaw dressing) on index cards or in a phone note
- Build a pantry bridge shopping list for August or September (frozen, dried, fermented targets)
- Complete the recipe conversion practice sheet for one existing recipe
- Plan one preservation task for the current season (what to freeze, ferment, or dry)
- Identify which winter produce gap concerns you most and plan a bridge strategy for it

Preservation, Fermentation, and Building a Year-Round Practice

Execute your first preservation session, begin your first lacto-ferment, and design the habit system that will sustain seasonal eating through all four seasons.

Exercise: First Fermentation Reflection

If you have completed your first lacto-fermentation (or are planning to), use these prompts to engage deliberately with the process rather than treating it as a mechanical task.

- What vegetable did you choose for your first ferment, and why? What was in season locally when you made it?

- What was the sensory experience at each stage: day 1 (raw and salty), day 3 (first bubbles), day 7 (tangy)? Describe the smell, texture, and taste at each point.

- What, if anything, went wrong or surprised you? What would you adjust in the next batch?

- How does having a jar of lacto-fermented vegetables in your fridge change how you think about the winter produce gap?

Worksheet: My Annual Preservation Plan

Design your preservation calendar for the full year. Based on your regional seasonal calendar, identify what you will freeze, dry, ferment, and root-cellar — and when. This plan converts into two blocking calendar events per year (late summer and fall preservation days).

August preservation targets (what to freeze and in what quantity):

August fermentation targets (what to ferment and jar size):

September preservation targets (fruit preserves, dried herbs):

October preservation targets (root cellaring — which vegetables and quantity):

October fermentation targets (sauerkraut batch size for winter):

Pantry goal — frozen inventory by November 1:

Pantry goal — ferments in fridge or cold storage by November 1:

Root cellar or cool storage location in my home:

Equipment I still need (dehydrator / canning jars / fermentation weights):

Who can I do a preservation day with (friend, neighbour, CSA community)?

Checklist: Module 4 Action Checklist — Long-Term Practice

- Complete your first lacto-fermentation batch (sauerkraut or cucumber pickles recommended)
- Complete your first freeze session using the blanch-shock-freeze protocol
- Block a date on the calendar for your late summer preservation day (August)
- Block a date on the calendar for your fall preservation day (October)
- Set up a seasonal reflection journal with the four end-of-season questions
- Join one community seasonal food channel (CSA community group, food co-op newsletter, surplus sharing network)
- Complete the annual preservation plan worksheet
- Schedule the weekly produce-first planning session as a recurring calendar event

Your Action Plan

1. This week: complete the produce audit and identify your USDA or equivalent hardiness zone
2. This week: visit your local farmers market and speak to two vendors — buy whatever they recommend as peak-season right now
3. Within 2 weeks: fill in your regional four-season produce calendar and identify your primary sourcing channel
4. Within 2 weeks: run the anchor meal planning method for one full week using only seasonal produce and pantry staples
5. Within 1 month: complete your first lacto-fermentation batch and taste it at day 3, day 7, and day 14
6. Within 1 month: complete the recipe conversion exercise for one existing recipe you make regularly
7. Before end of summer: complete one batch-freezing session using the blanch-shock-freeze protocol
8. Each fall: block a full Saturday for the annual preservation day — sauerkraut, frozen stock, root cellar inventory

9. Each season change: visit your farmers market in the first week of the new season to observe what has come into abundance
10. Each season end: complete the four-question seasonal reflection in your notebook and use it to plan the next year

