

What's New...

Diet and Lifestyle According to the Seasons

Winter, according to Chinese medicine, is considered the end of all seasons. It is a time to become more receptive and introspective. Shorter days drive us inward towards a more hibernating lifestyle. Winter is a time to rest, meditate, and store physical energy- in the form of added weight- for the colder season. Rest is beneficial, but we must remember to maintain a certain level of activity to keep the spine and joints flexible.

Beneficial foods during the winter are hearty soups, whole grains, and roasted nuts. Also dried foods, small dark beans, seaweeds, and steamed winter greens are very beneficial for the kidneys, which need to be supported more so in the winter months (according to Chinese medicine). One should cook foods longer, at slower temperatures and with less water.

Salt and bitter foods are beneficial during the cold season, but use salt with caution. Consuming too much causes us greater thirst, where too much water weakens the kidneys in the colder months. Salt and bitter foods benefits cool the exterior of the body, driving the internal heat deeper within to warm us. Examples of bitter foods include lettuce, watercress, endive, escarole, turnip, celery, asparagus, alfalfa, carrot top, rye, oats, quinoa, and amaranth.

Salt is overused in the typical diet, where as bitter foods are under-represented. Bitter foods do not need to be consumed in large amounts; a little goes a long way. Consuming small, regular amounts of bitter and salty foods in the winter months enhance our inner meditative experience, and can preserve joy in the heart.

Observing specific cooking methods and lifestyle habits during the seasons can enhance our well-being and keep our bodies in tune with nature.

