

What to Eat in Autumn?



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Energy moves down in autumn, so as the season progresses, we can eat more foods that have a downward moving energy which are the foods that are in season such as **root vegetables like carrots, sweet potato, beetroot and turnip.**

Autumn is the season for the lung and the skin which can easily suffer from dryness. Eat food to moisten and open the lungs and support the digestive system. Cooked apples and pears moisten the lungs, although people with phlegm or fluid retention should eat all fruit sparingly. **Apples, persimmons, grapes and pears** contain a lot of water and are very good for clearing stomach inflammation left over from the hot summer. **Lima beans, adzuki beans and navy beans** are good for strengthening the lungs. Use pungent foods and herbs to stimulate and clear the lungs i.e. **garlic, onion, shallots, ginger, cinnamon and cardamom.** Sweet and sour flavours strengthen spleen and lungs; try grains like **rice, millet and sourdough bread.** Other autumn foods are **olives, chestnuts and figs.**

Although it might be hot on some days, it is important to **avoid excessive intake of cold drinks and summer fruits especially melons.** Cold food slows the digestive process and causes wind. In autumn, there should be **far fewer salads and more soups.** Warm foods strengthen immunity and protect the body from colds and virus in the coming winter season. Heavy foods, such as thick stews and soups build energy reserves for the colder months.

Pork is the most moistening meat and is very nutritious, so it's perfect to eat in autumn. **Bok Choy** is helpful when the body is run-down, or when the body feels warm but hands and feet are cold. Improving circulation in early autumn will be much easier than living with consequences in the depths of winter.

Autumn is a good time for steaming. Cook at a low temperature for longer periods of time than you would for a quick stir-fry in summer. Salt helps moisten dryness in the blood so use small amounts of salt in cooking.

During autumn, cook with **sesame seed or paste (tahini)** as flavouring in soups or as a spread for toast and sandwiches. Tahini is gentler on the digestive system than unprocessed sesame seeds, but still provides the benefits of moistening and toning all the major organs.

Astringent and sour foods encourage contraction, which fits with the seasonal direction of autumn. In the liver, sour helps breakdown grease and fats. Examples include fruits like **lemons, limes, grapefruit, plums and apples.** **Sourdough bread, sauerkraut, olives, pickles, adzuki beans, vinegar, yoghurt are all sour flavours. Less common sour foods are umeboshi plums and rose hip tea.**

If the lungs are suffering with excessive phlegm causing cough, runny nose, sinusitis, hayfever or puffy swelling like bloating or swollen joints then eat pungent foods to disburse the excess fluids.

Horseradish, cabbage, leek, onions and garlic are examples of pungent foods. These should be used sparingly if the weather is particularly dry in autumn. Try gentler pungent herbs such as **ginger, basil, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, dill, cloves, fennel, bay leaves, oregano, nutmeg, rosemary, thyme, turmeric, turnip, watercress and wheat germ.**

Disclaimer; This diet information is an overview of the principles of healthy eating from a Chinese dietary model. It is a simple guide and is not intended as a complete diet regime or as a treatment for specific health conditions. Please consult our practitioner if you require more detailed dietary advice.