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Asparagus is in season! Check out this delicious and easy recipe.

Prosciutto-wrapped **Asparagus**

1 bundle of asparagus

1 – 2 pkgs. prosciutto

olive oil

Preheat oven to 450° F. Grease baking sheet with olive oil. Wrap each asparagus sprig with prosciutto and place on the baking sheet. Cook 5 to 7 minutes and then flip. Cook the other side another 5 to 7 minutes. Prosciutto should be slightly crispy. It serves as a great snack, appetizer or side dish.



Happy Spring! So I'm trying to step it up a bit with the newsletter. I've even given it a name: "From The Vine". The idea of "from the vine" really gets across one of my fundamental beliefs in nutrition – the less food is altered from its original state, the better. Anyway, here's round two of the newsletter. Enjoy!

Buying Local

Have you ever wondered why produce picked from a garden and eaten shortly after tastes so much better than it does from the store? That is because the produce you buy from a store has been warehoused, for longer than you may think, and has traveled, on average, about 1,500 miles to get to your store.

Also, produce that has to travel so far is picked before it is completely ripe, therefore it has not reached its peak nutrient value. Then it is typically sprayed with ethylene gas to artificially ripen it which creates that disconnect between the look and the taste.

It can be several days, or weeks, before produce is getting to your table because after harvesting, several days are spent sorting and packaging. Then placed in a refrigerated truck, the produce may spend several more days on a journey to a distribution center, where yet more time may be spent stored in a refrigerator.

Cold storage and fluctuations in light and temperature each cause degradation and breakdown of nutrients. Many nutrients are extremely sensitive to changes in temperature, light and atmosphere. Fresh fruits and vegetables stored at room temperature for as little as two to three days can lose half of their vitamin C and as much as seventy percent of their folate (responsible for the formation of new tissue).

Produce is living, thus the reason it is so good for us, but also the reason that it dies quickly after it is plucked from its nutrient source. As the produce continues to live, separated from its nutrient source, it uses up its own water, energy and nutrients, which eventually leads to decay. Makes you want to get it sooner than later huh? Well then cut out the middle man, and go straight to the farmer.

Are you familiar with any farmer's markets in your area? My husband and I are fortunate to live in California where we are surrounded by a diverse, cornucopia of fresh produce. We look forward to the Sunday farmer's market so we can enjoy some sun and music while selecting the most fresh and tasty produce. The farmer's market connects us with our community, the farmers, and best of all, we don't have to go to the grocery store - whoever would have thought that grocery shopping could be enjoyable! If possible, buy from a local farmer's market so you can get the best quality for your money. If you can't get to a farmer's market, there are plenty of farmers that would love to accommodate you. Check out the following link to find your fresh produce options. <http://www.localharvest.org/>



Buying Local Means

- Quality taste as if it came right from the garden, because it did!
- More nutrients to nourish your body because it hasn't been in transit or stored for weeks.
- Produce is harvested the day before, or even the morning of sale.
- Food distribution that doesn't require trucks crossing the country, burning up fuel along the way or adding to the carbon dioxide in the air.
- More money to the farmers (farmers see about 10 cents per retail dollar from their produce sales through the conventional grocery channel).
- It is typically cheaper because the farmers have not gone through the conventional grocery channel.
- Your pick of seasonal produce that is in its prime.
- No grocery store!

If you can't buy from a farmer's market, then maybe you could just consider buying what is in season. If it is in season then it most likely hasn't traveled from as far as Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, or even New Zealand. Check out the seasonality charts below.



<http://www.cuesa.org/seasonality/charts/vegetable.php>



<http://www.cuesa.org/seasonality/charts/fruit.php>

References:

<http://www.cuesa.org/>

<http://www.fao.org/Wairdocs/X5014E/X5014e04.htm>

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ppp/index.htm> (Great study looking at the "food journey")

<http://www.nffi.net/superiorgrown/aboutus.htm>

Are you interested in something particular? Send me an email. If you are interested, then someone else probably is too. To unsubscribe, send an email to stacey_dempsey@yahoo.com.