


Living in Harmony with the Seasons





Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall are our familiar seasons however TCM recognizes a fifth season: late summer.

- ▶ Each of the five seasons has specific associations with different emotions, organ systems, foods, flavours, climates, elements, and activities.
- ▶ Learning the energetic qualities and the foods associated with the different seasons brings balance and harmony into one's inner and outer life.
- ▶ Our overall health, happiness, and well-being are deeply rooted in the rhythms of the natural world.
- ▶ When we're aware of and aligned with the cycles of Nature, we have the opportunity to enhance our vitality and quality of life, feel connected with and supported by the Earth's like affirming forces, and live in a truly sustainable and awakened way that respects, nurtures, and honors all life.

Seasonal Shifts

- ▶ Watch each seasonal shift closely, as transition times can be stressful to the body and mind.
- ▶ Eating nourishing food, pausing to notice your breath throughout the day, and taking warm evening baths are practices that can help make you feel more present amidst a demanding work schedule.



SPRING



- ▶ The light of day noticeably shifts at the beginning of February; February 2nd is the mid-point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.
- ▶ A stirring of energy occurs in both the mind and body when February arrives and the feeling of deep winter starts to shift, even though the cold and snow still persists.
- ▶ When the ice of winter begins to melt in March and April the water element gives way to the wood element of spring.
- ▶ If you have rested deeply in winter and feel replenished, the awakening of your vital life force in early spring will naturally begin slowly and without hesitation.

SPRING



- ▶ Spring is the season of renewing the body's vitality by using spring greens and bitter root teas, fresh juices and lighter foods, engaging in more outdoor activities and clearing out our homes, closets, cars and stressful internal affairs.
- ▶ In TCM, spring is associated with the liver, gallbladder, and the element wood.
- ▶ A balanced uprising of energy in spring will support us through the rest of the year in accomplishing our visions, dreams, and creative projects.
- ▶ When there is a gentle spring rain, go outside and breathe in the reviving essence.

SPRING GREENS



- ▶ People worldwide have traditionally called upon spring greens to cleanse the body and clear the mind. The taste of sour resonates with the liver, spring greens tend to be bitter, sour, and pungent in flavour and are perfect for improving liver health.
- ▶ Favorite edible spring greens: dandelion, nettle, watercress, lamb's quarters, violet, chickweed, chicory, amaranth, red mustard, and arugula.
- ▶ Fresh nettle is a great leaf tea for spring.
- ▶ Burdock, dandelion and yellow dock root are preferred springtime tinctures.
- ▶ The roots of astragalus, codonopsis, and fresh ginger should be added to soups and teas for immune and digestive support as spring weather can be cold, damp, and rainy.

SPRING FOODS & HERBS



- ▶ **Foods-** barley, quinoa, rye, arugula, dandelion greens, mesclun salads, wild mustard greens, steamed nettle greens, violet leaf and other wild edible greens, beets, carrots, cabbage, fermented vegetables, umeboshi plum paste
- ▶ **Culinary Herbs-** Chives, cilantro, garlic, ginger, lovage, parsley, rosemary, thyme
- ▶ **Medicinal Herbs-** Burdock roots, birch leaf, chickweed, dandelion roots and greens, nettle leaf, yellow dock roots and greens, sweet cicely leaf, violet leaf and flower

SUMMER



- ▶ The arrival of the summer solstice , June 21, marks the beginning of summer, for us in the Maritimes it denotes that the sun has reached its most northern point in the wheel of the year and that the next six weeks are meant to be lived as actively outside as possible.
- ▶ TCM associates summer with the fire element, the heart and the small intestine, and the emotion of joy.
- ▶ The heat and long days of summer foster a feeling of optimism, which can lead to a feeling of ease and harmony in one's body and relationships.
- ▶ It is important during the heat of the summer to balance and ground outer activity with meaningful conversations with friends and with moments of reflective alone time.

SUMMER



- ▶ The summer's tendency to be overly outward and active can inhibit the heart's fire from feeling truly warmed and satisfied.
- ▶ The heart needs experiences that nourish a steady flame. If we burn ourselves out in summer and head into harvest season depleted, then the body and mind are unable to sort through what is valuable and what needs to be discarded.
- ▶ This can create the tendency to spiral into negative thought patterns, excessive thinking, and depression is more likely to occur.
- ▶ When the heart is settled and peaceful, a person is warm, friendly, humble, clear minded and open hearted, and happy.
- ▶ Problem solving takes less effort as the heart and mind are clear.
- ▶ Playing, laughing, singing, praying, meditating with friends, and spending contemplative time in nature are activities that nourish the heart.

SUMMER FOODS & HERBS



- ▶ Summer is the season for creating beautiful meals from the abundance of locally grown vegetables and fruits.
- ▶ Eating lighter and easy-to-digest foods such as fresh salads, sprouted legumes, nuts, seeds, and locally crafted cheeses and drinking cooling flowers and leaf teas (lemon balm and mint) connect us to nature's bounty.
- ▶ It is important to balance the intense summer heat with watery and cooling foods such as cucumbers, strawberries, watermelons, and quinoa.
- ▶ **Culinary Herbs-** Basil, cilantro, dill, parsley, nasturtium flowers and leaves, rosemary, watercress
- ▶ **Medicinal Herbs-** Blessed thistle, chamomile, hawthorn flowers, lemon balm, motherwort, rose petals, rosemary, sacred basil, yarrow

LATE SUMMER



- ▶ The mid-point between the summer solstice and the fall equinox occurs on August 2.
- ▶ TCM associates late summer with the spleen and stomach which govern digestion and assimilation.
- ▶ When we feel deeply nourished and connected to the rhythms of nature, a feeling of balance, no matter what internal and external changes are occurring, is possible.
- ▶ Late summer is the time to fully take in and assimilate all the experiences we have tended and nurtured since spring. The sweetness of Each beckons us to fill our hearts and minds with gratitude and to extend compassion and nurturance to ourselves and others.

LATE SUMMER FOODS & HERBS



- ▶ **Foods-** sweet corn, barley, brown rice, millet, carrots, summer squashes, shallots, onions, sweet potatoes, artichokes, cabbage, cooked leafy greens
- ▶ **Fruit-** Blueberries, cantaloupe, early apples and pears, figs
- ▶ **Culinary Herbs-** Basil, cardamom, coriander seed, fennel seed, garlic, marjoram, nutmeg
- ▶ **Medicinal Herbs-** Anise hyssop, astragalus root, codonopsis root, eleuthero root, fresh grated ginger, goldenrod, licorice root, marshmallow root, oats, Solomon's seal root

AUTUMN



- ▶ As the days shorten and the colors and flowers of the garden fade, this is the season for fermenting and canning vegetables and preparing winter squashes and root crops for storage.
- ▶ TCM associates autumn with the lungs and colon which govern releasing and eliminating waste from the body.
- ▶ The season of autumn brings lots of changes. The 'winds of change' can blow erratically, heralding in different types of weather; sometimes dry, sometimes wet, sometimes hot, and sometimes cold.
- ▶ For some people, autumn feels refreshing; for others, the erratic nature of autumn is unsettling. Fall can be one of the hardest seasonal transitions for lots of people, both physically and mentally.

AUTUMN



- ▶ From the fall equinox- September 21- and onward, the decrease in sunlight affects people's spirits in different ways. Fall is a time of letting go and of evaluating the projects we have tended and completed throughout the summer.
- ▶ This can be a time when people feel dissatisfied and judgmental towards themselves and others, especially if they're not content with what's occurring in their lives.
- ▶ Autumn offers the opportunity for clear and thoughtful re-evaluation and the releasing what no longer serves us, both internally and externally.
- ▶ Letting go allows room for what is truly precious to be present in our hearts and minds.

AUTUMN



- ▶ Grief is an emotion associated with Autumn.
- ▶ It is a time of year where people start to struggle with colds, sinus and bronchial infections, runny noses, asthma, allergies, wet coughs, and constipation. These symptoms are clues that the lungs, colon, and immune system need tending.
- ▶ In the fall rhythm of the year we are called to slow down, turn inward, eat more warm and cooked foods, dress in layers, pace our work lives differently, and release old patterns, behaviours, and things that no longer nourish us.
- ▶ This releasing offers clarity for what serves us and how we can serve others.

AUTUMN FOODS & HERBS



- ▶ Early autumn is a time to start making soup broths with astragalus root, burdock root, codonopsis root, and reishi and shiitake mushrooms. Teas of astragalus root, codonopsis root, cinnamon, ginger, and licorice root are encouraged at this time.
- ▶ Pungent is the flavour associated with autumn and the time of year when we add more pungent and warming herbs and cooked foods back into our diets.
- ▶ **Foods-** arugula, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, cooked apples and pears, celery, grapes, kale, leeks, mustard greens, olives, and onions.
- ▶ **Culinary Herbs-** Anise seed, black pepper, black mustard, chili pepper, caraway seeds, cardamom, cinnamon, clove, coriander seed, cumin seed, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, horseradish, marjoram, rosemary, thyme, turmeric
- ▶ **Medicinal Herbs-** Astragalus root, burdock root, codonopsis root, elderberries, elethero root, garlic, ginger, hawthorn berries, hyssop, licorice, mullein, reishi, rosemary, Schisandra, shiitake, thyme

WINTER



- ▶ Winter is a time for dreaming, for deep rest, and for renewing my body, mind, and spirit.
- ▶ TCM associates winter with the kidneys, adrenals, and bladder and the water element. These organs regulate fluid metabolism and support the endocrine system, reproductive system, bone health, and auditory abilities.
- ▶ Winter is a time for being especially mindful for our energy reserves. It is when we need to draw our energy inward and refill the deep well that contains our chi.
- ▶ If we move from winter into spring feeling rested and revitalized, then summer will feel energetic and expansive and autumn will feel abundant and satisfying.
- ▶ If we've been unable to rest sufficiently in winter and be nourished by food, family, community, and safe and meaningful work, then over time we being to lack the chi needed to feel healthy and vital.

WINTER



- ▶ People who enter winter feeling tired and depleted are more susceptible to frequent colds and flus, low back pain, cold hands and feet, lowered sexual energy, digestive challenges, depression, joint pain, and poor memory.
- ▶ Rest, reflection, and contemplation are supportive practices to engage in during the winter months. Winter's rhythm begs us to slow down and retreat inward in order to renew strength and spirit.

WINTER FOODS & HERBS



- ▶ **Foods-** arugula, beets, broccoli, burdock root, carrots, celeriac root, daikon radish, fermented vegetables, garlic, kale, rutabagas, shiitake mushrooms, sunflower sprouts and other sprout mixes
- ▶ **Grains-** barley, buckwheat, short grain rice, wild rice
- ▶ **Beans-** kidney beans, lentils, black beans, pinto beans
- ▶ **Fruit-** Blackberries, Blueberries, Raspberries
- ▶ **Culinary Herbs-** Black pepper, chili pepper, cinnamon, clove, coriander seed, cumin seed, curry spices, dill, garlic, ginger, rosemary, thyme, turmeric
- ▶ **Medicinal Herbs-** Ashwagandha, astragalus root, bee balm, calendula, codonopsis, echinacea, elderberries, ginger, hyssop, oats, nettle, rosemary, sacred basil, Schisandra, thyme, usnea

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