

Winter Local Eating Guide

Harvest Connection

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table of contents



01

What's in season

02

Tips for eating more locally grown food

03

Cooking with seasonal ingredients

04

Cooking skills for winter vegetables

05

Eat local on a budget

06

Teaching kids about eating locally



what is

Harvest Connection?

Harvest Connection is a regional initiative that helps people find and support local farms, farmers markets, and locally grown food throughout the year—including winter. Serving the Greater Capital Region and surrounding areas, Harvest Connection connects consumers with up-to-date information on where to buy local food, what's in season, and how to enjoy it at home.

The Harvest Connection Winter Local Eating Guide highlights the many ways local food remains available even in the colder months. From winter farmers markets and farm stores to CSA shares, storage crops, and greenhouse-grown produce, the guide showcases the abundance that farms provide year-round. Harvest Connection works closely with local farmers and market managers to share accurate listings, seasonal updates, and practical resources for eating locally in winter.



chapter 01



What's in Season During the Winter?

While fields may be covered in snow, winter is still a season of abundance when it comes to local food. Many crops are harvested in the fall and carefully stored to last through the colder months. Others are grown year-round in greenhouses or high tunnels, making fresh, local produce available even in midwinter.

Understanding what is in season during winter helps shoppers make better choices, find the best quality produce, and support farms that specialize in winter growing and storage.

Winter Storage Crops

These vegetables are harvested in late summer and fall, then kept in temperature- and humidity-controlled storage so they remain fresh and flavorful for months:

- Potatoes (red, white, fingerling)
- Onions, garlic, and shallots
- Winter squash (butternut, acorn, hubbard, kabocha)
- Sweet potatoes
- Beets, carrots, parsnips, rutabaga, and turnips
- Cabbage

Winter Greens (Greenhouse or Cold-Hardy)

Even in winter, many farms grow fresh greens using greenhouses, high tunnels, or cold frames. These protected growing systems allow tender crops to thrive despite freezing temperatures:

- Kale
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Arugula
- Lettuce mixes

Winter greens bring freshness, color, and important nutrients to winter meals. They are perfect for salads, sautés, soups, and grain dishes, and they add balance to heavier winter foods.

Together, storage crops and winter greens make it possible to eat locally all winter long. By choosing what's in season, you enjoy better flavor, longer shelf life, and a stronger connection to the farms that keep local food available year-round.



chapter 02



Tips for Eating More Local Food in Winter

1. Shop Winter Farmers Markets

Many farmers markets operate year-round or host winter markets. These markets are one of the best places to find storage crops, winter greens, meats, cheeses, baked goods, and pantry staples—while continuing to support local farmers during the off-season.

2. Embrace Storage Crops

Winter is the season to lean into root vegetables and squash. These crops are versatile, filling, and packed with nutrients. Roast them, add them to soups and stews, mash them, or shred them into salads and slaws.

3. Cook Seasonally

Winter cooking is all about warmth and comfort. Think soups, stews, and chili; roasted vegetables; casseroles and baked dishes and slow-cooker meals. Seasonal cooking helps stretch local ingredients and makes meals more satisfying on cold days.

4. Plan Meals Ahead

Meal planning makes winter eating easier and more affordable. Build your weekly meals around what's available locally, then fill in with pantry staples. Planning reduces food waste and helps you make the most of winter produce.

5. Preserve the Harvest

If you stocked your freezer or pantry during the growing season, winter is the time to enjoy it. Frozen vegetables, fruits, herbs, and meats extend the local harvest and make quick meals easy.

Preservation ideas include:

- Freezing berries, greens, and chopped vegetables
- Canning sauces, soups, and jams
- Pickling vegetables
- Dehydrating herbs and apples

6. Buy in Bulk

Many farms offer bulk options for potatoes, onions, squash, and meats during winter. Buying in larger quantities can save money and reduce trips to the store.



chapter 03



Cooking with Seasonal Ingredients

Winter may feel quiet on the farm, but local kitchens can be full of flavor and possibility. Cooking seasonally during the colder months means embracing the foods that store well, preserve beautifully, and provide comfort and nourishment when fresh fields are resting. Root crops pulled from the soil in fall, apples kept in cold storage, meats raised and processed locally, and greens grown under protection all play an important role in winter eating.

Winter recipes tend to be simple, satisfying, and flexible. Soups, stews, roasts, casseroles, and baked dishes highlight the natural sweetness and earthiness of seasonal ingredients while stretching meals across several days. A pot of soup made with local carrots, onions, garlic, and beans can become lunches all week. A roasted squash or chicken can anchor several meals with just a change in seasoning or sides.

Instead of focusing on fresh summer produce, winter cooking leans into foods that store well and adapt easily to slow, gentle cooking:

Storage crops

Potatoes, carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips, rutabaga, onions, garlic, cabbage, and winter squash form the backbone of many winter meals. These vegetables become sweeter and more flavorful after time in storage and are ideal for roasting, braising, mashing, and simmering.

Cold-hardy greens

Kale, spinach, lettuce mixes, arugula, and Asian greens grown in greenhouses or high tunnels bring fresh color and nutrients to winter plates. These tender greens are perfect for quick sautés, simple salads, and adding brightness to soups and grain dishes.

Locally raised proteins

Beef, pork, poultry, eggs, and dried beans provide hearty, filling options for cold-weather meals. Slow-cooked roasts, braised meats, bean soups, and egg-based dishes are economical, comforting, and deeply satisfying.

Pantry staples

Local grains, flour, maple syrup, honey, apples, and preserved foods—such as frozen vegetables, canned tomatoes, pickles, and jams—help round out winter cooking. These staples make it easy to bake, sweeten, preserve, and build meals from simple ingredients.



chapter 04



Cooking Skills for Winter Vegetables

A few basic cooking skills make winter vegetables easy, affordable, and flavorful. Many storage crops and winter greens are forgiving and well-suited to simple techniques.

Roasting is one of the easiest methods. Cut vegetables evenly, toss with oil and salt, and roast at 400–425°F until tender and caramelized. Potatoes, carrots, beets, onions, cabbage, and squash all roast well.

Soups and stews are ideal for using storage crops. Start with onions and garlic, add chopped vegetables, broth, and herbs, and simmer until tender. Almost any combination can become a hearty winter meal.

Sautéing and braising greens adds quick, fresh sides to winter meals. Cook greens briefly with garlic and oil, or braise tougher greens and cabbage for a softer texture.

Batch cooking saves time and stretches ingredients. Large trays of roasted vegetables or big pots of soup can provide meals for several days.

With just a few techniques, winter vegetables become the foundation for simple, nourishing meals all season long.

chapter 05



Eating Local on a Budget in Winter

Eating local in winter doesn't have to be expensive. In fact, winter is one of the best seasons to stretch your food dollars while supporting local farms. With a few simple strategies, you can build affordable, nourishing meals from seasonal ingredients that store well, cook easily, and go a long way.

One of the most effective ways to save money is to buy storage crops in bulk from farms, winter farmers' markets, or farm stands. Potatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage, beets, and winter squash are often sold by the bag or at a lower price per pound. These vegetables keep for weeks—or even months—when stored properly, making them ideal for budget-conscious households.

Choosing vegetables that last longer helps reduce both cost and waste. Root crops and hardy vegetables can be used in many different ways: roasted one night, added to soup the next, and turned into hash, casseroles, or grain bowls later in the week. A single bag of potatoes or a large squash can provide the base for several meals.

Building meals around affordable proteins is another key strategy. Beans, lentils, dried peas, eggs, and locally raised meats used in smaller portions can stretch a meal while keeping it satisfying. Combining vegetables with grains and legumes—such as bean soups, vegetable stews, stir-fries, and baked dishes—creates filling meals without relying on expensive ingredients.

Cooking at home more often is one of the biggest cost-savers in winter. Simple, seasonal recipes require fewer ingredients and less preparation than elaborate meals. Large batches of soup, chili, or roasted vegetables can provide multiple meals, saving both time and money.

chapter 06



Teaching Kids About Eating Locally in Winter

Winter is a wonderful time to help children and families build lasting connections to local food. While fields may be quiet, there is still an abundance of learning happening through storage crops, winter greens, and preserved foods. These ingredients are easy to find, simple to prepare, and perfect for hands-on learning at home.

Involving children in food choices is one of the best ways to spark curiosity and build healthy habits. Letting kids help choose vegetables at winter farmers' markets or farm stands gives them a sense of ownership and pride in what they eat. Encourage them to ask farmers simple questions—such as how vegetables are stored, where eggs come from, or how animals are cared for in winter. These small conversations help children understand that food comes from real people and real places.

In the kitchen, even young children can take part in simple tasks. Washing vegetables, snapping beans, peeling carrots, stirring soups, or measuring ingredients for baking all help children feel included and capable. These activities build practical skills while reinforcing the idea that meals are made, not just purchased.

By involving children in shopping, cooking, and tasting, families help build lifelong habits of curiosity, appreciation, and respect for local food and the farmers who grow it.

Why Eat Local in Winter?

Eating local food in winter supports farmers, strengthens the regional food system, and keeps communities connected to their food year-round—even when fields are covered in snow.

Buying local during the winter provides farmers with critical off-season income, helping them cover ongoing expenses like labor, feed, and infrastructure while planning for the next growing season. These purchases help ensure farms remain viable and productive for years to come.

Choosing local food also strengthens the local economy. Dollars spent at farms and winter markets circulate within the region, supporting farmers, food processors, market managers, and other small businesses connected to the local food system.

Local winter foods are often fresher and more flavorful. Cold-hardy vegetables and properly stored root crops develop rich, sweet flavors and retain quality longer than produce shipped long distances.



want to

learn more?

Visit the Harvest Connection website to explore:

- Winter farmers markets in the Greater Capital Region
- Local farms offering winter products
- Seasonal recipes and cooking tips



join us!

harvestconnection-ny.com