

Cookie

























eating

a fresh take

Twelve chefs share recipes for the fruits and veggies they look forward to all year.

BY JULIE ALVIN

Brasing a meal on in-season produce is not some highfalutin concept for childless food snobs without jobs. It's a back-heron-planet-Earth strategy for any parent who plans, shops for, and actually cooks meals on a regular basis. Think about it: Even during these bleak winter months, there is something in season somewhere that you can plan a healthy dinner around. And not only can you count on that ingredient being a showstopper, but you don't even have to work very hard to get it there. In that spirit, *Cookie* has asked chefs from across the country with kids of their own to share their ideas on how to turn everything from the revered summer tomato to the lowly winter radish into meals, snacks, and sides that taste exactly the way they're supposed to: fresh and perfect.

CHEF	CHEF'S PICK (AND HOW TO PICK IT)	PEAK MONTHS												THE RECIPE	KID STRATEGY	ALSO IN SEASON	
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D				
JAN  JAMIE OLIVER author, <i>Cook with Jamie</i> (Hyperion) Father of two	 ROOT VEGETABLES Grab carrots, celery hearts, and fennel bulbs with their stalks still attached.														ROOT-VEGETABLE SALAD This is one of Oliver's winter favorites. Use a mandoline to slice a combination of "gorgeous, vibrant" raw beetroots, carrots, celery hearts, radishes, and fennel bulbs until you have a pile of thin, crunchy strips. Toss with olive oil, lemon juice, mint, salt, and pepper.	Let the kids sit with you as you slice (they'll be more likely to taste it). Have honey nearby for dipping.	Collard greens Parsley root Parsnips
FEB  BARTON SEEVER Hook, Washington, D.C.	 CAULIFLOWER Go for a head of compact curds with bright green leaves at the base.														FRY-SEARED CAULIFLOWER Seaver says to sauté florets in olive oil until lightly colored, toss in pine nuts and kaisies, and add about 3 tablespoons of water. Cover and simmer on low heat until most of the liquid is gone. Then add a tablespoon of butter. Toss and add chopped parsley.	Kids (okay, grown-ups too) will love this topped with a mound of grated Parmesan.	Corn Potatoes Yukon
MAR  PATRICK O'CONNELL The Inn at Little Washington, Washington, Virginia	 CABBAGE The freshest heads have leaves that are crisp and densely packed.														TAKE GREEN TANGSA To start, O'Connell says, fry bacon and minced onion in a pan. Pour off some of the fat and add shredded cabbage. When it starts to wilt, add ½ cup of white-wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons of sugar, and fresh greens, like arugula and watercress. Add salt and pepper to taste.	Serve it over Chinese noodles, and let the little ones try their hands at chopsticks.	Fennel Gingerroot Archieholes
APR  KEVIN TAYLOR Kevin Taylor Restaurant Group, Denver Father of one	 MUSHROOMS The caps should be firm, spongy, and dry, not slippery.														MUSHROOM PASTA SAUCE Taylor suggests pairing delicately flavored mushrooms with pasta, rather than overpowering them with meat. Use earthy chanterelles or nutty morels. Sauté them in light butter, a bit of cream, and some freshly grated lemon zest. Toss with fresh pasta.	Pair the mushrooms with small, scoopable pasta: ditalini, wagon wheels, shells.	Shallots Radishes
MAY  ALFRED PORTALE Gotham Bar and Grill, New York City Father of one	 ASPARAGUS A bundle of fresh spears makes a squeaking noise when squeezed.														STEAMED ASPARAGUS "Good asparagus needs little adornment," says Portale. He peels his at the bottom, which can make them more tender. He then steams the stalks and adds salt, olive oil, and a squeeze of lemon. To make a meal of it, Portale throws a fried egg on top.	Put the fried egg next to the spears and have the kids dip the asparagus into the yolk.	Fiddlehead ferns Sweet peas Strawberries Violet onions
JUNE  JASON ALLEY Comfort, Richmond & Portsmouth, Virginia Father of two	 PEACHES A peach should smell like a peach—no smell usually translates to no taste.														PEACHES AND CREAM Alley dresses up this classic dessert. Pit and slice fresh peaches and add blueberries, black pepper, rosemary, lemon juice, honey, and a dash of Grand Marnier. Let the mixture marinate, then serve with whipped cream.	It's healthy enough to give your child seconds. Leave out the booze, match.	Bell peppers Zucchini Onion Apricots
JULY  JOE TRUEX Repost, Atlanta Father of one	 CORN Look for ears that are still in moist, green husks. Those are likely to be freshest.														COLD CORN SOUP Sauté some onion and several ears' worth of corn kernels in a little corn oil over low heat. Add a can of vegetable stock and chili. Then puree, strain, and serve with shrimp or a dollop of sour cream. "One tablespoon of soup is like a whole ear of corn," Truex says.	"My son doesn't even use a spoon—he just picks up the bowl and slurps."	Cucumbers Baccharis Raspberries Lima beans
AUG  VICTORIA GRAND contributing editor, <i>Cookie</i> Mother of one	 TOMATOES Choose vines, Roma, and heirlooms will be firm, fully colored, and very fragrant.														SLOW-COOKED TOMATOES Put a bunch of whole heirloom tomatoes and olive oil into an overnight dish and slow-bake them in a toaster oven at 350° F overnight, until they are soft and runny and broken down. "You can use it as pasta sauce or puree it into gazpacho," Grand says.	"For my son, I put the tomato 'puree' into a pan and cook eggs on top. He digs right in."	Green beans Cantaloupe Eggplants Figs
SEPT  BRIAN BISTRONG Braeburn, New York City Father of one	 APPLES Braeburns (fittingly) and Macouns are Bistrong's favorites. Choose with your nose.														HOMEMADE APPLESAUCE Add chunks of cored, peeled apples to a pot of water with lemon juice, Bistrong says. Simmer over medium heat until they're soft, about 15 minutes, then puree them. Eat plain or, for more adult palates, with a rich piece of foie gras.	Bistrong's 18-month-old loves this puree, minus the foie gras. It's the ultimate baby food.	Furrs Pears Lettuce Grapes
OCT  SUZANNE GOIN A.O.C. and Lucques, Los Angeles Mother of two	 POMEGRANATES Tip on the fruit: it will make a slightly tingly sound if it's ripe.														POMEGRANATE SALSA Goin suggests using pomegranates to make a quick fall salsa. Toss pomegranate seeds with diced shallots, pomegranate molasses (available at specialty food shops), olive oil, and chopped parsley. Serve on top of halibut, snapper, or turkey.	If your child resists, sell nutrition-packed pomegranate seeds as "little rubies."	Pearl onions Cranberries Dates
NOV  MICHAEL ANTHONY Gramercy Tavern, New York City Father of two	 SQUASH Make sure it's very firm and has matte rather than shiny skin.														SQUASH CROQUETTES Toss chunks of peeled squash with olive oil, salt, and pepper, Anthony says, and roast them at 325° F until tender, about 40 minutes. Mash and roll them into balls, bread them with flour, eggs, and bread crumbs, and deep-fry them in an inch of peanut oil.	In the Anthony house, these croquettes are known to his two kids as "Daddy nuggets."	Sunchoke Broccoli Radishes Meyer lemons
DEC  DEBORAH MADISON author, <i>Vegetable Soups</i> from Deborah Madison's Kitchen (Broadway)	 BEETS Look for small, hard, boldly colored bulbs.														BEST SALAD The vegetarian-cookbook author says beets are best in salads. Steam them for about 25 minutes, then remove the skin, chop, and toss them with a vinaigrette made of olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and minced garlic. Serve atop arugula, crumbled hard-boiled eggs, and olives.	If nothing else, they'll love your purply pink-stained lips and tongue.	Sweet potatoes Brussels sprouts Chestnuts