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Seasonal food in Calabria

Didactic Material nr. 11



Introduction

Calabria is known for its rich agricultural heritage and diverse landscapes, making it an ideal region for growing a variety of seasonal products. Understanding the importance of consuming food that is naturally available during specific times of the year is essential for supporting local communities and maintaining the balance between nature and agriculture

What is Seasonal Food in Calabria?

Seasonal food refers to products harvested at their natural peak throughout the year. In Calabria, this cycle shapes the region’s **culinary identity**, bringing freshness to traditional recipes.

The cuisine closely follows the seasons: bergamot in winter, tomatoes, figs, and eggplants in summer. This availability guides what appears on the table while respecting agricultural rhythms.

Choosing seasonal food means enjoying authentic flavors, supporting local farmers, and celebrating Calabria’s rich biodiversity with lower environmental impact.

Season	 Fruits	 Vegetables	 Others
 Spring (Mar–May)	Strawberries, loquats, early cherries 	Artichokes, wild asparagus, fava beans, peas, spinach, lettuce, arugula 	Herbs (oregano, wild fennel) 
 Summer (Jun–Aug)	Peaches  , apricots, plums, watermelon  , melon, figs, early grapes 	Tomatoes  , eggplants  , zucchini, peppers  , cucumbers 	Fresh basil  , chili pepper 
 Autumn (Sep–Nov)	Grapes  , pomegranates, pears, apples  , chestnuts  , dried figs	Pumpkins  , mushrooms  , broccoli, cauliflower, chard	Olives  , walnuts
 Winter (Dec–Feb)	Oranges  , mandarins, clementines IGP, bergamot, kiwis 	Cabbages, kale, cardoons, fennel, turnips, potatoes 	Citrus fruits for juices and liqueurs 

Here you can read [The Definitive Guide to Seasonal Eating in Italy.](#)

Why is it important?

Each time we buy seasonal food, we are making a choice that benefits our health (as you can see in [this article](#)), our local community, and the environment. Seasonal food is not only healthier and tastier, but it also helps preserve local culinary traditions and reduce food waste.

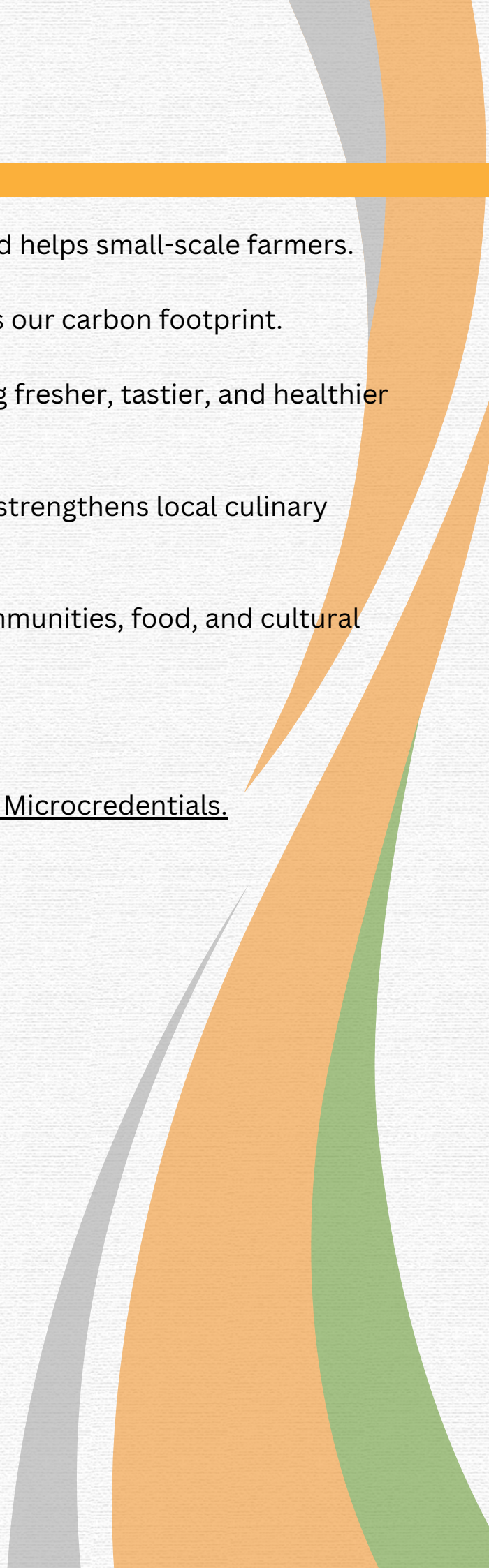
What are the benefits?

- 1. Environmental Impact:** Eating seasonal food reduces the need for energy-intensive farming practices such as heated greenhouses or storage facilities. This results in a smaller carbon footprint, less resource use, and a more sustainable food system.
- 2. Support for Local Economies:** Seasonal food is typically grown by small, local farmers. By purchasing their products, you are keeping money within the local community and contributing to the economic growth of rural areas.
- 3. Freshness and Quality:** Seasonal produce is harvested at its peak, meaning it has higher nutritional value and better taste compared to products that are stored for long periods or transported from far away.
- 4. Biodiversity:** Growing seasonal products promotes the cultivation of a variety of crops, maintaining agricultural diversity and reducing reliance on monocultures, which can be harmful to the soil and ecosystem..
- 5. Transparency and Trust:** Buying from local markets allows consumers to know where their food comes from, building trust in the quality and production methods of the items they purchase.
- 6. Cultural Preservation:** Seasonal food helps maintain traditional recipes and culinary customs tied to specific times of the year. This not only keeps cultural traditions alive but also strengthens the connection between the local community and its heritage.

What can I do?

- **Buy fresh veggies and seasonal products in the local markets.** In Calabria, local markets have become a symbol of sustainable and seasonal food consumption. With weekly markets spread across the region—from Reggio Calabria to the Ionian coast—residents and visitors alike have easy access to fresh, seasonal produce. Whether you're buying citrus fruits in Siderno or wild greens in Bova Marina, these markets offer a glimpse into the true essence of Calabrian cuisine. For more information on where to find these markets, visit: [Weekly Markets in Calabria](#), you can also check this video about the [Market from Amantea](#).
- **Learn About Local Produce:** Discover fruits and vegetables in season, like bergamot in winter and Tropea onions, and other [local products](#).
- **Support Local Restaurants:** Dine at restaurants that use seasonal ingredients and highlight Calabrian cuisine, like [Locanda del Borgo in Tropea](#).
- **Attend Food Festivals:** Celebrate local flavors, such as the Bergamot Festival in Reggio Calabria or local harvest fairs, like [this winter markets](#).
- **Grow Your Own:** Plant herbs or vegetables suited to the Calabrian climate to connect with seasonal rhythms. You can follow [@BalconyGardenIdeas](#) for tutorials.
- **Follow Local Chefs and Influencers:** Get inspired by Calabrian culinary experts on social media for seasonal recipes, like [@calabriafood.official](#).
- **Use Seasonal Food Apps:** Apps like [Kuri](#) help track what's in season and promote eating local, fresh ingredients.

What have I learnt?



- Seasonal food supports local economies and helps small-scale farmers.
- It reduces environmental impact and lowers our carbon footprint.
- Choosing seasonal products means enjoying fresher, tastier, and healthier food.
- Seasonal eating preserves biodiversity and strengthens local culinary traditions.
- It fosters a deeper connection between communities, food, and cultural heritage.

All is summarized in the [European approach of Microcredentials](#).

Micro-credential 1

Understanding Nutrition

- 1.1 value sustainability by reflecting on personal values while critically evaluating how they align with sustainability values.
- 1.2 Supporting fairness to support equity and justice for current and future generations and learn from previous generations for sustainability.
- 1.3 Promoting nature to acknowledge that humans are part of nature; and to respect the needs and rights of other species and of nature itself in order to restore and regenerate healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Micro-credential 2

Adopting Healthy Eating Habits

- 2.1 (Systems thinking), to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider times, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems.
- 2.2 (Critical thinking) To assess information and arguments, identify assumptions, challenge the status quo, and reflect on how personal, social and cultural backgrounds influence thinking and conclusions.
- 2.3 (Problem framing) To formulate current or potential challenges as a sustainability problem in terms of difficulty, people involved, time and geographical scope, in order to identify suitable approaches to anticipating and preventing problems, and to mitigating and adapting to already existing problems.

Micro-credential 4

Promoting a Balanced Diet

- 3.1 (Futures literacy) to envision alternative sustainable futures by imagining and developing alternative scenarios and identifying the steps needed to achieve a preferred sustainable future.
- 3.2 (Adaptability) to manage transitions and challenges in complex sustainability situations and make decisions related to the future in the face of uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.
- 3.3 (Explorator thinking) to adopt a relational way of thinking by exploring and linking different disciplines, using creativity and experimentation with novel ideas or methods.