



Lesson plan for teachers

Lesson 9: How to use what's in season



Learning intentions

- ★ To understand the value of eating seasonally
- ★ To learn how to prepare different vegetables
- ★ To make **Baked carrots in a bag**, **Lemony green beans**, **Simple dressed asparagus** and **Wilted spinach with garlic and nutmeg**

Key skills

- ★ Washing vegetables
- ★ Baking vegetables
- ★ Sautéing vegetables
- ★ Boiling vegetables
- ★ Seasoning

Before the lesson

- ★ Read through the lesson plan and narrative in full
- ★ Read through the recipes in full
- ★ Print one copy each recipe per pupil
- ★ Gather ingredients and equipment needed for the **Baked carrots in a bag**, **Lemony green beans**, **Simple dressed asparagus** and **Wilted spinach with garlic and nutmeg**
- ★ Source seasonal vegetables from the garden or a local farm and buy the remaining vegetables from the supermarket, reserving the label that indicates their country of origin

Running order

- 1 Welcome children to the classroom
- 2 Introduce learning intentions
- 3 Explain what it means to cook and eat seasonally and why it's important
- 4 Recap rules and get ready to cook
- 5 Introduce carrots and explain that although they can be grown throughout the year, this is the perfect dish for autumn
- 6 Prepare **Baked carrots in a bag** recipe
- 7 Introduce spinach and explain the importance of washing green vegetables
- 8 Introduce green beans and explain that they're a summer vegetable
- 9 Prepare dressing for **Lemony green beans** recipe
- 10 Prepare and boil the green beans for **Lemony green beans** recipe
- 11 Introduce asparagus and explain that they're a spring vegetable
- 12 Prepare and boil asparagus for **Simple dressed asparagus** recipe
- 13 Assemble **Lemony green beans** recipe
- 14 Assemble **Simple dressed asparagus** recipe
- 15 Explain that there are two types of spinach – today you'll need the bigger spinach leaves that are in season in winter
- 16 Prepare **Wilted spinach with garlic and nutmeg** recipe
- 17 Sit down to taste
- 18 Finish with discussion questions

Terms and techniques

- | | | |
|---------------|----------|------------|
| ★ Seasonality | ★ Winter | ★ Snapping |
| ★ Food miles | ★ Summer | ★ Boiling |
| ★ Autumn | ★ Spring | ★ Sautéing |



Lesson narrative for teachers

Lesson 9: How to use what's in season



Introduction: 20 minutes



Today we're going to talk about what it means to eat and cook seasonally. We're going to focus on preparing a selection of vegetables in different ways, looking at which vegetables are best to eat at certain times of the year and why.

First, let's start with the word "seasonally". What is a season? A season is a period of the year that is characterised by the length of daylight, the weather and the outside temperature, but also by the types of plants that grow. Fruit and vegetables naturally grow in cycles, and ripen during a certain season each year. How many seasons are there in a year? **Four**. Who can name them? **Spring, summer, autumn, winter**. Right, so spring, summer, autumn and winter each have their own weather patterns, their own temperatures and their own lengths of daylight, and all of these things affect the plants that grow.

So, what does it mean to cook or eat seasonally?

★ Ask the children to share what they think cooking or eating seasonally means.



Eating seasonally means making use of fruit and vegetables during the time of year that they are naturally at their best. When produce is naturally ripened it means it's at its peak, both in terms flavour and also nutrition.

Who knows which season it is right now? Can you name some of the fruit or vegetables in season in Britain at the moment? Think about the things growing in our garden that are ready to eat right now.

★ Break the children into four groups and give each group a season. Get each group to think of a few fruits or vegetables that are available in their season. Give them hints about the weather, and the styles of cooking that we associate with different times of year. Regroup.



Modern technology means that we can buy fruit and vegetables all year round, but that's because they're either being grown in greenhouses, or flown in from warmer countries where they're picked before they're ripe and before they're able to fully develop their flavour.

There was a time when fruit and vegetables were only eaten when they were available in the local area. People were used to eating seasonally, rather than buying produce that has been flown in from other places – it meant that there were some times of the year, like the summer, when there were loads of different fruits and vegetables, and other times, particularly the winter, when the produce was more limited. This pattern of only eating the food that was available meant that when there was a lot of a certain crop available, people would cook creatively. They learnt different ways to preserve or save the abundance of produce, by making things like jams, chutneys and pickles from the summer's harvest to last them until the following year.

Eating seasonally is exciting. It's great to have new things to look forward to, rather than getting stuck in a rut with the same old fruit and veg. And produce that hasn't had to travel far is much tastier than produce that's had a long journey to get to your plate. It's great to cook seasonally too – food that's available in winter can be made into delicious, heart-warming dishes, while there's plenty of produce in the summer to give you fresh, light meals, that are perfect for the warmer weather – think comforting root veg stews in the winter and zingy, fresh salads in the summer.

Lesson 9 continued: How to use what's in season



There are other reasons to eat seasonally too. Not only for us, but for the environment. When we pack and ship food across the world, we use a lot of fuel and create pollution that damages the environment. Eating food that's in season helps support local farmers, and reduces the miles that your food has to travel before it gets to your local supermarket or grocery store. We call these miles "food miles".

Today we're going to look at different vegetables that are in season at different times of the year. We'll learn about the different techniques we can use to prepare and cook different seasonal vegetables and we'll be looking at where our vegetables travelled from to get here. Let's get ready to cook!

Children get ready to cook:

- ★ Roll up sleeves
- ★ Tie hair back
- ★ Remove jewellery
- ★ Put apron on
- ★ Wash hands

Cover the key rules for the kitchen, suggesting ideas if the children aren't heading in the right direction.

Cooking: 1 hour



The different vegetables that we're looking at today are: spring asparagus, summer green beans, autumnal root vegetables and winter spinach. Put your hand up if you've ever tried any of these vegetables? Keep your hands up if you like them already.

When people say that they don't like eating vegetables, it only takes about 10 seconds to work out why. More often than not, people have only ever eaten overcooked, soggy vegetables without any dressing or flavouring, which is enough to put anyone off.

Vegetables need care and attention – in the same way that a salad needs to be dressed, cooked vegetables need to be looked after, whether it's with a simple dressing, just a bit of seasoning or a drizzle of olive oil. The worst thing that you can do is overcook your veg so they end up mushy, or undercook them so they're still squeaky and too hard to eat. Today we're going to try lots of different ways of cooking vegetables and mix them with flavours that make them taste delicious.

Let's start with our root vegetables. We're going to be making carrots that will be roasted in a bag in the oven, and since we want to get started straight away, we need to set our oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6.

★ Get one of the children to set the oven temperature. Pass the carrots round for the children to look at.



What do we know about carrots?

- ★ Get the children to share any observations or facts they know about carrots.









We're going to begin by practising our peeling skills.

- ★ Give the children Y-shaped peelers and recap how to peel safely.

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	Once our carrots are peeled we need to slice them into chunky round pieces.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Demonstrate slicing the carrot into pieces on a chopping board using the bridge technique (secure the board). If there's adequate supervision, give out the knives and get each child to prepare two carrots. Collect the carrots into a large mixing bowl.
	Next we're going to create a bag using kitchen foil, which we're then going to put our carrots into.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Create the bag with a half a metre of kitchen foil, folding it in half to create a crease and then opening it out again. Get the children to pile the carrots into the middle, to one side of the crease. Demonstrate how to finely slice the bacon and add to the carrots (if using).
	Now, one of the things key to creating the perfect vegetables is to add all sorts of fantastic flavours to them. Today we're going to use rosemary, garlic, orange zest, marmalade and the juice from an orange to flavour our carrots while they're cooking. You might not think it, but oranges and carrots actually go really well together – adding the juice of an orange helps bring out the sweetness of the carrots and makes them really tasty.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Get the children to pick the rosemary leaves, discarding the stalks. Collect all the rosemary onto a chopping board and demonstrate cross chopping the herbs before adding them to the carrots. Get one of the children to smash the garlic, breaking it into cloves. Demonstrate peeling and chopping the garlic, then add it to the carrots.
	Alright, we need to add some orange zest to our carrots. Who knows what zest is? Zest is the outer peel of a citrus fruit, like our orange. It's jam-packed full of flavour, so you don't need much of it. We're going to collect the zest by grating the outside of our orange using a microplane grater. We need to be very careful because the grater is very sharp. We also need to make sure we stop grating as soon as we see the white pith – the pith can be quite bitter, so we only want the orange skin.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Demonstrate zesting the orange. Show the pith and let them smell the orange zest. Get children to measure and add the marmalade and the butter, and season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper. Fold the empty half of the foil over the carrots and scrunch and seal the two sides of the bag together, leaving one end open. Demonstrate using the bridge to cut the orange in half and get two children to squeeze all of the juice into the bag, catching any pips with their hands. Seal up the final side of the bag and place on a baking tray. Place in the hot oven and set a timer to bake for 50 minutes, or until softened.
	While the carrots are baking, we're going to wash our spinach. It's important to always wash your greens well, using your fingers to rub off any stubborn dirt or mud, and always check to make sure there are no slugs or bugs hiding between the layers of leaves. After you wash them, transfer the leaves to a salad spinner to spin dry. If you don't have a salad spinner at home, that's OK, just put them into a clean tea towel, gather the edges up, then stand outside and spin it around your head. Keep a good grip on the towel though or your greens will go flying everywhere!
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Get the children to wash the spinach and spin it dry. Put the spinach to one side while you move onto the green beans.
	Green beans are a classic summer vegetable.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">★ Show the children the green beans.

Lesson 9 continued: How to use what's in season



There are all sorts of different climbing beans that belong to the same family as our lovely green beans. With some types, we eat the beans inside the pods, and with some others, like the ones we're cooking today, we eat the pod itself. Beans go well with almost everything: alongside meat and fish, tossed warm or cold in salads or added to soups and pasta dishes. Today we are going to boil them and season them with some herbs and a lovely lemon dressing.

Let's start by making the dressing. We're going to add some herbs to the basic lemon dressing we've made before. We are using flat-leaf parsley today, but you could also use mint, tarragon or chervil – any soft herb you like, really. Parsley is a strong-flavoured herb that comes in two varieties: flat-leaf and curly. The stalks are commonly used to flavour stocks in things like soup and gravy, and the leaves are great chopped and sprinkled over vegetables, soups, pasta dishes and even salads. They're also delicious in a dressing, which is what we're going to do now.

★ Get the children to follow the recipe and make the lemon dressing in a jam jar, then get them to shake it well.



Now we're going to give our green beans a quick wash, then carefully cut off the ends. The wispy tops are fine, but we just want to carefully remove the bottom stalks.

★ Demonstrate how to cut the ends off the beans. Get the children to prepare a small pile of beans, then collect the beans into a bowl.



We're going to boil our beans in a large pan of boiling water. All green vegetables are cooked in water that's already boiling, whereas root vegetables are usually put into the pan with cold water. Beans need to be cooked on a high heat for a short time. We want them to keep their bright green colour, so you need to time it carefully to make sure they're cooked but not overcooked – you'll know if they're overcooked because they'll turn a dark greenish-brown colour. Once the vegetables are cooked, we would usually drain well in a colander or a sieve over the sink. Today we're going to use the same pan to cook our beans and our asparagus, so instead of draining them, we're going to use a slotted spoon to remove the beans from the water then, when our asparagus is ready, we'll drain the water.

★ Get the children to carry the beans to the hob. Half-fill a large saucepan with cold water.



What do we now need to add to our water? **A tiny pinch of salt.**

We want to add a tiny pinch of salt to the water to help season our vegetables, and then we'll bring it to the boil. Who can remember what temperature water boils at? **100°C.**








While we wait for our water and our beans to boil, we're going to make a start on our spring asparagus. Put your hand up if you've tried asparagus before. Asparagus ripens in the spring and it has a pretty short season, but it's worth the wait. Nowadays, there are all sorts of asparagus available from all parts of the world, but it's best when it's local and super fresh. Just like our beans, we need to give them a quick wash and then snap off the woody ends before we boil them.

★ Wash the asparagus and demonstrate how to snap off the woody ends. Get the children to prepare the asparagus while the green beans are cooking.

★ Using a slotted spoon, remove the green beans to a colander and leave to steam dry over the sink. Gather the children around the pan to watch the asparagus boil.

Lesson 9 continued: How to use what's in season



	<p>★ Explain that asparagus only needs around two minutes to cook (depending on the thickness of the stems) and show the children how their colour changes to vibrant green. Using oven gloves, carefully carry the pan to the sink. Place the green beans into a mixing bowl, and carefully drain the asparagus. Get the children to dress the green beans while they're still warm and arrange the asparagus nicely on a serving plate.</p>
	<p>We're going to finish our asparagus with a nice drizzle of olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice and some Parmesan cheese.</p>
	<p>★ Ask one of the children to grate a handful of Parmesan using a box grater and another child to measure out the olive oil. Slice a lemon in half using the bridge and ask one of the children to squeeze the juice over the asparagus, using their fingers to catch any pips. Season the asparagus and get one of the children to sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese.</p>
	<p>Alright, let's set our spring asparagus and our summer beans to one side. Can someone tell me which season we haven't covered yet? Winter. For winter we're going to make Wilted spinach with garlic and nutmeg.</p>
	<p>★ Hold up the spinach for the children to see.</p>
	<p>There are different varieties of spinach: baby spinach with small delicate leaves, which you might have seen in a salad, and nice big leafy spinach. Winter spinach has a dark green colour and is one of the few vegetables that can handle the colder weather. The dish that we're making today is nice and warming, so it's perfect for those cold winter days.</p> <p>Has anyone ever seen this before? This is called nutmeg.</p>
	<p>★ Show the children the nutmeg and pass it round so that everyone can smell it.</p>
	<p>Traditional British cooking uses nutmeg a lot in sweet dishes, especially in cakes, biscuits and Christmas pudding. However, spinach and nutmeg are great friends. We're going to grate a few scrapings of nutmeg over our garlicky spinach after it's cooked. We need to begin with our garlic – the recipe says to peel and finely chop it. Cloves of garlic can be quite small and fiddly, so always ask an adult to do the chopping for you, or you can also use a garlic crusher instead of a knife.</p>
	<p>★ Ask the children to peel the garlic by bashing the cloves with the palm of their hands, then peeling off the skin. Use a garlic crusher to crush the garlic into a bowl.</p>
	<p>We're going to sauté the spinach and the garlic in a large frying pan – this will make the spinach wilt. First, we're going to turn the hob onto a medium-high heat and add 1 teaspoon of olive oil to the pan.</p>
	<p>★ Place a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Get one of the children to add the oil.</p>
	<p>Next, we're going to add our garlic.</p>
	<p>★ Get the children to add the garlic and cook for around 1 minute or until lightly golden.</p>
	<p>And then we need to add our spinach. We need to be very careful as we add the spinach to the oil, because it might spit and splatter when it hits the pan. Don't worry that there's a lot, it'll cook right down. We're going to let it cook for around 2 to 3 minutes, so we need two children to keep a close eye on it, stirring occasionally so that all of the spinach wilts.</p>

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★ Choose two children to stir the spinach. Once ready, carefully carry the pan to the sink. Warn the children that there's a hot pan, and make sure you have the colander ready in the sink. Drain well, reminding children that if they don't, they'll end up with watery spinach that will wash away all the other lovely flavours that they're going to be adding – no one likes soggy spinach.



All that's left to do is to season it. We need two children to season the spinach by grating over 12 strokes of nutmeg and add a tiny pinch of salt and pepper. We are going to use a microplane to grate the nutmeg, and we need to be very careful because it is very sharp. To finish, we're going to drizzle over 1 teaspoon of olive oil.

★ Get the children to season and dress the spinach, then carefully transfer to serving a dish.



We're almost ready to eat. We just need to tidy up, and then we can take everything to the table.

★ Remind the children that they need to be careful when carrying and washing knives and other sharp objects.

★ Get the children to lay the table and carefully carry the dishes to the table for tasting. Use oven gloves to remove carrots from the oven. Carefully open the bag and transfer to a serving dish. Get the children to taste each dish, comparing the flavours, textures and styles of cooking.

Discussion question suggestions:

- ★ Which is your favourite vegetable that we tried today?
- ★ Which of the vegetables that we made today are in season right now?
- ★ Where did the other vegetables come from? Can you work out the food miles they travelled to get here?
- ★ What are your favourite vegetables to eat at home?



Your notes...

Baked carrots in a bag



Serves 4



Equipment list

- Y-shaped peeler
- Weighing scales
- Knife
- 2 chopping boards
- Kitchen foil
- Microplane
- Measuring spoons
- Baking tray
- Oven gloves
- Serving dish

Jamie's
top tip

Make sure you're really careful when you open the foil parcel as it will let out very hot steam.

Ingredients

- 800g carrots
- optional: 1 rasher quality smoked streaky bacon
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon marmalade
- a small knob of unsalted butter
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Jamie's
top tip

Raw carrots make a brilliant snack with some homemade dip for dunking - see Minty yoghurt dip recipe for lots of delicious ideas.

Allergy
info



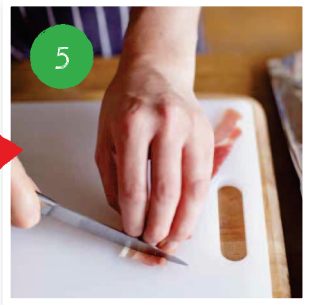
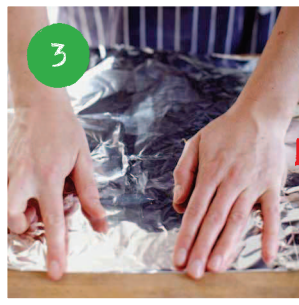
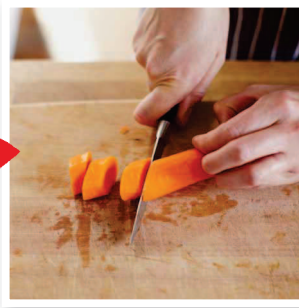
dairy



For nutritional
information ask
your teacher.

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Step by step



Step by step





Lemony green beans

Serves 4



Equipment list

- Chopping board
- Knife
- Empty jam jar with lid
- Measuring spoons
- Medium saucepan (20cm)
- Weighing scales
- Colander
- Tongs
- Serving bowl



You don't have to use flat-leaf parsley in this recipe - try soft herbs such as fresh mint, chervil, tarragon or curly parsley instead and see which you prefer. Delicious served alongside grilled meat and fish, or as part of a salad.

Ingredients

- ½ a bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 300g green beans



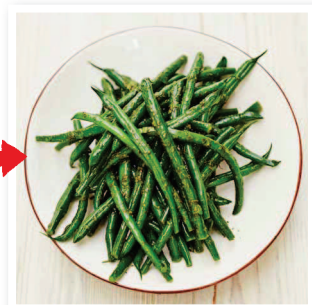
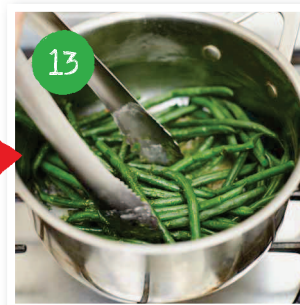
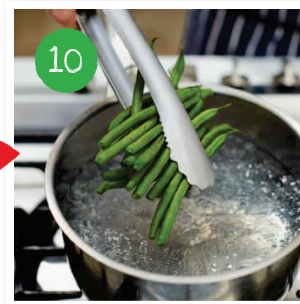
Keep your eyes peeled for different coloured beans - green, yellow or black - as a mixture will make it even more interesting!



For nutritional information ask your teacher.



Step by step



Simple dressed asparagus

Serves 4



These are delicious dunked in a runny boiled egg (see Boiled egg and soldiers recipe), or served simply with grilled meat or fish.

Ingredients

- 500g asparagus
- 15g Parmesan cheese
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon

Equipment list

- Weighing scales
- Microplane
- Chopping board
- Large saucepan (25cm)
- Slotted spoon
- Colander
- Serving plate
- Measuring spoons
- Knife

Here's how to make it

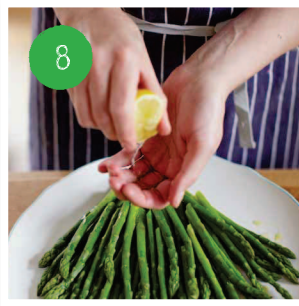
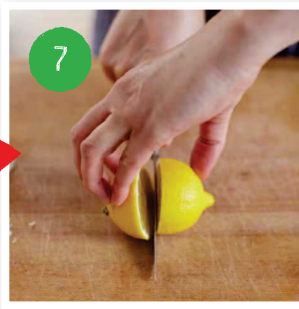
1 Snap off and discard the woody ends of the asparagus stalks – if you bend them towards the bottom, they will break naturally at this point (roughly 3cm to 4cm from the bottom).



- 2** Using a microplane, finely grate the Parmesan cheese onto a chopping board, then put aside.
- 3** Carefully fill a large pan with boiling water, add a tiny pinch of salt and bring back to the boil over a high heat.
- 4** Use a slotted spoon to carefully lower the asparagus into the water and boil hard and fast for 1½ minutes for stalks less than 1cm thick and 2 minutes for stalks any thicker than that – when you test them with a fork, they should be tender but not all soft and losing their shape.
- 5** Carefully drain the asparagus over the sink into a colander, steam dry for a minute, then arrange on a serving plate.
- 6** Drizzle over the extra virgin olive oil.
- 7** Cut the lemon in half.
- 8** Squeeze over the juice, using your fingers to catch any pips.
- 9** Season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper.
- 10** Sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese, then serve.



Step by step



wilted spinach with garlic and nutmeg

Serves 4



Jamie's top tip

Spinach and nutmeg make great friends and are a classic flavour combination used in many countries, especially Italy. Nutmeg adds a slightly nutty and sweet flavour to both savoury and sweet dishes, and you'll find it in all sorts of things from lasagne to custard.

Ingredients

- 2 cloves of garlic
- olive oil
- 400g spinach
- 1 whole nutmeg, for grating
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil

Equipment list

- Chopping board
- Knife
- Large frying pan or wok (30cm)
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Weighing scales
- Tongs
- Colander
- Microplane
- Serving bowl



Here's how to make it

- 1** Peel and finely chop the garlic cloves on a chopping board.
- 2** Place a large frying pan or wok on a medium heat and add 1 teaspoon of olive oil.
- 3** Once hot, add the garlic and cook for around 1 minute, or until golden, stirring occasionally.
- 4** Add all the spinach to the pan (trim and cut away any tough stalky bits, if using winter spinach) – don't worry, it will look like a lot but will soon wilt down.
- 5** Stir the spinach occasionally for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the leaves have cooked right down and are dark green in colour.
- 6** Drain the spinach really well in a colander over the sink, if needed (nobody likes soggy spinach).
- 7** Using a microplane, finely grate over 12 strokes of whole nutmeg (save the rest for another recipe).
- 8** Season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper.
- 9** Drizzle over the extra virgin olive oil.
- 10** Using tongs, gently toss the spinach in the nutmeg and oil, then transfer to a bowl and serve straight away.



For nutritional information ask your teacher.



Step by step

