

fresh

CALL OF NATURE

Warm days, fresh flavours and invigorating ingredients make the transition to spring easy and inviting in the kitchen, writes naturopath **SOPHIE ATKIN**.

SPRING is about lightness, colour and creativity.

It is also about getting outside and enjoying the warmth, cranking up the barbecue, entertaining and relaxing.

In spring, as we emerge from the hibernation of winter, we need to begin the transition to lighter, more colourful foods.

At the beginning of spring there can be a demand on our immune systems as we fight the last of those winter infections and start to breathe in those allergenic pollens.

The days are warm, the nights are still cool, so it can take a little bit for our bodies to adjust.

How clever then, that Mother Nature has provided us with an abundance of mineral-rich, anti-allergic and detox-friendly foods for this time of year.

As your appetite changes, go big on fresh flavours, especially fruits and vegetables, but consume smaller portions to draw energy and strength from light meals of seasonal produce.

Spring colours: The emphasis is on fruit and vegetables of vibrant reds, greens and orange.

Spring textures: Crisp, juicy and fresh.

Spring food preparation:

Throw away the heavy pots, pans and rich, heavy menus. Begin to cook lightly with vibrant herbs and refreshing flavours. Think barbecues and meals based around salads, lightly steamed and stir-fried vegetables. Spring is a season of swift, effortless, light-hearted and creative meals. It is about fresh ingredients that are tossed together in minutes and shared with guests.

Spring table atmosphere:

Bring flowers into your home and onto the table. Start to embrace the warm weather and eat lunch in a sunny spot.

Spring food choices:

Fruits, vegetables and fresh herbs take the spotlight as we cut back on heavy meats, grains and nuts. Serve crisp cool things like salads, sprouts, tofu and fish. And lots of mint and parsley, and add olive oil to draw out the rich minerals and vitamins.

Reduce salt by substituting with cooling herbs and spices: peppermint, mint, rosemary, oregano, basil, parsley and coriander. Or add ginger and chilli: these hot spices disperse heat from the body and stimulate our natural cooling mechanism, sweat.

Treat yourself to snacks and desserts based around mangoes, berries and sweet juicy stone fruits as summer nears.

Spring drinks:

Cool down on water with a squeeze of lemon or lime. Rehydrate with peppermint, chamomile and chrysanthemum teas or slices of watermelon.

RECIPE: Pear and sprout salad with Asian dressing: A great complement to barbecued fish, grilled meats or as a light lunch.

- 2 to 3 firm pears
- 2 handfuls snow pea sprouts
- 2 handfuls bean shoots



- 2 handfuls snow peas
- 1 stick celery
- 1/2 cup coriander
- 1tsp sesame oil
- 1tbsp olive oil
- 1tbs tamari
- 1tsp rice vinegar
- 1tbsp brown sugar
- 1tbsp sesame seeds



ABOVE: Throw away the pots and pans and bring in textures with a green salad.

LEFT: Bring flowers into the home or embrace the warm weather and eat al fresco.

BETWEEN: What better way to boost your anti-oxidants than with asparagus.

BOTTOM: Leading into summer an abundance of local produce makes it easier to eat healthier.



(Tamari is a gluten-free soya sauce made from traditional ingredients).

Thinly slice pears and arrange on top of the greenery. Mix sesame oil, olive oil, tamari, rice vinegar and brown sugar together for the dressing.

Drizzle dressing over. Top with chopped coriander and sesame seeds.

* Sophie is a naturopath with seven years' experience in herbal medicine. Join her on Thursday, September 18, for a DIY herbal medicine-making workshop at her clinic in Wangaratta. Bookings are essential. Visit nenaturalhealthcentre.com/workshops.

Cow and the Moon has ice-cream world title licked

PUNTERS may line up around the block for a taste of Gelato Messina, but another Australian ice-creamer has been hailed for producing the world's best gelato.

Cow and the Moon trumped ice-cream artisans from all over the world on Sunday to take out the Gelato World Tour title in Rimini, Italy.

The family-run gelato and coffee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

bar, based in Enmore in Sydney's inner-west, won for its mouth-watering mandorla affogato flavour,

which is a recreation of the classic affogato.

It combined caramelised almonds sourced from Italy with single origin-roasted coffee shots on a Madagascan vanilla base.

Owners Wendy and John Cowl held a special night at their bar for their regular coffee drinkers to help decide which specific blend of beans

they should use in their winning flavor.

Wendy, who'd just heard the good news from husband John and son Sam in Italy, said she couldn't believe they'd won.

"Beating the Italians at their own game is something we've been trying to do for such a long time," she says.

"My husband has taught so many

Italians how to make gelato, even the Messina boys. He taught them how to make gelato. We're just so excited."

After placing second in the Oceania category, which was taken out by Gelato Messina in Melbourne, Cow and the Moon went on to beat the 24 finalists from around the world after a combination of technical judging and public votes.