

# VIE

Life, Leisure & Style



ULTIMATE SUMMER LIVING

# SUN DRENCHED & DELICIOUS

WORDS Beth Aldrich

Go ahead, throw caution to the wind and have a summer love affair with food. One can't help but marvel at the way gorgeous vegetables and fruits are displayed at stores or in rustic wooden crates at the farmers markets during the summer. Real, fresh, whole food has such brilliant, sun-drenched colors, tantalizing aromas and distinct flavors all their own. Fresh food offers a bouquet of sensations that can brighten our days, bringing a myriad of sensory pleasures; it is a key ingredient in family gatherings throughout the year.

Food can be looked at in many ways – for its flavor, nutritional content, and also for the energy it gives your body. You've heard the expression, you are what you eat. Well, it's true, food makes up the cells in your body, it influences your health and it keeps you energized all day long. Summer is the best time to take advantage of the bountiful array of colorful, nutrient-rich fresh fruits and vegetables available. While most are energizing and make you feel vibrant; here are some of the season's standouts

**Berry, Berry Good:** Nothing says summer more than the aroma of a fresh strawberry or raspberry. Pile 'em high on your plate whenever you can because berries of all kinds are antioxidant-rich superstars that pack a nutritional punch with very few calories. Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries are the most popular varieties available, and they are loaded with vitamins and fiber. They're an ideal way to start the day topped on cereal.

**Pineapple Passion:** This sweet tropical fruit is the perfect ingredient for summer smoothies and juices; it contains the proteolytic enzyme bromelain, which aids in the digestion of protein and blood clot formation, making you feel lighter and more energetic. As an anti-inflammatory super food, pineapple can help reduce swelling and in turn, flatten your belly for even the skimpiest of beachwear.

**Give Peas a Chance:** Big things come in small packages. This is true for the tiny giant, the pea. Brimming with protein, iron and several vitamins and nutrients, these little green babies really perk up your dinner plate with good nutrition and flavor. The same holds true for sugar and snap peas, too.

**Lettuce Liven Up:** A bountiful bowl of lettuce has a scant amount of calories, yet it's loaded with fiber so it will digest fairly quickly making you feel energized. Top with a squeeze of lemon and a bit of olive oil and you'll be invigorated all day long.

**Watermelon Wonder:** Burrowed within the inner pink flesh, watermelon is an unsung hero. Adults and children alike love the sweet, watery refreshing taste, making watermelon a favorite family snack, especially during the summer when it's hot and in season. Watermelon breaks down quickly, so it's best to eat before a heavy meal, ensuring that the heavier foods don't slow down its digestion.

**Lemon Aid:** Lemons are an excellent source of Vitamin C and add great flavour to a variety of recipes or simply to a glass of water. Lemons are alkaline-forming, as such they help balance your body's pH which in turn supports your immune system and helps prevent disease. Many foods we eat are actually acidic creating an environment in our bodies that encourage illness. Eating foods that are alkaline-forming, you can neutralize the acid build up and balance your body's pH levels.

Eating summer foods at their peak in-season, grown from local farmers markets or from your own garden, you have more sustained energy, feel healthier and have a stronger sense of connection to your home and community which gives you an uplifting, overall fabulous feeling inside and out.

