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Inside this issue:

<i>The 8 healthiest winter vegetables</i>	1-2
<i>Seasonal spotlight on Winter squash</i>	3
<i>Squash recipe</i>	3
<i>Things you didn't know about squash</i>	3
<i>Bio-cosmetics tips</i>	4
<i>Top-up your box</i>	4

Winter in Belgium

Gardens may be frosted over, but when it comes to vegetables, this is the perfect season for tasty recipes with some of the healthiest vegetables.

In this edition, we review some of the healthiest vegetables available in Belgium at this time

of year.

The vegetables featured will be included in subscribers vegetable boxes in coming weeks. All winter vegetables will be sourced from Belgium farms whenever possible.

If you are interested to know

more about the farms that we source from, we will be writing special articles about individual producers starting in the next newsletter.

If you are interested to know more or have any comments, please write to us at ben@reason2.be

The 8 healthiest winter vegetables

- **Kale** (*borenkool* in Flemish and *Chou frise* in French)

Why? This descendent of wild cabbage is a member of the *Cruciferae* family, along with broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and collards. Kale originated in Asia Minor; around 600 B.C., and Celtic wanderers most likely brought the vegetable to Europe. Leafy green kale is an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C and manganese. It also has plenty of dietary fiber, copper, calcium, vitamin B6 and potassium.

Look For: Crisp, tender leaves that are bright in color.

Make: Do not eat these raw. Instead, here's a favorite recipe. Sauté onions and then add the

chopped Kale. Pour about 2 inches of salted water over the top. Now, slowly pour a small amount of olive oil over the top in a spiral. This will make the kale even tenderer. Do not stir until the very end of cooking. Simmer the kale over low heat for at least an hour. Try adding cooked kale to your salads or eat for breakfast or brunch with eggs.



- **Artichokes** (*Artichaut* in French and *Artisjok* in Flemish)

Why? Artichokes are a great source of fibre and vitamin C, and have minerals like magnesium, folate, copper, potassium and phosphorus. Be sure you cut off all of the point "chokes" before cooking with a pair of scissors.

Look for: Heavy artichokes that are tightly closed.

Make: Steamed artichokes taste great with little adornment. Cultured butter or olive oil with a squirt of lemon and dash of Sea Salt are all you need. Cut up steamed artichoke bottoms or "hearts" from last night's dinner into your salad.

The 8 healthiest winter vegetables *continued*



- **Cabbage** (*Kool in Flemish and chou in French*)

Why? Grown in ancient Greece and Rome, cabbage was considered a cure-all for a myriad of health conditions. Later, sailors took sauerkraut on long voyages to prevent scurvy. Now we know that cabbage (especially fermented cabbage) has amazing anti-cancer properties and is an excellent source of vitamins A and C.

Look For: Tight and firm heads with no broken or bruised leaves.

Make: You can make your own cultured veggies and kimchi to really benefit from the wonderful cleansing benefit of cabbage.



- **Winter Squash** (*Courge/ potimarron in French and pompoen in Flemish*)

Why? Winter squash comes in a variety of shapes and flavors. Examples are acorn, butternut, buttercup and delicata squash. Pick one (or more) that you enjoy for a delicious and nutritious winter dish. Winter squash is an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and fiber, and a good source of folate and thiamin.

Look For: A squash that feels heavy for its size. Skin should be thick and hard without blemishes.

Make: See page 3 for suggestions

- **Brussels sprouts** (*Spruitjes in Flemish and choux de Bruxelles in French*)

Why? Native to Belgium, these little vegetables were once a staple all around Europe. An excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin K, they also have folate, vitamin A, manganese, dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin B6 and thiamin (vitamin B1), omega-3 fatty acids, iron, phosphorous, protein, magnesium, riboflavin (vitamin B2), vitamin E, copper and calcium. Brussels sprouts also have amazing disease-fighting phytochemicals.

Make: Steamed Brussels sprouts with butter and Sea Salt are excellent.

- **Turnip Greens** (*Navet in French and raap in Flemish*)

Why? Turnip greens are an amazing source of vitamin A (through their concentration of carotenoids such as beta-carotene), vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin B6, folate, copper, calcium, and dietary fiber. These nutrients are of special importance when fighting rheumatoid arthritis, colorectal cancer and atherosclerosis.

Look for: Healthy, un-wilted leaves and moist stems.

Make: Turnip greens cook up beautifully. Slice off the stems and just quickly sauté the leaves with onions and cook until tender. Mix with other greens for flavor and texture.

- **Broccoli** (*Broccoli in Flemish and broccoli in French*)

Why? Broccoli contains *glucosinolates* (special phytochemicals), and the carotenoid, lutein. Broccoli is an excellent source of the vitamins K, C, and A, as well as folate and fiber. Broccoli is a very good source of phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and the vitamins B6 and E.

Look for: Firm stems with heads that are a dark green-purple color. Buds should be closed with no sign of yellow flowers.

Make: Broccoli florets can be steamed until tender.

- **Cauliflower** (*Bloemkool in Flemish and chou-fleur in French*)

Why? The milky, sweet, nutty flavor of cauliflower is a nice change from stronger-flavored vegetables. Even though it lacks chlorophyll, cauliflower has plenty of other nutrients including vitamin C (91.5% of the DV), folate and dietary fiber. Cauliflower is even a good source of omega-3 fatty acids.

Look for: Tightly packed heads that have no brown spots.

Make: Delicious soups and pureed cauliflower spice up your usual vegetable routine.

A reason to be seasonal: Winter squash

Squash are fleshy vegetables protected by a hard rind. They belong to the plant family that includes melons and cucumbers

Winter squash comes in a variety of shapes and flavours. Examples are acorn, butternut, buttercup, hubbard, spaghetti, pumpkin and potimarron

Most winter squashes are vine-type plants whose fruits are harvested when fully mature.

They take longer to mature than summer squash (3 months or more) and are best harvested once the cool weather of autumn sets in.

They can be stored for months in a cool basement-hence the name "winter" squash. Winter squash have hard, thick skins.

In Belgium, a common type of squash is the potimarron. The name comes from Potiron (pumpkin) and marron (Chesnut). It is a very aromatic

and chesnut-like in taste. It is known as one of the best varieties of squash for baking and roasting.

Squash can be cooked in different ways, including baking, boiling, sautéing and steaming.

If you don't have a lot of time, they can be cut into chunks and microwaved for around 7 minutes



Belgian potimarron squash

Seasonal recipe - Baked squash

Ingredients:

1/3 cup olive oil
3 slices of bacon cut in 1/4 inch (1cm) short strips
2 onions minced
One 1 1/2 kilo (3 pound) squash peeled, sliced and cut into 3/4 inch (4 cm) cubes
2 bay leaves
2 garlic cloves crushed and minced
a couple grates of nutmeg
salt and pepper as needed
3 tablespoons of honey

Directions:

In a large deep frying pan, pour in enough olive oil to cover the bottom, reserving the rest for later. Turn your flame up to medium high, and add the bacon bits and onions. Sauté till the onions are sweated and the bacon cooked. Add the squash and the remaining oil, and sauté over a medium flame, allowing them to lightly brown, for 10-15 minutes. They should start to become

tender. Now remove the squash from the flame, fold in the bay leaves, the minced garlic, and nutmeg. Salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a baking dish/tian/gratin dish and place in the oven at 400F or 200C. Let bake for 30 minutes, or till tender. When just about done, drizzle the honey over the top, return to the oven and bake for another 10 minutes or till the honey caramelizes.

Baked potimarron



How to cook squash

First remove fibers and seeds; then bake, steam, or boil the squash. When water is used in cooking, the quantity of water should be kept small to avoid losing flavor and nutrients. Acorn and butternut squash are frequently cut in half, baked, and served in the shell. Squash pulp is also used for pies and may be prepared in casseroles,

Facts about winter squash

The term "summer" and "winter" for squash are only based on current usage, not on actuality.

The English word 'squash' derives from askutsquash (literally, 'a green thing eaten raw'), which is a word from the Narragansett language.

Although considered a vegetable, botanically speaking, squash is a fruit as it a receptacle for seeds.

The smallest squash are usually the tastiest

Squash seeds can be eaten directly, ground into paste or

pressed for vegetable oil

Squash is low in calories, fat and sodium and a good source of fibre and potassium.

Squash has been a staple for the Native Americans for more than 5000 years. Columbus brought squash back to Europe from the New World

Valerie's bio-cosmetics tips

Winter is around and this season is generally not a favourite of many; mainly because it is harsh on the skin. Many of the dry skin conditions that victimize us in the winter can be alleviated. Cleanse the face and body with warm water instead of hot water. Hot water and steam tends to have a drying effect when used too frequently and/or for lengthy periods of time. There are many ways to exfoliate our skin. For good natural products check the Faith in Nature range of organic toiletries and cosmetics at www.reason2.be.

Compostable packaging

At reason2.be we use compostable packaging made from sugar cane to pack some of the fruit and vegetables. We challenge any our customers to send a photograph of how you have used your packaging, and we will feature it in a future newsletter

Sugar cane compostable tray



Who are we

We are a husband and wife team hailing from Manchester and Le Mans respectively.

We have a passion for organic food, and have been running reason2.be since October 2008.

We welcome any feedback or comments you may have in improving our service.




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reason2.be

Delivering quality 

Top-up your organic box

Kallo organic
savoury rice cake
bites (40g)

€0.99



Amisa organic
spelt crispy muesli
(500g)

€3.99



Clipper organic &
fair-trade loose
green tea (125g)

€3.99



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www.reason2.be