

## Week 2: Diet

### Informational material on regional and seasonal nutrition

#### Regional: Why?

Those who buy products that come from the region are often supplied with fresh food that has not already been transported for several days and therefore often tastes better and is healthier because it contains more nutrients. Due to the reduced transport routes and storage needs, it is beneficial for the climate, fewer greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide are released by aircraft, truck, ship, etc. or are needed for cooling. The flying goods are particularly problematic, these are mostly very perishable or fresh foods such as fish or fruit (mangos, papayas, pineapples, etc.). Although only about 1% of all food from non-European countries is transported to Germany by air, it causes 10-16% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions caused by food transports. It is therefore worthwhile to do without airfreight.

Now the question arises: What actually means regionally? Where is the border of the region? This is exactly where the problem lies, because the term "region" is not legally protected or defined. As a consumer, you are sometimes exposed to the uncertainty of whether the product comes from within a radius of 30 kilometres, from the same federal state or simply from somewhere in Germany. Therefore, it makes sense not only to rely on advertising terms such as "from here" or "from the region", but also to pay attention to specific regional information or to buy directly from the farmer or on the market, where the origin can be inquired. It can also be misleading if regional brands (e.g. "Unser-Norden") or regional specialities with a protected geographical indication (e.g. "Lübecker Marzipan", "Nürnberger Rostbratwurst") make the consumer believe that the place mentioned is the place of origin of the raw materials and that production and further processing took place there. In fact, the "protected geographical indication" (EU-wide labelling (PGI) but, for example, only one stage of production may take place in the area in question.





There are also a few other voluntary regional labels in Germany that are not legally defined:

1. Identification marks: The oval mark is only an orientation, not a sign of origin. It can be found on packaging of dairy products, eggs and meat and consists of a code, for example DD-NRW-xxx. This makes it clear that the last processing stage or the packaging originates from NRW.
2. Regional window: The regional window provides information on the origin of the product (here you should pay attention to how the region is defined), where the product was processed and how high the proportion of regional raw materials in the total product is. It is a good orientation aid, but it is also not a label for guaranteed regionality.
3. Signs of regional initiatives: Here, associations of small producers, processors or restaurateurs label their foodstuffs as regional products, with varying requirements in terms of origin, quality and control. The "Regio Portal" is an information site for regional brands.
4. Quality mark of the federal states: Some federal states mark their own products accordingly, however not all raw materials of the product necessarily come from the named federal state.

Ultimately, it turns out that due to the lack of legally defined regional labelling, regional shopping is currently associated with a lot of research if you really want to be sure that the products come from the immediate region. If this is too exhausting for you, you can go to the market, farm shops or subscribe to a box of vegetables from farmers in the region. You can ask directly where the food comes from.



## And what about "seasonal"?

The Christmas dessert garnished with fresh strawberries? A homemade pumpkin bread for Easter breakfast? At the first picnic of the year grapes should not be missing? Nowadays, all this is not only not impossible, but almost normal in Germany. German supermarkets supply you with everything your heart desires all year round. Can that be good?

- Non-seasonal shopping usually does not mean regional shopping, which in turn means: long transport routes, sometimes even with the evil plane (see above), which increases CO2 emissions.
- Non-seasonal shopping means that available products may have been stored for months (prominent example: apple) or frozen. Both consume a lot of energy and have a correspondingly negative impact on the life cycle assessment. Just like products that are sold before or after the actual season. These are often grown in heated greenhouses or in foil tunnels to ensure the right conditions for growth. Outdoor goods always have a better climate balance, they cause up to 30 times less greenhouse gases than those from the greenhouse, etc.

Seasonal fruit and vegetables do not only taste particularly delicious, because the good conscience is pleased, but also because the food is fresh and healthier due to more nutrients. In addition the purse is pleased and the year remains culinarily seen varied and exciting.

## Tips:

For the month October we have provided you with a seasonal food calendar from the website Utopia. You can follow it if you currently live in Germany. Nabu, Utopia, Geo and many other websites have compiled seasonal calendars so that you can quickly get an overview also for other countries or regions with just a few clicks. It's also worth checking out a local vegetable box. Local organic farms regularly (often weekly) put together a box of fresh, seasonal and organic fruit and vegetables, which are then delivered to subscribers. Depending on the supplier, delivery is made directly to the front door, to a larger distribution station near the



home or by post. It is often possible to choose between different sizes (and prices) and also to make wishes regarding the contents of the crates in order to prevent food from being thrown away at the end because the subscriber does not like it. Since our Eco-Challenge is a supra-regional project, we cannot give any concrete tips at this point. The best thing is to take some time to research in peace or to listen to friends, neighbours, etc.. Maybe one or the other already has experience or tips with a regional vegetable box. ☺

### What else is good to know?

As part of the nutrition week, we would of course like to motivate you to look out for seasonal food from the region when shopping. However, food waste is a big problem in Germany: about 12 million tons of food are lost every year in Germany. About 50 % of these losses are caused by private households. Of course the waste of food is difficult to justify from a social point of view, but also ecologically and economically the current waste is catastrophic. Thus not only resources are used unnecessarily and energy and water are wasted for production but also the destruction of goods consumes energy. 8% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to food waste. There are different ways to tackle food waste, but it is another big issue in itself. Who likes, can read gladly under the Website <https://www.lebensmittelwertschaetzen.de> or the side <https://www.zugutfuerdietonne.de> of the Federal Ministry for nutrition and agriculture still somewhat further. At this point we would like to briefly introduce the app "Too good to go" and the principle of "food sharing". Both can be tried out as part of the bonus challenge.

- Too good to go: The idea behind this app is that surplus food is sold in bakeries, restaurants or supermarkets at a reduced price as part of a "wonder bag" (surprise effect!). After downloading the app, you can see which establishments in the area are part of Too-good-to-go and where portions are still available. Once you have reserved your portion and paid for it via the app, you can pick it up at the company at a fixed time. Conclusion: You have a tasty meal at a good price and you counteract the waste of food. Sounds good? Then try it out!



challenge  
your



- Food sharing: Private individuals as well as retailers and wholesalers take part in this initiative. Once you have created an account, you can offer food that is left over but still edible for free. Interested can announce themselves thereupon and together a collection can be agreed upon (either at a private place or at a Hotspot of the initiative). In addition, there is cooperation with the boards as well as with farmers, the promotion of regional products is also a topic here.



A **Beyond Borders** Project  
Weißburger Str. 10, 22049 Hamburg, Germany  
info@beyond-borders-ev.de  
<https://beyond-borders-ev.de/>

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## References

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