

Diane's Blog  
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### A Food Writer's Dilemma

How do I reconcile the desire to eat seasonally and locally with the demand of deadlines? Consider the lead times. Rarely does a magazine give a writer a year's notice for an article, so I find myself roasting turkey in February, scrambling to find fresh chestnuts, and hoping there are persimmons left in the market. Or, I'm developing recipes for a book and need to re-test my rhubarb compote in December. Hot house rhubarb anyone?

As much as I want recipe development to follow the rhythm of the seasons, it mostly doesn't. Recently asked to double-check the quantity of liquid in a blackberry sauce, I slinked through my local grocery store on Saturday buying organic blackberries grown in Chile. They were fresh and tasty, but not with a low-carbon footprint. I felt guilty and was hoping the produce manager, who I know, wouldn't see me since I'm such a vocal supporter of all the local farmers the store buys from. On the one hand, those organic berries are there because "someone" is buying them (oops, that was me) and the produce manager wouldn't be ordering them if he thought they were going to sit on the counter and rot. On the other hand, with all the marketing materials and signage declaring, "seasonal" and "local," what are they doing there at all?

Our dynamic Portland farmers' market closed for the winter and won't reopen until late March. And even then it is a slow start until the ground warms up and produces spring onions, spinach, and rosy long stems of rhubarb.

As I think about winter entertaining and the upcoming opportunity to gather friends to watch the Super Bowl, I'm wondering about the two tomatoes I have in the ingredient list for the Chorizo Chile Con Queso (this week's Featured Recipe). Hmmm, I could hydrate and dice some sun-dried tomatoes, or I could leave them out altogether, or I could imagine the warm sunshine of Miami and think about the large crop of tomatoes grown in Florida at this time of year and shipped around the nation. My carbon footprint is negligible watching the game at home. Does that negate the impact of the tomatoes transported here? Am I going to be the "someone" buying traveling tomatoes? It's a dilemma.