

# Ways to Nourish Your Body Without Straining It During Winter

**Although the body is often hidden behind thick clothing in winter, it deserves the same care in every season. Cold days, shorter daylight hours, and a slower pace directly affect eating habits. During this time, the body's energy needs increase, while the immune and digestive systems require additional support. For this very reason, legumes—which provide seasonal and sustainable nutrition—become more important than ever in the winter months.**

With the start of the new year, January offers strong motivation for many people who want to reassess their eating habits. According to Duru Gıda Nutrition Consultant and Dietitian Emine Uluçay, rather than making rapid and strict changes in the middle of winter, it is better to prioritize choices that do not strain the body and instead support its natural rhythm. Uluçay emphasizes the importance of a more holistic approach to nutrition, stating: “The goal in winter should not be to push the body, but to establish a routine that strengthens the immune system, supports digestion, and balances mood.”

At this point, one of the strongest allies of winter nutrition is legumes. Uluçay points out that legumes are not only filling but also provide significant support for the immune and digestive systems: “Legumes are rich in protein, zinc, iron, and B vitamins. These nutrients contribute to the healthy functioning of immune system cells and help increase resistance to illness.”

With colder weather, reduced physical activity and lower fluid intake can slow down the digestive system. The high fiber content of legumes offers an important advantage here. Uluçay explains: “Thanks to their high fiber content, legumes help regulate digestion and prevent constipation. They also support the gut microbiota. A healthy gut means a strong immune system.”

Legumes can take their place on winter tables in many different ways—from soups and salads to olive oil-based dishes and main courses. When combined with seasonal vegetables, they make it easier to create nutritious and balanced meals. Winter vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, leeks, and spinach, when paired with legumes, result in dishes that are both satisfying and gentle on the body. Fruits rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, such as kiwi, tangerines, and oranges, further support this balance.

Uluçay also reminds us to pay attention to protein balance in main meals: “Including a source of protein in every main meal prolongs satiety and reduces energy fluctuations throughout the day.” In this respect, legumes play an important role during winter as a plant-based protein source.

When it comes to carbohydrates, choosing complex sources such as bulgur, quinoa, buckwheat, and whole wheat bread instead of refined options supports digestive and gut health, contributing to overall well-being.

Another issue often overlooked during winter is fluid intake. Even though the sensation of thirst may decrease, the body's need for water continues. In addition to drinking water throughout the day, incorporating herbal teas into your routine can help maintain fluid balance.

Desserts and pastries tend to become more appealing during this season. At this point, Uluçay emphasizes focusing on balance rather than restriction: "When sugary and high-fat foods are consumed frequently, they can lead to low energy levels and mood fluctuations. If consumed, keeping portions small helps maintain a healthier relationship with the body."

Supporting the body during winter is not as difficult as it may seem. Seasonal vegetables, adequate fluid intake, and giving more space to legumes at the table stand out as some of the most natural and effective steps to both strengthen the immune system and adapt to the slower rhythm of winter.