



Why Everyone Should Shop at a Farmers Market

Shopping at a farmers market has a number of benefits – from improving the quality of the foods you eat to preserving our environment and supporting your local economy. Below are a few highlights on why you should shop at farmers markets for your family’s food. Check out the farmers market nearest you and you will agree – the reasons to shop at a farmers market are important, but the experience and flavor are even better!

- 1) **Farmers markets offer a wide diversity of affordable foods.** Many varieties of fruits and vegetables are simply not found anywhere but at your local farmers market. How often do you find 5 types of eggplant or 10 varieties of heirloom tomatoes at the supermarket? Sometimes you will find that prices at farmers markets are similar to the supermarket; but often you will find that farmers market prices for fresh local foods, in the peak of the season, are less expensive than the supermarket. This means that you will have plenty of choices, at affordable prices, when you visit your local farmers market.
- 2) **Fruits and vegetables are the freshest** at farmers markets since they are harvested within hours of being offered to you. That’s when they are at their peak for flavor and freshness, and full of the vitamins and minerals that are important to keeping our bodies healthy and strong. Many fruits and vegetables do not survive well on the long, arduous journey from farm to supermarket. When purchased at the farmers market, they don’t have that long a commute to your dinner table.
- 3) **Farmers love to tell their story.** When you shop at a farmers market you have the opportunity to meet and visit with the farmers who grow your food. You can ask questions and learn about agriculture; how your food is grown and harvested, how to make the best choices when purchasing local foods, hints and tips for food preparation along with recipes, and the seasonality of local foods. Once your food has a farmer’s name and face attached, you’ll feel more comfortable with the food choices you have made for yourself and your family.
- 4) **Shopping at a farmers market is a family-friendly experience.** A farmers market is like a weekly community event. They are social gathering places where shoppers look forward, not only to purchasing their week’s supply of fresh foods, but also to meet with their friends and neighbors. Many farmers markets also hold events or offer entertainment that every member of the family can enjoy, such as music, food preparation demonstrations, face painting for the kids, etc. While you see frowns on the faces of shoppers at other food venues, you’ll see smiles and laughter on the faces of farmers market shoppers.





- 5) **Support your local farming community.** Buying your food direct from a farmer allows that farmer to earn a higher percentage of the consumer's food dollar. What does that mean to you? It means that you are helping the farmer to be financially solvent, remain in farming and continue to produce the foods we need to survive. Without a healthy local agricultural community, we become dependent on others to feed us. Is that healthy for our bodies, for our nation, for our way of life?
- 6) **Supporting a local economy.** When you spend your food dollars at a farmers market, your dollars stay in the local economy rather than being sent to remote locations around the globe. Local farmers spend their earnings locally, meaning you actively participate in the cycle of keeping your local economy and local community healthy.
- 7) **Support a more "green" environment.** The traditional meal, including meat and vegetables, travels anywhere from 1500 – 2400 miles to reach your plate. That's a lot of energy expended to bring food to your home. When you shop at a farmers market, your food comes from just a few miles away, leaving a much smaller carbon footprint.

