



**PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION**

PCFMA.ORG

TEN REASONS TO SHOP THE FARMERS' MARKET!



Get out in the fresh air and support your local farmers' market! Sunshine, fresh produce, supporting your community - what could be better? Here are some very good reasons to support your local farmers' market as we celebrate National Farmers' Market Week.

1. Know where your food comes from:

A regular trip to a farmers market is one of the best ways to reconnect with where your food comes from. Farmers themselves sell their produce at the farm stands. Meeting and talking to farmers is a great opportunity to learn more about how food is grown, when it is grown, and why!

2. Taste real flavor fresh from the farmer:

The fruits and vegetables you buy at the farmers' markets are the freshest and tastiest available. Fruits are allowed to ripen in the field and be brought directly to you—no long-distance shipping, no gassing to simulate the ripening process, no sitting for weeks in storage. This food is as real as it gets—food fresh from the farm.

3. Eat with the seasons:

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The food you buy at the farmers' market is seasonal. It is fresh and delicious and reflects the truest flavors. Shopping and cooking from the farmers' market helps you to reconnect with the cycles of nature in our region. As you look forward to asparagus in spring, savor sweet corn in summer, or bake pumpkins in autumn, you reconnect with the earth, the weather, and the turning of the year.

4. Support family farmers

Family farmers are becoming increasingly rare as large agribusiness farms and ranches steadily take over food production in the U.S. Small family farms have a hard time competing in the food marketplace. Buying directly from farmers gives them a better return for their produce and gives them a fighting chance in today's globalized economy.

5. Protect the environment

Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1500 miles to get to your plate. All this shipping uses large amounts of natural resources, contributes greatly to pollution, and creates excess trash with extra packaging. Conventional agriculture also uses many more resources than sustainable agriculture and pollutes water, land, and air with toxic agricultural byproducts. Food at the farmers' market is transported shorter distances and grown using methods that minimize the impact on the earth.

6. Nourish yourself

Much food found in grocery stores is highly processed. The fresh produce you do find is often grown using pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and genetic modification. In many cases, it has been irradiated, waxed, or gassed in transit. All of these practices have potentially damaging effects on the health of those who eat these foods. In contrast, most food found at the farmers' market is minimally processed, and many of our farmers go to great lengths to grow the most nutritious produce possible by building their soil's fertility and giving their crops the nutrients they need to flourish in the ground and nourish those who eat them.

7. Discover the Variety

At the farmers market you find an amazing array of produce that you don't see in your supermarket: Asian vegetables, a rainbow of heirloom tomatoes, white peaches, green garlic, watermelon radishes, quail eggs, shiitake mushrooms, and much, much, more. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience first-hand the diversity of our planet, both cultivated and wild!

8. Promote humane treatment of animals

At the farmers market, you can find meats, cheeses, and eggs from animals that have been raised without hormones or antibiotics, who have grazed on green grass and been fed natural diets, and who have been spared the cramped and unnatural living conditions of so many of their brethren on feedlots.

9. Learn healthy cooking tips, recipes, and meal ideas

Few grocery store cashiers or produce stockers will give you tips on how to cook the ingredients you buy, but farmers, ranchers, and vendors at the farmers market are often passionate cooks with plenty of free advice about how to cook the foods they are selling. They'll give you ideas for what to have for supper, hand out recipes, and help with your culinary conundrums.

10. Connect with your community

Wouldn't you rather stroll amidst outdoor stalls of fresh produce on a sunny day than roll your cart around a grocery store with artificial lights and piped-in music? The farmers market is a community gathering place—a place to meet up with your friends, bring your children, or just get a taste of small-town life in the midst of your wonderful city.