



10 Tips for Shopping at Your Local Farmers Market

Before You Leave Home

- 1) Bring reusable tote bags to carry your purchases. This reduces the amount of plastic bags that farmers have to use for sales. It helps keep the environment clean, reduces the use of petroleum needed to produce plastic bags and provides you with a convenient means to carry multiple purchases.
- 2) Bring a list with you so that you can be sure to get everything you need for your week's meals. BUT come with an open mind. You'll find some really enticing foods at the market and you'll want to be flexible with your shopping so that you can try new products, take advantage of seasonal prices or buy that last quart of blueberries that will be out of season before the next market day.
- 3) Bring cash. Many markets and farmers do not have access to electronic card readers to take your debit or credit cards. With the growth in popularity of smartphone applications and card reader plug-ins, we expect to see this becoming increasingly popular. But for now, it's a cash business.
- 4) Do your part for food safety - bring a cooler to help you keep your food purchases cool while you travel home. It's important to maintain cool temperatures, especially when purchasing meat, eggs, cheese or other dairy products. Also, keeping produce separate from other foods, such as meat, eggs and dairy products eliminates potential cross contamination.
- 5) Dress comfortably. You will be outdoors and walking through the market. You'll have a more enjoyable experience if you wear appropriate attire and walking shoes.
- 6) Visit <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/> for a listing of Farmers Markets near you. And visit www.snaptomarket.com for a full list of the New York farmers markets that accept food stamp benefits.

At The Market

- 7) Come early for the best selections. Farmers do their best to bring in enough product to satisfy all their customers. But Mother Nature has a say in this too. The best selection of products is early in the day before the crowds have reduced the supply.
- 8) Browse the market before you begin to make purchases. You'll want to know what is available so you can decide what to buy. Look at each farmer's products in terms of both price and quality. When you browse the entire market before you begin to buy, you will be able to make informed and appropriate choices. Remember, base your purchasing decisions on quality, not on price alone.
- 9) To help you choose the appropriate farmers and products, ask questions. Farmers love to talk about their products, whether it is vegetables, cheese or meats. They have a wealth of knowledge and take great pride in educating their customers about their products and their farms.
- 10) Stock up on produce while it is in season – when it's at its peak for flavor and freshness. That's when it's abundant and you'll likely find the best prices. Plan to freeze, can or preserve your purchase so you can enjoy them all year long.

