

## Making the Most of Your Farmers' Market Trip

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Farm fresh produce is the perfect, delicious addition to any summer meal. Peak season, fresh picked produce gives you the best taste and maximum nutrition, making it the best value for your food dollar. In addition, shopping at farmers' markets directly supports your local farmers and keeps the money you spend closer to your neighborhood. Your local farmer's market is also a great place to catch up with friends and neighbors while you enjoy browsing the selections and learning about foods grown in your area.



There are many farmers' markets in our local area. You can find some of them listed by visiting [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org). Then, gear up for some great shopping while keeping the following tips in mind.

1. **Go Early – Go Late!** In the hot summer, early morning can be the most pleasant time to shop, and you'll find the best selection if you show up early. But just before closing time, you may find some of the best deals even though the selection may be limited later in the day.
2. **Go Often!** Buy only as much as you will use within a few days, and store produce (except tomatoes) in the refrigerator or in a cool, dark place. Flavor and nutrients diminish quickly.
3. **Plan Ahead!** If you don't plan to go straight home from the market, take a cooler with ice so that fresh items won't spoil in a warm car.
4. **Bring Cash!** Most vendors appreciate it if you have small bills for purchasing. And while some larger markets will accept credit cards, most will not accept personal checks. SNAP and WIC benefits are accepted at some markets.

5. **Take Your Time!** Scope out the entire market before making your selections. Prices and types of produce vary among the different vendors. You'll want to shop just as wisely here as anywhere else.

6. **Try Something New!** Have you ever tasted gooseberries or rhubarb? Many farmers' markets offer lesser known fruits and vegetables, providing a variety that can be both tasty and nutritious. While having access to the produce you enjoy regularly is important, have fun checking out offerings that may be new to you as well.

7. **Talk to the Farmers!** Make connections with the local farmers in your area and don't hesitate to ask questions. Market vendors usually love to share their knowledge and you might glean some unique cooking tips or even recipe ideas.

8. **Bright is Best!** Look for blemish-free, brightly colored fruits and vegetables. Any bruised or damaged produce will spoil quickly. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables allows their different nutrients to work together to promote health and help fight illnesses.

9. **Don't Wash Right Away!** Wash fresh produce just before cooking or serving—not before storing.

10. **Recycle, Reduce, Reuse!** You're already a steward of the environment by shopping at your local farmers' market, so remember to take it one step further and bring your own canvas bags, baskets, or boxes to carry away your purchases for the day.

11. **Get the Kids Involved!** A great way to get your children to eat healthy foods is to involve them in the selection process. Let them pick out something new to try, then they can help prepare a meal or snack with the produce they've chosen.

For more information about these programs and others, contact the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](http://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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