

Shop A Local Farmers Market

Visiting a farmers market can be a pleasant experience! Shopping at a farmers market is an easy way to obtain and eat locally-grown, fresh produce or foods. To make your trip a success, follow these tips:

Before You Go:

1. **Research Markets:** Look up local farmer's markets in your area to check their operating hours and days. Many farmers markets will connect with their digital community using a Facebook page, e-mail listserv, newsletter, or website. They'll often post what vendors are attending the farmers market. Many vendors provide pre-orders for a quick, grab-and-go pickup.
2. **Bring Bags:** Bring bags or a tote to carry your purchases. Some markets or vendors may not provide bags, or they may charge for them. If you live far away or have other errands, consider a cooler to keep items cold.
3. **Carry Cash:** Many vendors may accept cards or mobile payments. Bringing cash in small denominations is a good idea, especially if you plan to make smaller purchases.
4. **Consider Weather:** Wear a hat and sunglasses along with sturdy shoes! And don't forget to wear sunscreen!
5. **Shop Seasonally:** Many edible crops can be grown in Wyoming. Seasonal produce in your area of Wyoming will vary by growing conditions and weather.
6. **Meal Planning:** Think about your meal planning needs so you can come home with veggies, fruits, meat, dairy, and snacks that you can use for a week.

During Your Visit:

1. **Arrive Early:** For the best selection, arrive when the market opens. The best items tend to be bought first; some may even sell out before the end of the market.
2. **Explore and Tour:** Get a sense of what is available. Stroll through the market and explore the various booths.
3. **Interact with Vendors:** Initiate conversations with the merchants. They can provide valuable insights into their products. In addition, ask the vendor about the process before handling their merchandise. Some vendors want customers to bag their items and bring them to where they collect payment, while others prefer to gather what customers want.
4. **Sample:** Many vendors offer product samples. Take advantage of this opportunity to sample different items and discover new favorites.
5. **Purchases:** Purchase sturdy items first, such as root vegetables or corn. Leave the top of the bag for more delicate items like fruit, tomatoes, lettuce, and herbs. Purchase items that must be refrigerated, such as eggs, dairy, and meat, last.
6. **Build Relationships:** Become a regular customer. Get to know the vendors. Relationships make the shopping experience feel more personal.
7. **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to ask questions about the food or products.
8. **Support Local:** Buying from farmer's markets supports local farmers and small businesses in your community. Only buy what you will use in the coming week. If you're worried about using all the fresh produce, try some new recipes or learn the art of preserving food.

After Your Visit:

1. **Enjoy Your Purchases:** Once you're home, savor the fresh flavors of your farmers market food finds. Incorporate them into your meals throughout the week.
2. **Store Properly:** Properly store fruits and vegetables to maintain their freshness. Some items may need refrigeration, while others can be kept at room temperature.
3. **Plan Your Next Visit:** Farmers markets often have rotating vendors and seasonal offerings, so plan to visit again to discover new treasures.

Visiting a farmer's market is a great way to buy fresh, locally sourced food, and it offers a chance to be more motivated to cook in your kitchen and try new recipes.