

A Visit to the Farmers' Market

FARMERS' MARKETS are one of the oldest forms of direct marketing by small farmers. From the traditional "mercados" in the Peruvian Andes to the unique street markets in Asia, growers all over the world gather weekly to sell their produce directly to the public. In the last decade they have become a favorite marketing method for many farmers throughout the United States, and a weekly ritual for many shoppers.

In a farmers' market, a group of farmers sell their products once or twice a week at a designated public place like a park or parking lot. Some farmers' markets have live entertainment. Shopping at a farmers' market is a great way to meet local farmers and get fresh, flavorful produce.

It's farmers' market season, and while many of you are already experienced farmers' market shoppers, some people find the whole idea a little intimidating. The following ideas will help you get the most out of a trip to your local farmers market.

1 Go Prepared

Before going to the market, look at what meals you are planning for the week. Take a list of any ingredients



you may be able to get there; once at the market, though, keep an eye out for anything that looks particularly good, whether or not it's on your list. It is easy enough to change the menu if something unexpected and great shows up at the market. If you buy it and it needs to be cooked, add it to the menu so it won't get forgotten in the refrigerator. No need to make plans for fruit and raw veggies, serve them at every breakfast, lunch and snack!

Other things to bring include a handful of reusable shopping bags. If you're going to be out for a while, you may also want to bring a cooler

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did you know...

- ▶ **Child Care Provider Appreciation Day is Friday, May 8, 2015!**
This is a great day to recognize and thank your provider for their unselfish dedication, compassion and strong commitment to your child.
- ▶ Most fruits and vegetables sold at U.S. supermarkets travel an average of 1,500 miles from their source; farmers' market produce is typically sold no more than 50 miles from where it's grown.
- ▶ For every \$10 spent at a farmers' market, studies show that as much as \$7.80 is re-spent in the community.
- ▶ America's farmers support 24 million jobs; that is greater than the entire population of Florida.

Sources: American Farmland Trust, lonestarfarmersmarket.com, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Quotable Quotes

“Artichoke: That vegetable of which one has more at the finish than at the start of dinner.”

– Lord Chesterfield

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so that your heat-sensitive veggies do not wilt on the ride home. Most markets require cash or EBT cards.

2 Talk to the Farmers

The experience of shopping at a farmers market is enriched when you begin talking with the farmers. Some good topics: what to look for when choosing a particular kind of vegetable, the farmer's favorite ways of preparing a particular vegetable, when a favorite fruit or vegetable might be ready for harvest and the impact of the recent weather on the crops. Try not to be shy, but don't monopolize the farmer's time either!

Other aspects of etiquette include remembering that this produce (or meat, flowers, honey, etc.) represents the fruit of many hours of labor, most likely performed by the person standing before you. Your utmost respect is required, even if the quality is not pristine. You don't have to buy it, but don't make faces or negative comments.

If you are looking for organic produce but don't see a sign saying that it is certified organic, you might want to ask about whether it is conventionally raised or what they use for fertilizing and pest control. It can be a sensitive topic, so tread lightly.

In most areas the price is the price, but in some places haggling is acceptable. If you want to try it, ask first. "Are you open to talking about the price on those?"

If you want a large quantity of an item, you may want to arrange ahead of time for the farmer to bring you a crate the next week, and set it aside for you until you arrive.

3 Pick a Strategy

Some people like to walk through the whole market, looking at everything before deciding what to buy. Others hunt and gather their way through the market, buying as they go. Some like to buy most of their produce from one vendor, others like to buy a little here and a little there. Whatever your style, if you're at a new market you may feel most comfortable if you pick a strategy.



4 Become a Familiar Face

Being a "regular" at a farmers market is fun. You'll feel like you belong there, you'll get to know the farmers and other regulars a little bit, and you'll be known as a loyal customer.

5 Talk It Up

It's your community's farmers market! The more you and your neighbors go—and spend money—the stronger and more diverse your market will become. If your town gets a reputation as a place that supports local food, more new farmers will want to participate.

— Erin Barnett, *Localharvest.org*

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Strategies to Help Children Stay Healthy in Child Care

Avoid Illness

- Have children wash hands with soap and warm water when they arrive at child care and before eating.
- Teach children to cover their mouths with their elbow when they cough or sneeze.
- Perform a health check at the door and have a health policy to help keep sick children from spreading illness in child care.
- Check with parents to see if children are going to their regularly scheduled check-ups.



Sleep

- Most children under age six need at least ten hours of sleep a night. Ask parents when children go to bed and get up each morning.
- Have a regular nap time and/or rest time for all young children.

Exercise

- Encourage children to live an active lifestyle.
- Schedule plenty of indoor and outdoor active-play times during the day.
- Limit or eliminate television, videos and computer time.

Eat Nutritiously

- Give children a variety of healthy foods every day. Children need a healthy diet to help them grow.
- Serve plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Offer low-fat milk and water. Limit 100% juice to no more than 4 ounces per day.
- Encourage but do not force children to eat and do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- Limit all sweets, chips and other “junk food”.

Be Safe Outdoors

- When children go out to play in the sun, use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and when possible have children wear hats, sun glasses and long sleeves.
- When outside in cold weather, make sure children are warm with hats, gloves and boots as needed.

Observe Dental Health

- Have children brush their teeth after lunch.
- Teach children to not swallow toothpaste.
- Check with parents that children brush at home and visit the dentist on a regular basis.

Create a Healthy Environment

- Use only non-toxic cleaning and art supplies.
- Lock up or get rid of any poisons including medicines, garden products, cleaning supplies, make-up and plants.

Support Emotional Health

- Establish a routine and be consistent. Children behave better when they know what to expect.
- Encourage children with positive statements and give hugs.

Don't Smoke

- Keep children away from second-hand smoke. It increases a child's risk of asthma, ear infections and other illnesses.
- Smoking is not allowed in or near child care facilities.

Immunizations

- Check with parents to be sure children are getting their scheduled immunizations.
- Encourage parents to get the flu shot for all children over 6 months of age, every year.

— Catherine Stafford
Contra Costa Child Care Council

Turkey and Cheese Quesadillas

Olive oil	about ¼ cup
Whole grain tortillas	8
Turkey breast, sliced thinly	8 ounces
Cheddar cheese, shredded	2 cups
Red bell pepper, thinly sliced	1

1. Heat a drizzle of olive oil in a pan. Working with one tortilla at a time, place in hot oiled pan. Layer half the tortilla with turkey, cheese and bell pepper slices.
2. Fold tortilla over filling. Flip quesadilla to melt cheese and brown both sides.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads and protein/ meat alternate

— Parents Magazine

Fresh Salsa with Homemade Tortilla Chips

Tomatoes, chopped	2 cups
Corn	1 cup
Black Beans	1 cup
Red onion, finely chopped	¼ cup
Cilantro, chopped	¼ cup
Salt	½ tsp
Lime juice	to taste
Corn tortillas	8
Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp

1. Combine all ingredients except tortillas and oil. Mix well.
2. Cut each tortilla into 8 wedges. Spray or brush with oil. Bake at 375°F for 8 to 10 minutes or until crisp.

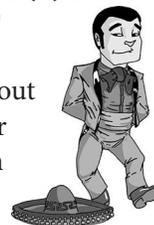
Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable and grains/breads

— Parents Magazine

Activity Corner

DO THE MEXICAN HAT DANCE!



Place a sombrero or a cut-out picture of one in the center of the floor where children will be dancing.

To perform the Mexican Hat Dance, play the national folk dance of Mexico, “The Mexican Hat Dance Song.” Have children stand with their feet together and arms down by their sides. Teach them to kick their heel out three times, alternating feet and clap twice. Repeat until the chorus begins. At the chorus, children link elbows with a partner and skip around in a circle. Circle once, and then circle the opposite direction. Repeat with different partners throughout the chorus. Or...the entire group can circle one way—and then the other.

Variation: Call children’s names one by one. When a child’s name is called he/she will come to the center of the circle and do the dance.

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Food Funny Q: Why did the banana go to the doctor?
A: Because it wasn't peeling well!