



NUTRI-BYTES[©]

Going Green with Local Foods

Why is it important to buy locally grown foods?

A national movement to promote the purchase of local foods is gaining momentum. The term “locavore” was coined recently to describe those persons who buy food from nearby farmers or even grow their own food. Locavores believe that fresh, local products are more nutritious, delicious, and environmentally friendlier than supermarket foods that have traveled over long distances. In the United States, foods travel an average of 1300 miles from the field to the table, using a large amount of fuel during their transport.

What is a farmers market?

In the last decade farmers markets have become more common throughout the United States. In these markets, farmers sell their products on designated days at a specific public place, such as a parking lot. Findlay Market, Ohio's oldest public market, is open year-round in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine area. Visitors will find a wide variety of locally produced foods, including meat, fish, produce, cheese, and ethnic products, as well as plants, music, cooking demonstrations, and more. Other farmers markets can be located on the website www.localharvest.org.

What is another way to purchase local foods?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between a farm and a group of consumers. After purchasing “shares” of a local farm, CSA members receive fresh, locally-grown produce once a week during the growing season, and occasionally at other times during the year. CSA's are a “win-win” concept. Farmers are assured a market for their crops and members are guaranteed high quality produce, often below retail prices. To locate nearby CSAs, visit the website www.localharvest.org.

Farm to School Program: Lessons for American youth

The National Farm to School Program is a collaborative program of the Center for Food & Justice at Occidental College and the Community Food Security Coalition to connect schools with local farms. The program is now offered in over 8,000 schools in 39 states, including the Seven Hills Schools in Cincinnati. The program strives to encourage healthy meals in school cafeterias, nutrition in the curriculum, and support for local small farmers. Schools use locally grown foods on their menus and provide experiential learning through farm visits, gardening, and recycling programs. For more information, visit the website www.farmtoschool.org.

The slogan “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” is a great reminder to connect with your community's farmers and growers by purchasing locally grown, healthful foods whenever possible!



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