Is produce from the Farmers Market more nutritious?

• In a word, yes!

• Fruits or vegetables purchased at the grocery store have traveled an average of 1500 miles from farm to store. On that journey the produce may have lost up to 45% of its vitamin nutritional value.

• https://cuesa.org/learn/how-far-does-your-food-travel-get-your-plate

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Are Farmers Markets good for the local economy?

• Purchasing 15% of a family’s food budget from local farmers results in a $639,000,000 increase in the central Illinois economy.

• For every $1 million in revenue, direct-market farms create almost 32 local jobs whereas larger wholesale growers create only 10.5.

Shopping tips:

• Check your local newspaper and social media for types of produce to be offered

• Bring cash and a reusable bag

• Stroll the entire market before you buy, check availability, prices, etc.

• Dress appropriately, wear comfortable shoes

• Don’t over buy—you can come back next week!

For every dollar spent, how much goes to the farmer?

• Grocery store: $0.16

• Farmers Market: $1.00
Know the season

- Do not go to a farmer's market in Illinois expecting tomatoes in May or pumpkins in July.
- Do not expect uniform size in produce.
- Try something new.
  - Heirloom varieties are often not found in the supermarket; they might look different, but the taste is often superb!

Practice food safety

- Bring a clean reusable bag
- Wash fruits and vegetables just before serving
- Buy meat that has been kept at 41°F, keep it separate from other products
- Only buy pasteurized cider

Meet the farmers

Do not be shy; farmers are passionate about their produce and proud of what they do.

Ask them how to prepare some of the varieties of produce unfamiliar to you.

Resources

- Illinois Department of Ag: http://www.agr.state.il.us/markets/farmers/
- How to find a farmers market: https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Consumers/FarmersMarkets/Pages/Current-Farmers-Markets.aspx

References

Crossroads Resource Center.org
Farmersmarketcoalition.org
Illinois.gov
Usda.gov

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