

JUNE: Farmer's Markets & Pick Your Own

Have you heard of a **farmers' market**? Do you know what one is, have you seen one in your community? Many of us have not...Have you picked your own produce, maybe strawberries or peaches?...This month we are featuring facts about the local, nutritious, colorful, and fun to be had at **farmers' markets** and **pick-your-own** locations (page 2)!

A **farmers' market** is a place where foods are sold directly by farmers to customers. Food items are presented and sold in booths, tables or stands, and can be sold outdoors or indoors. **Farmers' markets** can be small, consisting of just a few stalls, or very large, covering many city blocks!

Farmers may sell fruits, vegetables, meats, and sometimes prepared foods (such as jellies, salsas, beverages, etc.). **Farmers' markets** are a bit different than regular grocery stores, which are generally housed in permanent structures, open year-round, and offer a variety of non-local produce (although more and more groceries are offering local produce!), packaged foods, and non-food products. **Farmers' markets** are found worldwide and wonderfully reflect local culture in food items for sale. See a short video about Farmers' Markets at:

<https://www.nutrition.gov/farmers-markets>



Top 10 Reasons to Shop at Farmers' Markets!

1. Freshly picked, in season produce is at its peak in flavor and nutrition.
2. Support your local farmers and economy - you are helping new and smaller farmers be successful and saving farmland in your area.
3. Colorful fresh fruit and vegetables are full of powerful antioxidants and phytonutrients.
4. It's a great way for kids involved! Kids can help pick out something new to try, then help prepare a meal or snack using the *new* produce.
5. Supporting your local farmers market strengthens your community – often times, you run into friends and neighbors while stocking up with local goods.
6. Protect the environment! Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to your plate. All this shipping uses large amounts of natural resources (especially fossil fuels), contributes to pollution, and creates trash with extra packaging.
7. Farmers often have recommendations for preparing their nutritious fresh foods! Ask them for tips on how to prepare the items and/or recipes!
8. You can try a new fruit or vegetable! Many farmers' markets offer lesser known fruits and vegetables, that are grown locally – check them out!
9. SNAP and WIC benefits are accepted at some farmers' markets, check out where here (<http://bit.ly/whereSNAP>).
10. Farmers' markets are easy to find, check out this link: <http://bit.ly/whereFarmers>.



June: Pick Your Own

Have you ever picked your own apples, strawberries, or pumpkins at a farm? Have you ever heard of such an activity that is known as **"Pick-Your-Own"**? Going to a pick-your-own farm lets you choose what you want to pick, and buy, connects you to farmers and your community, helps you learn about where your food comes from, and encourages a bit of physical activity since you have to walk around looking for your produce, and then bend and stretch to reach and pick it!

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FUN ACTIVITY? CHECK OUT MORE FACTS ABOUT "PICK-YOUR-OWN" BELOW!



What is a "pick-your-own?" A pick-your-own (PYO) operation is a farm where you, as the customer, pick, cut, or choose their own product out of the field. Yes, out in the field! The most common pick-your-own farms grow berries, tree fruit, pumpkins and Christmas trees, but other crops such as beans and flowers may also be offered through this fun way of selecting and purchasing farm products.

History of Pick-your-own (PYO)! PYO began almost 90 years ago in the United States! In the 1930s, prices for some fruit and vegetable crops hit low levels, so low that the prices for some crops failed to cover the cost of paying people to harvest the produce. So some farmers decided to allow customers to come to the fields to pick their own product for purchase, thus saving the labor costs. Also during this time, there was an increase in "rural recreation," as people drove to the countryside from the cities for leisure, which also increased the popularity of PYO.

Why should you try PYO, if available in your area (or during summer vacation if you visit an area that has PYO)? It is fun, first of all! Seeking out and picking your own food is fun, something new to try...and, you cannot get more fresh produce, and usually at a reduced price! Check out the link below to find PYO locations near you, and/or make a road trip to enjoy this way to buy nutritious foods!

Find PYO locations:
<http://www.pickyourown.org/#states>

