

# To Your Health

September 2009

## Shopping the Farmers' Market

There's still plenty of opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at a Farmers' Market.

**Know your seasons.** If you know a bit of what to expect for produce when you get there, making decisions about what to buy will be easier.

**Go early or go late.** For best selection, go early. Often the most popular items are gone within the first hour or so in some markets. For the best deals, go late. Vendors may be willing to sell for less so that produce doesn't have to be taken back to the farm.

**Bring shopping bags and small change.** A sturdy canvas or nylon bag is great for carrying your purchases. And purchases go faster if you have exact (or close to exact) change.

**Plan for spontaneity.** Trying new things is part of the farmers' market experience - such as an early winter squash or new apple variety.

**Get advice.** If you find a food that you're unfamiliar with, ask the vendor how *they* like to prepare and eat it.

**Get your children involved.** Each can select one food item for the family to try ... and later help prepare it.

To locate Farmers' Markets in your area, go to:

<http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us> for a searchable database. Click on "Find Iowa Products" then on "Iowa Farmers Market Directory."

## Think You Don't Like Vegetables? Think Again!

### Farmers' Market Salsa

Serves 8 -  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup per serving

Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup corn, fresh cooked or frozen  
1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 cup fresh tomatoes, diced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup onion, diced  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup green pepper, diced  
2 tablespoons lime juice  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup picante sauce

Directions:

Wash hands before beginning any preparation. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Chill until serving time. Drain before serving. Serve with low fat baked tortilla chips and/or fresh vegetables.

Nutrition Facts per  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup salsa: 70 calories, 0.5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 230mg sodium, 13g total carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 2g sugars, 4g protein

Source: [www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu](http://www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu)

## Home Food Safety Mythbuster

**Myth:** Once a hamburger turns brown in the middle it is cooked to a safe internal temperature.

**Fact:** You cannot use visual cues to determine whether food has been cooked to a safe internal temperature. The only way to know that food has been cooked to a safe internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. Ground meat should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 160° F, as measured by a food thermometer.

For additional food safety information, visit [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) or [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

## Fruit - Spend Smart

### Consider all forms of fruit

Fresh, canned, frozen, dried, and 100% juice have similar nutrient values.

### Fresh

Purchase fruit in season for best price and quality. Consider freezing extra if time and space allow.

Choose the smaller size when buying apples, oranges, bananas, and other individual fruits that are sold by the pound. The smaller size fruits are closer to the 1 cup serving size which helps with portion control.

Pre-cut fruit is at least 3 times more expensive and spoils faster.

### Canned

Choose juice- or water-packed varieties.

Watch for sale prices and stock up.

Use coupons and/or select the generic brand.

Use unit pricing; single-serving size containers can cost twice as much.

### Dried

Monitor portion size;  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried fruit is a 1 cup fruit equivalent.

Make your own snack packs by measuring  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup amounts into plastic bags or small containers.

Compare brands and package sizes using unit pricing.

Raisins are generally the least expensive dried fruit but even other dried fruits can be a smarter alternative to candy or cookie snacks.

### Juice

Check labels and buy 100% juice instead of "drinks" or "punches."

Frozen concentrate generally provides more servings per dollar than other juice choices. Add lemon or lime slices to chilled water for an alternative thirst quencher.

### Guard your fruit investment

#### Check before you buy

Hold the bag or carton up and look at the bottom for smashed or moldy fruit. The packaging should protect the product.

#### Treat with care at home

Use fresh items first; have an immediate plan for using fresh berries and cherries which can spoil quickly.

Most fruit will keep a week when refrigerated; but quality declines over time.

#### Monitor supplies

Freeze fruit if it won't be eaten immediately. Cut up blemished or damaged fruit for salads or snack cups.

Add nearly-too-ripe fruit to yogurt or use in smoothies, muffins, cobblers, or crisps.

For more information, visit

[www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings)