



Shopping at Farmers' Markets

Shopping at a Farmers' Market can be a very pleasant and tasty way to enjoy fresh produce. It connects you to the community, the seasons, and to local farmers. With the current dietary recommendations to enjoy five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day, farmers' markets are a treasure chest of tasty and colorful choices. To enhance your visit to the Farmers' Markets here are some shopping hints and tips.

Ask questions and talk to the producer. You can get valuable information on even the most common fruits and vegetables. If you don't know what a food item is just ask. You may discover a delightful addition to your summer meals.

Bring cash. It is a convenient method of purchase. Eligible families can receive coupons to buy produce at farmers markets. Call 563-382-8436 for information on the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Senior citizens can check with the Area Agency on Aging at 563-382-2941 for information.

Bring your own containers-baskets, bag, boxes. You can feel good about recycling and buying local at the same time. Bring a cooler, especially in hot weather and take the produce straight home to keep it fresh and at its peak.

Involve your children. Give them a few dollars and let them buy whatever produce they want to eat. It's a good way to encourage them to eat more fruits and vegetables.

For freshness, peak flavor, interesting varieties, taste and color, nothing beats shopping at a Farmers' Market. A listing of markets in northeast Iowa can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.