

**FINDING THE BEST:
LET YOUR SENSES BE YOUR
GUIDE**

Sniff the air and buy fruit that is fragrant. Fruit that has ripened in the summer sun is always fruity and sweet smelling.

Look for bright colors. The sun is also essential in the production of summer fruits' vivid colors. Buy brightly colored produce with a waxy sheen. Know that often the prettiest tomato or apple may not be the tastiest, but if anything is bruised, wilted, or tired-looking, don't buy it.

Listen for the sound of freshness. Green beans should snap when they break. Avoid limp produce and go for the crisp, crunch of freshness.

Taste a sample. Ask to taste a sample if possible. There aren't many places left where you can sample before you buy.

Touch and gently squeeze tomatoes, eggplant and other produce before selection. Know the signs of quality for each item you select and exercise your knowledge at the farmers' market.

Know when it was picked. With foods such as corn and peas that can lose their appealing sugars quickly, always ask when they were picked and always taste them before purchasing.



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**SHOPPING TIPS
FOR
INDIANA
FARMERS' MARKETS**

*Your guide to making
smart shopping
decisions as you
provide quality food
for your family and
support the local farm
community*



*Enjoy the freshest farm
products direct from the
farmer to you!*

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.

Indiana Fruits and Vegetable Harvest Calendar

Fruits & Vegetables	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Apples								
Asparagus								
Beets								
Blackberries								
Blueberries								
Broccoli								
Brussel Sprouts								
Cabbage								
Cantaloupe								
Carrots								
Cauliflower								
Cherries								
Collards								
Eggplant								
Grapes								
Green Peas								
Hot Peppers								
Lettuce								
Lima Beans								
Mushrooms								
Onions (dry)								
Peaches								
Plums								
Potatoes								
Pumpkins								
Radishes								
Raspberries								
Snap Beans								
Spinach								
Strawberries								
Summer Squash								
Sweet Corn								
Sweet Peppers								
Tomatoes								
Turnips & Turnip Greens								
Watermelon								
Winter Squash								

Special Note on Availability: Local weather may affect harvest dates from one year to the next. Many fruits and vegetables are available beyond the indicated harvest periods through modern storage techniques and facilities.
Source: Indiana State Department of Agriculture

WHY SHOP AT A FARMERS' MARKET?



Shopping at a farmers' market can be a wonderful family experience but in addition to being fun it can also be good for you and your community.

Some of the reasons include:

- There is a variety of locally grown crops picked at the peak of quality and freshness—often with the morning dew still on the sweet corn and greens.
- You can meet the farmer who grew the crops and they can tell you the best ways to preserve or prepare the produce that you just bought.
- You can often save money especially on organic and naturally raised produce.
- Farmers' markets provide a livelihood for many local farmers who might not otherwise be farming.
- They give you an opportunity to share in the local crop diversity as it changes with the progression of the seasons and visit with your neighbors at the same time



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BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

Check when the market is open

Farmers' markets operate on different days of the weeks, differing hours and at various locations. It's always wise to double check that your local market is open before you leave.

Shop early

The best selection is often available early in the hours of market operation. Other times however may be less crowded and more relaxed.

Bring your own bag, basket, cart or wagon

Recycle clean plastic bags and ask the farmer to use them and save theirs. Keep an inexpensive cooler in your car to keep perishables safe during hot weather. Be sure that the trunk of your car is empty and free of any hazardous materials where you might carry your produce. Narrow market aisles and large carts or strollers may not mix well, Canvas bags for your purchases and backpacks for the baby may be better in some situations

Go shopping without a list

While this sounds a little strange, part of the excitement and fun of a farmers' market is to see what is available and the freshest this week. A good idea is to plan your purchases on what looks attractive to you and to plan your meals around those purchases.

Make sure you have some cash

Cash is "king" at farmers' markets...about the only plastic you will use is in the recycled bags you bring. Be sure to take extra quarters and dollar bills.

ENJOY THE MARKET

Try new foods

Don't be afraid to try a new fruit or vegetable...Purchase a small amount of something new each week. Ask the farmer about how it is best prepared and served. There is more to Indiana agriculture than just soybeans and corn...Experiment...taste the diversity but avoid buying more of any one thing than you can use before the next market.

Browse before buying

Take time to savor the sights, sounds and flavors of the market. Don't be afraid to compare the offerings of different vendors before purchasing but realize that price is not always the best way to make your final decisions at the farmers market.

Take time to chat with farmers

You will become a wiser shopper by taking the time to visit with the local farmers. This is part of the fun and experience of the market. If the farmers didn't like to meet people and proudly display their products, they would probably be someplace else.

Go straight home from the market

Once you have had the opportunity to browse, visit and make your purchases and are now ready to leave, it is best to make a trip home to care for your purchases before running other errands. Freshness is fleeting. Hot cars are not the best place for perishables.

Bring the kids

Farmers' markets are a great place to introduce children to new foods. They are much more interesting and fun than regular stores and kids will be more interested in eating foods that they have had the fun of selecting.

Farmers' markets are a great family experience.

CARE FOR YOUR PURCHASES WHEN YOU GET HOME

- As you shop take care to place heavier, firmer items at the bottom of your bag or basket and more fragile items on top or in a small cooler.
- Be sure that your cooler has some ice or cold water in it...both for the produce and for YOU! Unpack the cooler as soon as you get home.
- Store everything green in plastic bags in the refrigerator.
- Always keep tomatoes, garlic and onions at room temperature and keep potatoes in the dark.
- Remember to try the suggestions of the farmer regarding storage preparation and serving the purchases.
- A good place to learn about individual fruits, vegetables and herbs is by contacting your county extension office or by trying the following websites:
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/lines/food.html>
http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/food_reservation_color_pubs.pdf
- An excellent site for recipes is www.allrecipes.com or www.recipecottage.com

