

Title:

Supporting Local Flavors

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631

Summary:

In the last 10 years Americans have seen a boom in local food markets and for good reason. While Americans continue to buy more fast food, they still expect perfect ingredients and they are finding them.

So why are they turning to their local markets more and more? In a nutshell they want fresh, healthy produce with great flavor. There are numerous other benefits to buying local products and it would seem Americans are now rediscovering what their local growers have to offer...

Keywords:

local ingredients, farmers market, fresh produce, produce, farmers, locally grown products, grocers

Article Body:

In the last 10 years Americans have seen a boom in local food markets and for good reason. While Americans continue to buy more fast food, they still expect perfect ingredients and they are finding them.

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FRESHER

Care for fresher ingredients? Locally grown items are usually harvested 1 or 2 days before hitting the market making them significantly fresher than traditional store bought ingredients. For those folks lucky enough to live in rural areas, many of your local ingredients may be available to you the same day they are harvested. Produce flown in from other parts of the country or world is considerably older given that on average they travel 1,500 miles to get to your dinner table. These products may be harvested before they are ripe because of the delay in getting the product to market. Given that produce loses nutrients quickly, a recently harvested crop is preferred for its ripeness alone.

SAFER

Local food is often safer, too. Even when it's not organically grown, small farms tend to be less aggressive than large factory farms about using chemicals. While biotechnology companies have long been experimenting with genetically altered produce, small local farmers do not have access to these seeds and most would not use them even if they did have access to these seeds. For those consumers opposed to using genetically altered produce, locally grown produce will offer the best product.

BUILDS COMMUNITY

When you go to a local market you get a chance to see the grower and talk to them eye-to-eye. You get to see their reaction when you ask them if they use chemicals. You get to see how proud they are of what their hard work has produced. And you get to see that happiness in their eyes when you support their farm with a purchase. This opportunity to meet the growers in person goes a long way in creating a sense of community and maintaining tradition in addition to supporting local growers financially.

BENEFITS OPEN SPACE & LOWER TAX DOLLAR SPENDING

As we have become wrapped up in the conveniences of the corner grocer, we seem to have forgotten how valuable our farmers are to our local communities. If you grew up in a rural area, you most likely remember the vast open space and picturesque countryside the crops created. As long as the small local farms exist this open space will not be developed into commercial property. Why is this important? Aside from maintaining the beautiful landscape, it is also most cost effective for the region, supports a cleaner environment and affords wildlife a greatly desirable sanctuary.

On average almost four times as much tax revenue is spent on services for a residential area than is spent on services for farms, forest or open space. For instance for every \$1 collected in taxes from a residential area, almost \$1.20 is spent on services to support that area. Conversely, only \$.34 is spent to support rural area for each dollar collected. Because farms contribute more taxes than they require in services, local farmers make for a surplus in tax revenue. In addition to the lower cost needed to support rural areas, they also help to clean 12-14% of the carbon emitted by vehicles and industry.

By continuing to support local growers today, you are ensuring that they will be around tomorrow. In fact more and more non-chain grocers are carrying locally grown products. They must, it's what consumers are demanding.

Try buying local flavors. You have nothing to lose and so much to gain.