



10 Reasons To Buy Local Food

Taken from “Think Global, Eat Local”

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1. Locally Grown Food Is Fresh

Food grown in your own community was probably picked within the past day or two. It’s crisp, sweet and loaded with flavour. Several studies have shown that the average distance food travels from farm to plate is 1,500 miles. In a week-long (or more) delay from harvest to dinner table, sugars turn to starches, plant cells shrink, and produce loses its vitality. Other agriculture products, such as meat and eggs, are also fresher when purchased locally.

2. Local Produce Is Better For You

Fresh produce often loses nutrients quickly. Food that is frozen or canned soon after harvest is actually more nutritious than some “fresh” produce that has been on the truck or supermarket shelf for a week. Purchasing local allows you to be in control of when the product is harvested and processed, as well as giving you direct contact with the source of your food.

3. Local Food Can Preserve Genetic Diversity

In the modern industrial agricultural system, varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment; for a tough skin that can survive packing and shipping; and for an ability to have a long shelf life in the store. Only a handful of hybrid varieties of each fruit and vegetable meet those rigorous demands, so there is less genetic diversity in the plants grown for commercial production. Local farms, in contrast, may grow more varieties to provide a long season of harvest, an array of eye-catching colors, and the best flavours. Some varieties are heirlooms, passed down for generations. These old varieties contain genetic material from hundreds of years of human selection; they may someday provide the genes needed to create varieties that will thrive in a changing climate.

4. Local Food Supports Local Farm Families

Farmers are a vanishing breed. And no wonder – commodity prices fluctuate widely and may be below the cost of production. Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail price for their food – which means farm families can afford to stay on the farm, doing the work they love.

5. Local Food Supports Your Local Economy

When you purchase local food, your money is going to be reinvested by the farmer back into their business, but also into the community – creating a positive economic “ripple effect” for local business. Choosing local may limit you to eating seasonal foods, but will allow you to take full advantage of the bounty on offer each month and even help to reduce your grocery bill!

6. Local Food Builds Community

When you buy direct from the farmer, you are re-establishing a time-honored connection. Getting to know the farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the weather, and the miracle of raising food. It may even open up opportunities for invitations to visit the farm in person to get a hands on taste for the agricultural lifestyle. Relationships built on understanding and trust can thrive.

7. Local Food Preserves Farmland

As the value of direct-marketed farm products increases, selling farmland for development becomes less likely. You have probably enjoyed driving out into the country and appreciated the lush fields of crops, the meadows full of wildflowers, the picturesque red barns. That landscape will survive only as long as farms are financially viable. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agricultural landscape.

8. Local Food Keeps Your Taxes in Check

Farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services, whereas suburban development costs more than it generates in taxes.

9. Local Food Supports a Clean Environment and Benefits Wildlife

A well-managed family farm is a place where the resources of fertile soil and clean water are valued. Good stewards of the land grow cover crops to prevent erosion and replace nutrients used by their crops. Cover crops also capture carbon emissions and help combat global warming. In addition, the patchwork of fields, meadows, woods, ponds and buildings – is the perfect environment for many beloved species of wildlife. Farmers use resources like Environmental Farm Plans to help ensure sustainable environments and agriculture practices for years to come.

10. Local Food is About the Future

By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavourful, and abundant food.