



## Farmers' Market Shopping Tips

**Go early, don't be shy and carry reusable bags are a few tips to remember.**

Headed to the farmers' market? Grab this list first.

If you're a newbie or just need a few practical reminders, here are a few courtesy of the Kansas State University Research and Extension. Go early for best selection.

Allow time to shop leisurely, to survey the market and make selections.

Encourage children (and family and friends as well) to shop - and learn-with you; leaving pets at home is, however, recommended.

Don't be shy. Ask about less familiar foods, such as a pink - or purple - heirloom tomato, white eggplant, unfamiliar squash or greens.

Take advantage of the opportunity to get to know the grower. Ask where the food was grown, when it was harvested, how to select the best of the crop and cook, store, or freeze for future use. (Have you voted for your favorite farmers' market?)

Plan to choose one or two new food items or varieties each week to add flavor, color, texture and health-promoting nutrients to meals.

Buy quantities sized to fit your household; overbuying increases waste and runs up food costs unnecessarily.

Carry a basket or re-usable grocery bags to reduce waste.

Store foods promptly to preserve freshness; use perishable items first.

(Want to preserve what you bought? Consider canning or read all about drying in the July/August 2009 Hobby Farm Home. For using dried foods, try a few of our dried food recipes.)

As a general rule, wait to wash fresh produce until ready to use it. For example, wash melons before slicing and serving to reduce the risk of transferring naturally occurring bacteria found in the soil in which the melon was grown to the edible portion of the melon.

Brushing off dirt, sand or other debris from freshly harvested crops grown either in soil or in close proximity to the ground is, however, recommended.

What are your best farmers' market tips? Comment below.