

Dig This: Buy the Best at the Farmers' Market

Contributed by Pam Paulsen
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Farmers' market season is here. Fresh, local grown food, entertainment, arts and crafts, flowers, and a great community atmosphere all can be found at the market. You'll be supporting our local economy as well. This time of year you can expect to find lots of wonderful spring crops such as lettuce, radishes, spinach, broccoli, yummy asparagus and maybe a strawberry or two. Here are some tips to make your shopping at the market an enjoyable experience:

Take Your Time

Grab some cookies or fruit from one of the booths then take a stroll around the market. See what's available and make note of anything that catches your interest. Then go back and make your purchases.

Go Early

You have a better chance of getting your choice of products and better quality the earlier you go. Popular and limited items often sell out early, especially when they first come into season.

Bring the Entire Family

The farmers' market provides a great atmosphere for spending time with your family. Give the kids a few dollars to buy some of their own fruits and vegetables. They just might be more inclined to eat the healthy items they picked out and paid for.

Try Something New

It's okay to go with a list and shop for what you know, but don't be afraid to experiment and try something different. The farmers' market is a great place to learn about new and different foods. If you aren't sure how to choose or prepare an item, just ask. Vendors and farmers enjoy sharing their knowledge and can give you recipes and cooking tips.

Bring Cash

Although some vendors will accept checks, cash will get you in and out quickly. Small bills are especially appreciated by the vendors.

Bring Your Own Bags

Most of the vendors have a supply of plastic bags, but it's much more convenient if you bring your own reusable bag with handles. Besides making it easier to carry your purchases, it's environmentally friendly. If are not going

home immediately after shopping at the market, bring a cooler with some ice or cold packs in your car to keep produce fresh.

Visit with the Vendors and Farmers

Ask questions. If you aren't sure how to choose an item or are wondering how to prepare or store it, there is no one better to ask than the person that produced it. If you have a favorite item, let the farmer or vendor know. They want to provide products that their customers want. Get to know the farmers. Ask them about their farm, how their food is produced. If they aren't busy, they are more than willing to visit with you. You never know what you might learn.

In Reno County, we are lucky to be able to buy fresh, locally produced food at a number of markets:

Reno County Farmers' Market

Farmers' Market Pavilion at 2nd & Washington, Hutchinson

Saturdays 7:30am - 12:30pm

May 16 - October 31

Wednesdays 11:30am - 4:30pm

June 3 - October 28

Third Thursdays 5:00pm - ???

June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17

Pretty Prairie Farmers' Market

Next to City Hall, Pretty Prairie

Saturdays 8:30 – 11:00am

May 30 – mid October

Yoder Farmers' Market

Yoder Community Building

Fridays 3:00pm – 7:00pm

Mid May through August