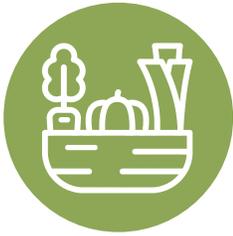




FARMERS' MARKET SHOPPING TIPS

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR NEXT MARKET VISIT!



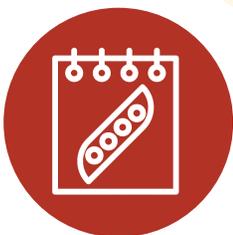
Shop the season! During the summer and fall, you will find the largest selection of local fruits and vegetables. During winter, you'll find vegetables like leafy greens, onions, garlic, pinto beans, and winter squashes, as well as meat, honey, jams, fresh baked goods and more. Ask the market manager for a copy of the New Mexico Harvest Calendar to see what the season has to offer.



Talk to your grower! Talking with the farmer who grows your food is a great way to learn about new methods of preparation, unique fruits and vegetables, and to find out what produce will be available soon. They are passionate about their profession, and love to share their knowledge.



Bring your own bag! Markets don't have shopping carts, so you'll need a way to carry your purchases. A sturdy reusable tote or two not only makes it easier to get your bounty home, it also helps reduce waste. Remember to place heavier items near the bottom of your bag and fragile items near the top.



Ditch the list! It's okay to go with a list, but expect to be flexible with what is available, and plan your meals around seasonal items. If what you're looking for is scarce, try a substitution like spinach instead of chard or parsnips instead of carrots. An open mind can open a world of tasty possibilities.



Try something new! Don't be afraid to expand your flavor horizons. A unique vegetable or fruit variety like an Armenian cucumber, a homemade jam, or an unfamiliar salad green could become a new favorite! If you're worried about food waste at home, bring your kids with you so they can help you choose.



PRESERVE THE HARVEST



Store your seasonal produce to save money, prevent food waste, and savor the local flavor year-round!



Preserving seasonal foods at home can help stretch your food budget.

If you have extra fresh produce that you don't want to go to waste, try preserving it for later enjoyment. Preserving fresh produce helps extend the season for your favorite foods, and can help you buy in bulk when product is plentiful and prices are best.



Freezing is the most commonly used food preservation technique.

Freezing for long-term food storage requires some extra freezer space and access to reliable electricity. Many foods need to be sliced and blanched before freezing, and freezer-safe storage containers or plastic bags are needed. Fruits and vegetables can be kept for 8 to 12 months in the freezer.



Dehydrating (drying) food is arguably the most efficient, and oldest, method of food preservation.

There are several ways to dry food, and the secret to good drying includes heating the food so the moisture is eliminated quickly enough to not affect food flavor, but not at a temperature that is so hot that it cooks the food. Air circulation is also paramount when it comes to properly drying foods as it carries moisture away from the food. Food can be dried in the sun, oven, or in an electric dehydrator.



Canning uses glass jars with pressure-sealing lids and preserves the contents.

You must use a water bath or pressure canner to safely preserve foods when canning. It is important to follow directions carefully while canning to avoid food-borne illnesses. After food is canned, it can be stored on the shelf until ready to open and eat. *New Mexico State University provides detailed canning information on its website: https://pubs.nmsu.edu/_e/E307/index.html*



Store food to last. Some dry foods like dried beans, pasta, grains, oats, and similar foods don't need to be preserved the in the same way as perishable items. Store dry foods in airtight containers in cool dry places with minimal exposure to light.



Keep in mind that preservation can alter the texture of certain foods.

Ask your local farmer, co-op extension office, or Google about the best preservation methods for particular produce as needed.