

Plan a Trip to a Farmers' Market

Overview: Your local farmers' market provides an ideal environment for kids to learn about their food and also practically apply math skills.

Materials: You can use your visit to just explore and learn, but you may also want to bring money and environmentally friendly shopping bags for any purchases.

Approximate Time to Complete: 1 hour

Location: Usually outdoors

Ages: Fun for all ages

Season: Usually Spring - Fall



Instructions:

1. Find a local farmers' market to visit. The USDA provides local food directory listings for farmers' markets, CSAs and on-farm markets at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-directories-listings>
 - a. Through their databases you can also search for additional information such as products available and payments accepted (including WIC and SNAP). Keep in mind that not all farmers' markets are listed, so don't give up your search if you do not find one here.
2. For your first visit, plan a day with good weather and an unhurried schedule to make sure it is a pleasant one. Before you go, talk about how you will find fruits and vegetables that are grown locally and find out what is in season in your area. You may want to search for some recipes you would like to make and create a shopping list for each child to find. Alternatively, you can arrive with a blank slate and look for fruits and vegetables that appeal to you and look for recipes when you return home.
3. During your visit, as long as the market is not too busy, encourage your kids to ask questions at the different booths you visit. You will find that experienced farmers are some of the best teachers around and take a lot of pride in their work. From growing tips to advice on how to adapt to unfavorable weather conditions, there is always a great tale to share. Keep in mind that if the market is really busy, they may not have time for too many in depth conversations. Since many children are shy in new situations, it may help for you to pose the first question. Once dialogue is initiated, their hesitation will likely fade and their natural curiosity will kick in.
4. To hone math skills, let your children weigh your fruits and vegetables when applicable, estimate the cost of your purchases and help with the payment. If you need an incentive, think about letting them keep the change when they add it up correctly.

5. Once home, prepare your fruits and vegetables to eat and enjoy. Talk about all of the things you have learned. Compare the taste of local produce to produce purchased in a grocery store that is shipped in from a distance. Discuss all the many benefits of supporting your local community of farmers.