

Local Foods

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What are local foods?

Local food is food produced within a short distance of where it is consumed. It's often accompanied by a social structure and supply chain different from the large-scale supermarket system.

What are the benefits of eating local food?

It's better for our health:

Local food is usually healthier than large scale supermarket produces because the food can ripen naturally which allows it to retain more nutrients. Rather than large stores, the food is usually picked before it's ripe and then shipped for long periods, which results in the product containing fewer nutrients. Local foods also allow us to eat food that is grown 'in season' which means the food is grown naturally by season cycles and is proven to be healthier for humans. Locally grown produce may also be safer because it is sold to us when the produce is ripe, rather than artificially grown and sold. Locally grown foods also tend to use fewer pesticides and herbicides.

It's Better for the Environment:

Eating local foods reduce carbon emissions because it's grown closer to our homes. Which means less shipping the products. Locally grown foods are far more sustainable because it uses less 'green space' (land and soil) which ties in with Urban Agriculture. The use of rooftops, gardens, and empty lots. Local food also uses far less water and access to clean drinkable water is currently one the biggest concerns of our time. Eating more plant-based diets can benefit the environment greatly, even just eating completely plant bases once or twice a week can help the environment, because the cultivation of fruits and vegetables produces far fewer carbon emissions and waste than other forms of food.

It's Better for Communities:

Local foods provide income for local farmers, as well as create jobs for people. It provides families the ability to pay for everyday necessities. Local foods also supply local businesses,

which also benefits those who own those businesses. It also can bring communities together, when we go to a farmer's market, we are usually purchasing our food directly from the farmers. It can also promote cultural diversity, a lot of local farmers are growing diverse varieties of produce, which can create inclusion with the communities.

Where can we get locally grown foods?

Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSA): As a community member, you can join these programs by paying a share for a variety of food. You can pick up your share of food at various community locations with other CSA members.

Farmers Markets: These are usually the most popular way to get local foods. This is where you can buy fresh produce, eggs, and meat. Some markets can be open year-round, otherwise they're usually open during the warmer months.

Events: Some communities have events where local farmers can set up their stands and sell their fresh food. Sometimes they can be at on site shops, or even along roadsides.

Other places you can find fresh food are local grocers, local food delivery programs, and you can even GROW YOUR OWN! (A great way to learn how to grow a garden)

Interesting facts about Local Foods:

Researchers at Montclair State University did a study to understand the difference between produce grown in season to those commercially grown (out of season). They found that broccoli grown in season had two times more Vitamin C than broccoli grown commercially (out of season).

There are approximately 8,690 Farmers Markets in the United States

3 out of 4 farmers that sell at Farmers Markets use sustainable practices that meet or even exceed organic standards

BIG QUESTION: When you're at a superstore, do you ever wonder how much food is thrown out and wasted every day?

There are approximately 38,307 superstores in the US, so think about how much food is wasted every single day. If we all decided to shop more locally, it could greatly benefit our lives and our planet.

Resources

<https://foodrevolution.org/blog/why-buy-local-food/#:~:text=Local%20food%20can%20be%20better,to%20travel%20before%20being%20sold-> Emily Honeycutt

<https://arrowquip.com/blog/animal-science/top-benefits-buying-locally-grown-food-Arrowquip>
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<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17852499/>- Shahla-M Arrowquip Wunderlich, Charles Feldman, Shannon Kane, Taraneh Hazhin- February 2008

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/240892/number-of-us-supermarket-stores-by-format/#:~:text=In%202018%2C%20there%20were%203%2C507,amounted%20to%2038%2C307%20that%20year.&text=The%20terms%20supermarkets%20and%20grocery,refer%20to%20retail%20food%20stores.>