



Seasonal shopping: Tips for shopping at your farmers market

Seasonal shopping at your local farmers' market is the best way to fill your kitchen with the country's freshest produce. Here are a few tips and tricks to get you inspired...

Last month, we took a look at what seasonal [fruits and vegetables](#) to stock up on at your local farmers market this spring. From artichokes to zucchini, your pantry will soon be overflowing with delicious spring produce. Here are some tips to make seasonal shopping a breeze:

Buy ripe, or ripen?

Buying a selection of ripeness levels where possible will mean that you've always got some vegetables and fruit ready to eat. For example, pick a few pears that are ready to be eaten tomorrow in a beautiful salad, but also pick a few that are hard to the touch and will be ready in a week or so.

Your leafy greens, on the other hand, won't last very long, so make sure you buy them just before you use them. Citrus fruits – from lemons to oranges – will be best earlier in the season, because their prime was in winter. Berries, on the other hand, won't be in their prime until much later in the year, so you might struggle to find juicy, ripe ones earlier on.

The early bird gets the fruit

Your local farmers market is packed with the highest quality fresh produce, but you most certainly won't get the best of the bunch if you're late to the party. Arrive in the aisles early in the day to avoid missing out on in-demand products. Alternatively, get in late for some bargains!

Keep things exciting

If you're buying seasonally, you may find that you're using more of the same ingredients throughout the week. Luckily, this is a chance to get inspired and experiment with new meals. To avoid eating the same meal three nights in a row, buy versatile fruit and vegetables that can be used in many ways.

Avocados can be put to use in many different meals – from guacamole to smoothies and sauces. Put your apples to the test in cooked and baked dishes, as well as fresh salads. Try out some new spinach flavour pairings – from creamy mushrooms to lemon and garlic. Early spring strawberries can be added to salads with a dash of balsamic, as well as made into jams and sauces. Juice your carrots, soup your leeks and try out some cauliflower rice.

The options are endless!