



Farmers Market Shopping Tips

..It is an art!!

In Preparation

❖ **Bring Containers and Shopping Bags**

TFM sometimes offers deals on reusable tote bags yet it's easiest if you bring your own. You are contributing to the most basic recycling and environmental causes by using cloth and string bags, besides buying local, most likely organically grown produce. Thank you for that!

❖ **Dress Comfortably**

Wear walking shoes and dress appropriately for the weather. Most farmers markets are open rain or shine, so be prepared with sunscreen and collapsible umbrellas...don't be afraid of a little liquid sunshine! If you take your children, make sure you have supplies, a stroller, and drinks for them.

❖ **Family Outing**

Bring the entire family. There are lots of activities for kids at the Tacoma Farmers Markets. Print out some interactive activities from our website Kids page (scavenger hunts, puzzles, etc). Stop at the instrument petting zoo, get a face painted, dance to the live music, watch the impromptu performers, plant seeds and refresh with a shaved ice! Involve kids in the process and they will become more interested in fresh produce and meal preparation. A great way to combat obesity early!

❖ **Bring Coolers**

Make sure to have coolers with ice packs in your car, or take the produce straight home to keep it fresh and at its peak. See our "storage tips" page to stretch your food dollars!

❖ **Research What's Fresh (make your shopping list)**

Check the Market's website or newsletter prior to making your trip. They'll likely list the items that are seasonally fresh and available on any given day, which will help in your menu planning process.

At the Market

❖ **Take Your Time**

Have fun browsing! Many folks like to make a slow loop around the market, making note of booths of special interest, before they begin buying. Feel free to munch as you go...there are always fresh baked goodies made with local ingredients along the way!

❖ **Bring Cash or EBT/DEBIT cards**

Forget your cash? Just visit the TFM information booth and use your debit/credit card to buy market tokens. They can be used at any TFM Market/booth and never expire. Did you know that our markets participate in a Senior and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)? If your family qualifies, you can receive coupons good at farmers markets that help supplement your meals. And local farmers benefit too. That's definitely a win-win situation.

❖ **Ask the Farmers**

Ask questions of the vendors when you see unfamiliar produce. Even after running markets for years, last season I learned that parsley has the highest vitamin A count of all vegetables and fruits, and loads of vitamin C....And I have been using it as a garnish all these years! Vendors and farmers love to share their knowledge and can even give you recipes and cooking/growing tips.

❖ **Go Early**

The sights, smells, and sounds are incredibly beautiful. To think all the produce and flowers were harvested earlier that same day! You'll find the freshest and best selection if you show up early.

❖ **Go Late**

Just before closing time, you'll find some of the best deals, because vendors don't want to take their wares back home. But remember that the selection will be limited at this time, and some vendors may be sold out.