



Buy Local

Buying local products is one of the easiest things you can do to go green. Buying local does not just mean local produce from farmers at farmer's markets, but local manufacturers and also local retail stores in your hometown. The benefits to buying local are endless and can help both you and your community achieve sustainable success. Follow these tips to make buying local as easy as possible.

BEST PRACTICE AREA: ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING

DID YOU KNOW?

A typical supermarket-bought carrot, not purchased from a local grower, has traveled 1,838 miles by the time it reaches your dinner table.

LOCAL VS. SUSTAINABLE:

Sustainable agriculture involves food production methods that are healthy, do not harm the environment, respect workers, are humane to animals, provide fair wages to farmers and supports farming communities. Sustainability includes buying food as locally as possible.

Buying local food does not guarantee that it is sustainably produced. Pesticides, chemical fertilizers, factory farming, hormone use, and use of antibiotics can all be involved in local food production, so it's important to make sure that the local food you buy is from farmers or gardeners using sustainable methods. The neighborhood farmer may be producing food less sustainably, using more pesticides, treating animals worse and paying workers less, than the commercial farm 1,000 miles away. So it's important to know the difference to ensure your food is coming from a sustainable, not just local source.

MORE THAN FOOD:

While food is the most commonly thought of product when buying local, many other products can be purchased locally. Items such as furniture, clothing, home décor and countless other items all can be produced locally by individuals in your community. Consider purchasing products from a local producer or craftsman before heading to the big box retailer. If you don't know if the item you seek is produced locally, ask around. Chances are someone knows where you might be able to find it.

THE BENEFITS OF BUYING LOCAL:

- **Money spent local stays local:** You've no doubt heard that money spent locally is circulated through the local economy. Buying locally helps another buy locally, and another, and so on...
- **Jobs and wages:** Supporting local businesses provides support to the jobs they offer to the community. If sales dry up...so do the jobs.
- **Stronger Tax Base:** Buying local means the local municipality collects local sales taxes adding money to city funds to provide essential services. Plus, buying locally helps keep businesses open and paying property taxes.
- **Local business owners invest in the community:** Local businesses are owned or managed by people who live and work in the community, raising their families and investing in the community's future. They support the churches, schools, organizations and the quality of life.
- **Better Variety:** Local businesses provide a wide variety of products and services, right here in the community. Many of these are "one-of-a-kind" businesses that provide the community with its own distinct character. The more people shop these businesses, the more products and services will be available.
- **Convenience equals savings:** Shopping locally saves you time and money. A shopping trip out of town costs you for every mile you drive, each way, and valuable time away from your home. Pocket the savings and treat yourself to a night on the town (locally)!
- **Green-Friendly:** Shopping locally reduces your gas consumption and pollution. Also, local stores help sustain vibrant, walkable communities, reducing sprawl and the need for cars.
- **Local character and prosperity:** In an increasingly homogenized world, communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character have an advantage in offering quality of life and unique experiences.
- **Friends and neighbors:** Local businesses are staffed by local residents, your friends and neighbors. You get better service from people you know and know you. And, you can catch up on "what's new" with other customers as you shop (without gossiping)!
- **Non-profits receive greater support:** Support of local businesses helps ensure that they are able to continue giving to local non-profit groups.

PURCHASE CSA'S:

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system of local food production and consumption in which shareholders or members pay in advance for a "share" of what a farm produces in a growing season, then receives a portion of each week's harvest. The CSA system provides farmers with much needed resources at the start of the growing season to plant their crop and provides members with the benefit of knowing where and how their food is being produced. Locate a CSA farm in your area and begin enjoying locally grown food today.

