Farmers markets are great way to buy fresh produce and support your region’s farmers, while also having fun. Buying produce at the peak of its harvest can also be a good bargain as well as more nutritious! Here’s how you can get the most from your market!

Find out what’s in season. Stop by the Healthy Eats Table at the WSU Farmers Market and ask for a produce calendar for Michigan. It will tell you when you can expect the pears, peppers, pumpkins, and more!

Go early or go late. For the best selection especially when harvests are just coming in, go to the farmers market early. For the best deals, go later. Vendors may give you a discount instead of schlepping products home!

Plan ahead for your meals. Once you know what’s in season, you can plan for your meals in advance and shop accordingly. That way, you’ll buy everything you need, but not so much that some may go to waste!

But also be spontaneous. Trying new things is part of the fun of going to farmers markets! Leave a little wiggle room in your pocket book and garnish your salad with those corn sprouts you just discovered at Rising Pheasant Farm’s stall at the WSU Farmers Market!

The flavor is worth it! Learning to handle just-harvested produce can take some adjustment, but it is well worth the effort! For example, beets that have greens on them will take a bit longer to clean and chop. But using both will add more color and nutrition to your meals!

Shop smart at your farmers market

Did you know that Americans consume 200-300 more calories per day than we did in the 1980s? As it turns out, nearly half of those extra calories come from sugary drinks. In fact, sugar-sweetened drinks—such as regular pop, juice drinks, lemonade, sweet tea, sports and “energy” drinks—are the single biggest contributor to the growing obesity epidemic.

Sugary drinks are everywhere: in schools, hospitals, and work and play spaces. These drinks contribute extra calories without making you full. They can therefore lead to overweight and obesity and increase your risk of developing chronic disease, such as diabetes, heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke.

It’s not just what you drink, but also how much. Portion sizes have dramatically increased in recent years. Before 1960, a standard soft-drink serving was 6½ ounces. In most stores today, a typical bottle of pop is 20 ounces—that’s three times larger!

One 20-ounce pop contains nearly 16 teaspoons of sugar! Consuming that much added sugar regularly is not just bad for your waistline: your risk of developing type-2 diabetes greatly increases when you drink even one can (12 oz.) of non-diet pop a day.

Avoid ‘liquid’ calories! Here’s how:

Drink water. Nothing quenches thirst better. Add lemon, lime or cucumber slices for a fun and zero-calorie flavor blast. Choose water with meals and snacks.

Choose whole fruit instead of fruit juice. Whole fruit has fewer calories and more fiber, which keeps you feeling full for longer. Most kids get too much juice and not enough fruit. If you do drink juice, be sure it is 100% juice with no added sugars and limit portions to less than 6 oz. per day.

Go with fat-free or 1% milk. Fat-free and low-fat milk has all the calcium, protein and vitamins as whole milk with fewer calories and less fat. Most kids over age 2 should drink fat-free or 1% instead of whole milk.

Watch out for sweetened coffee, tea, shakes and soy drinks. Check calories and ingredients lists to find hidden sugars.

Skip the sports and “energy” drinks. They are loaded with sugar and caffeine and low in other nutrients. Water is all you need to stay hydrated, even while exercising.

Avoid fruit punches and fruit-flavored drinks. These are just flavored sugar waters that have little nutritional value.

Downsize. Order a “small” instead of a “large.” Beware of free refills and super-sized portions that can add 500+ calories—the same as a Big Mac!—without making you full. If you do crave a sugary drink, make it an occasional treat.

A newsletter of SEED Wayne’s Healthy Eats Project, Wayne State University, June 19, 2013
Get the Most Greens for Your Green

Tips for spring greens

- For the best buy, look for greens that are moist and crisp, with rich green leaves.
- Keep in mind, 1 pound of fresh greens is about 8 cups when chopped!
- Dressings for greens can be cheap, tasty and simple. Lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, ginger and red pepper flakes can be combined in ways to add flavor.
- To prepare fresh greens, wash leaves well and trim leaves from stem. It’s important to make sure you always rinse greens well before consuming.
- To store fresh greens, wrap unwashed greens in a damp paper towel, place in a plastic bag and keep in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days.
- Spring greens contain vitamin A, which is good for healthy eyes and skin.

More on kale in salads!

- Tuscan Kale is the sweetest and most tender type, and is most suitable for raw preparations with kale.
- If you’re unable to find Tuscan kale, make sure to chop/ribbon the kale finely to help make salad more palatable.
- Salad made with other kale varieties may benefit from additional lemon juice, a bit more dressing, and a longer period to marinate before serving.

Try This Recipe!

Raw kale and Collard salad
Yield 6 servings (1 cup each)

Ingredients:

1 bunch (3 cups, chopped) Tuscan Kale
1 bunch (3 cups, chopped) Collard Greens
1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pinch (1/8 tsp) red chili flakes
1 pinch (1/8 tsp) salt
1 garlic clove, minced finely

Instructions:

1. Rinse kale and collards and pat dry
2. Remove stems from greens and cut into thin ribbons. Place ribbons in a large mixing bowl and set aside
3. In a separate bowl, combine lemon juice, olive oil, red chili flakes, salt and garlic
4. Pour dressing over greens; toss to combine
5. Cover and let stand for at least 10-15 minutes before serving
6. Adjust for seasoning
7. Salad may be dressed and kept refrigerated overnight