

27 Ways to Strategize, Shop & Have Fun



1 Get there early. Farmers at some markets leave once they sell out.

2 Larger markets may be open all week but more active on certain days. For instance, Pike Place Farmers Market in Seattle is open daily but has more farmers on Saturdays.

3 Some markets let you plan ahead, with online listings of what's available each day. TD Saturday Market (yes, some farmers' markets are sponsored like stadiums these days) in Greenville, South Carolina, has a searchable map. "Let's say you're thinking, 'I really need some okra,'" says Tara Eaker, one of the market's administrators. "You can search for okra and it'll pop up all the farmers that have it that week."



4 What else does the market offer? Make a day of it by checking out a cooking demo and grabbing lunch while taking in some live music. Some even have activities for mini market-goers.

5 Find out where the food comes from—are the vendors from within a certain distance of the market? Producer-only markets are packed with folks who actually grew or made the products they are selling. Find your market's rules on its website or ask at the information stand.

6 BYO bags—it's good for the environment, and farmers appreciate it. "We spend a lot of money on bags, believe it or not," says Kyle Thom of Wisconsin's Roots Down Community Farm. "I've spent about \$4,000 on packaging this year."



7 Hit the ATM: Although many vendors accept credit cards, they pay a fee for each transaction, so cash is appreciated.

8 Keep a cooler filled with ice packs in your car, particularly if you tend to buy more-perishable items like meat, cheese or eggs.

9 Invest in a roller cart to save your shoulders, especially if you plan on doing most of your shopping there.

GREENVILLE, SC



TD Saturday Market
Main Street, Greenville, SC
Sat. 8 a.m.-noon, May to Oct.

When it comes to picturesque farmers' markets, Greenville's is hard to beat. Every Saturday during the market season, two blocks of tree-canopied Main Street are filled with rows of white tents. Around 75 merchants sell at the market—a mix of farmers, prepared-foods vendors and crafters. Nearly all come from within a 100-mile radius. You'll also find live music, children's activities and the "Booth with a Cause," a weekly spotlight on a local community-minded organization.

