

Shopping on a budget at the Farmers Market



How to shop on a budget for your family depends on where you go. There are different tips for the farmers market and the supermarket.

1. Ask your neighbors, your local food pantry, or look online to find out the time and date of your local market, and whether they accept SNAP/EBT cards (food stamps).
2. Many markets that accept EBT cards will “double your dollars”. This means that if you spend \$5 of your SNAP dollars with your EBT card, the market will match it and give you another \$5 to spend at the market.
3. The tokens you receive from the market when you use your EBT card don’t expire. This means you can buy tokens at the beginning of the month and keep them for when your account runs low.
4. Look in your pantry and see what staples you already own (meat, eggs, beans, pasta, sauces, etc.) and think of some meals you can make. Make a list of what you need, but be flexible. You might want to think of it as “enough fruit for 5 lunches for 3 people” instead of “10 apples and 5 oranges”.
5. Learning to substitute ingredients for similar items can save you money and trips to the store!
6. Get there early to get what you want. If there is something you must have, get there early to make sure it doesn’t sell out..
7. When you arrive at the market, walk around to see what's available, and at what prices, before getting out your money. If the market is large, it can be helpful to jot down good prices along with the name of the farm or other identifying characteristics so you don't forget where you saw them!
8. Ask farmers about buying produce or meat in bulk if you can preserve and store it.
9. Don't overbuy, especially if you are new to farmers markets. If you buy more than you can eat or use, your waste will turn good buys into not-so-good buys.
10. Remember, just because it came from the farmers market doesn't mean brownies, pies or other treats don't contain fat and sugar! Dessert is still dessert.



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