

Reference Question

Question

Like many people who have read Michael Pollan's book, I'm interested in buying more foods produced locally. My problem is that I don't really know what foods are produced locally. I have no idea what fruits and vegetables are in season. I currently live in Palm Beach County, Florida and I know Florida has different growing seasons than the rest of the country. Is there a resource you can recommend where I can find this information?

Answer

Your question was received by the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) at the National Agricultural Library for USDA.

Buying fruits and vegetables locally and in season can be a very good idea. It allows you to help support your local economy by keeping dollars spent in your local area, and you are usually certain that the produce will be at its peak.

From the FNIC Consumer Corner Web site (<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/consumer>), look for the section titled "All About Food". From here, scroll down towards the bottom of the page to find the section called "Shopping and Meal Planning Tips". This page contains many different links aimed at helping consumers shop and plan meals. The fourth link, "Find a Farmer's Market in Your State," is a great place to start looking for locally produced fruits and vegetables. This tool will help you search for a farmers market in your state based on specific criteria such as city, county, or zip code.

On that same shopping and meal planning page, the link for "What's Fresh Near You" is another resource that will allow you to find which fresh fruits and vegetables are available in your state during different times of the year. From the site (<http://www.nrdc.org/health/foodmiles/>), click on the "select a state" drop-down list and choose Florida, then from the "select a season" choose late February. You will then see a wide variety of produce available in your local area.

An alternative website that features an interactive map to see what's fresh in your area, plus find ingredient descriptions, shopping guides, recipes, and tips can be found here:
<http://www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/seasonalcooking/farmtotable/seasonalingredientmap>

I hope this information is useful. Please feel free to contact us again if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

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