

## Fresh flavours and familiar faces at the farmers market

There is nothing like fresh picked corn with kernels so crisp, or the smell of vine-ripened tomatoes, harvested at their peak and purchased from a local farmers' market. With over 125 farmers' markets spread across British Columbia, chances are there is one near you!

Items available at the market change with the growing season. Buy your favorite foods each week but try something new too. If your local market is like my favorite one, there are often free samples, so you can try before you buy. Try preparing your veggies in different ways such as on the grill, pureed in a soup, or blended in a smoothie. The options are endless! Fresh herbs are also a great find to add to your favorite recipe.

Markets are as different as the communities they serve. Some are festive events with artists, musicians, and a huge variety of fresh produce and locally made products. Others might feature a few stalls with one farmer supplying most of the produce.

Besides providing an abundance of locally grown vegetables and fruit to help keep you healthy, markets also contribute to the health of the community. They are a great place to socialize, enjoy the fresh air, listen to some music, and meet the farmer that grows your food. Local farms employ local people - when you buy from a producer in your area, you support the local economy.

This summer check out the markets in your area. Visiting a market makes a great outing for kids, seniors or out of town guests. Some communities even offer free public transportation to the market. Don't forget to bring bags and a cooler for the trip home!

Are you wondering where to find the closest market, what is in season, or if your market offers the Nutrition Coupon Program? Perhaps you need a recipe? Check out the BC Association of Farmers' Markets' website at <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/> before you head off to the market.

Maybe I will see you at a market this summer!

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