Don’t Eat a Third Hand Tomato; Come to the Farmers’ Market

STOP! Before you take another bite, you might want to consider that your food choices have a much bigger impact than you could ever imagine. Nothing beats the flavor of field-ripened Maryland tomatoes harvested at the height of their ruby blush. These tomatoes are planted and harvested using good agricultural practices which renders them disease-free and are miles fresher. Many store tomatoes were picked somewhere west or south of Maryland, sold to a broker, and then sold to the grocery-store chain for distribution. That’s a third-hand tomato.

Farmers’ markets were deemed essential over the last few months. However, farmers’ markets have already been celebrated as essential each year for the past two decades. The 21st annual National Farmers Market Week, is happening from August 2 to 8, 2020. National Farmers Market Week is a celebration started by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that highlights the essential role farmers’ markets play in the nation’s food system. The campaign runs throughout the first full week of August each year and is formally declared by a USDA proclamation. Maryland has multiple farmers’ markets open in every county and the City of Baltimore.

FARMERS’ MARKETS:

▸ Preserve America’s rural livelihoods and farmland–50% of farmers selling at farmers’ markets derive at least half their revenue from farmers’ market sales.
▸ Increase access to fresh, nutritious food–with affordable prices and special programs for low-income people, markets are expanding access to fresh, nutritious food.
▸ Support healthy communities–farmers’ markets provide communities with a healthy food environment. With abundant produce, farmers’ markets help increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
▸ Promote sustainability–farmers’ markets create new business opportunities for farmers interested in selling sustainably produced food. This helps protect the natural environment, public health, human communities, and animal welfare.

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We recently experienced a food supply chain disruptions in the grocery stores. With growing season in full swing, Maryland’s growers and specialty foods entrepreneurs are bringing their best directly from their farms and businesses to your market basket. Take advantage of this bounty by shopping at your local farms, farm stands, farmers’ markets, wineries, grocers, and markets that stock genuine local products.

Here are resources for locating Maryland’s farmers’ markets and market shopping tips:

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

► 2020 Maryland Farmers Market Directory (Note: This is the current listing of the Farmers’ Market Directory. As new information becomes available we will continue to update the directory throughout the season. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. (Updated March 2020) https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Documents/2020-Maryland-Farmers-Market-Directory.pdf.

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► University of Maryland Extension-Eat Smart, Be Fit Maryland https://www.eatsmart.umd.edu/

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