



## Buying Local Food = Making Sustainable Choices

(Part I in a Buy Local Series)

*Improve your health, the local economy, and the environment all at once by buying and eating local food! Here's why:*

### Taste and Freshness

Local food is fresher and tastes better than food shipped long distances because it goes straight from the farm to you. Crops can be picked at their peak ripeness. Local farmers can produce varieties bred for taste and freshness rather than for shipping and long shelf life.

### Improved Health

Local foods don't need to be waxed, irradiated, gassed, or processed like their long-distance counterparts. Nutritional value can also decline after harvest, making freshly picked produce more nutritionally rich. In addition, knowing about where your food comes from and how it is grown enables you to choose safe farming practices from growers you trust.

### Economic Benefits

Buying locally grown food keeps money within the community, strengthening all sectors of the local economy. Food producers can receive **50% to 80% more revenue** by selling directly to the consumer. A **study** found that if consumers spent 1% of their purchasing power on local foods, farmers would see a gain of 5% in their income. That money not only helps farmers, but it helps our entire community through taxes, jobs, and more spending in the local economy.

### Environmental Protection

**17% of the total energy use** in the US comes from food production and distribution, and accounts for more than 20% of all transportation in the country. Local food uses less fossil fuel because it travels a shorter distance and requires less packaging. Small, local farms are also more likely to use practices that protect soil, air, and water resources, and promote biodiversity.

### Community Resources:

**Portland Farmer's Markets** have expanded to include a **matching program** for low-income shoppers. Find a market in other parts of **Oregon** and **Washington** too.

**Community Supported Agriculture** (CSA) Individuals support a local farm in return for a monthly allotment of produce or farm products. Find a **Portland area CSA**.

**Food Buying Clubs and Co-Ops:** Individuals who value food quality come together to generate large enough orders to deal directly with local distributors or growers. Find a **Portland Area Food Co-op**.

**Eat Well Guide:** Search tool for local and organic food options – farms, markets, and restaurants.

**Local Harvest:** A national website with maps and search features for sustainably grown food.

**Slow Food Portland:** Learn about the movement to reconnect people with the food they eat. Find an **event/class**.



### Dig Deeper

- **The Great Grocery Smackdown: Will Walmart Save the Local Farm?**
- **It Takes a Community to Sustain a Farm**
- **Adding Values to Our Food System: An Economic Analysis of Sustainable Community Food Systems**
- **In Defense of Food**
- **Food, Inc.**

### Take Action

- Attend a **Portland Plan workshop**; there are **draft objectives** specifically related to health & food policy in Portland.
- Learn and advocate for the **Portland Public School's Farm to School program**.
- Attend a meeting of the **Portland Multnomah Food Policy Council** (open to the public)