

10 Eco-Friendly Grocery Tips



1. **Shop from the farmers' market in your area.** The products are not only often cheaper, fresher, and tastier than those at a supermarket but also more environmentally friendly. Local food generally uses less packaging. This is also a great way to support small local growers. Buying local also cuts down on “miles per calorie”. Buying from local sellers cuts back on emissions, fuel consumption, and unnecessary traffic. Most produce in the US travels an average of 1,500 miles before being sold.
2. **Check out the u-pick farms in your region.** Pick- your-own farms are not only a bargain, but a great way of stocking up on cannable or freezable produce. Look for berries in the late Spring and early Summer, tomatoes all Summer long, corn in late Summer, and squash and pumpkins in the Fall. You can find u-pick farms near you by going to [www. PickYourOwn.org](http://www.PickYourOwn.org) At this site, you will also find picking tips, guides to home canning, recipes, etc.
3. **Buy less meat.** Beef, chicken, and pork are not only expensive, they come with a costly impact on the planet. A pound of beef requires around 12,000 gallons of water to produce, compared to 60 gallons for a pound of potatoes.
4. **Buy low on the food chain.** By choosing fresh beans over a frozen bean casserole, or several ears of corn over a few cans of creamed corn, you reduce your contribution to the food processing industry, which uses up a lot of energy to produce “convenience” foods you can easily prepare yourself.
5. **Grow your own food.** Growing plants not only helps soak up excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but it can help clean toxins from the air and provide habitat for wildlife. Try growing in a garden, in the greenhouse, or even in a window box. Herbs like basil and parsley are incredibly easy to grow and can give your dishes more flavor than the dried variety found in stores. Other easy- to- grow fruits and vegetables include: tomatoes, cucumbers, watermelon, and squash.
6. **Buy dry goods in bulk at a local food co-op, bulk store, or farmers' market.** Dried beans, spices, grains, cereals, pastas, and nuts are usually cheaper when bought in bulk. Most will keep well for months, either in a cool dark pantry or in your fridge, so it's worth stocking up when you can. By purchasing things in larger sizes, you can help banish excess packaging.

7. **Look into bartering.** Know a friend or relative whose garden is overflowing with tomatoes or eggplant? Why not strike a deal in which you shuttle their children to sports practice or bake them a few loaves of fresh bread once a week in exchange for some fresh vegetables from their garden?
8. **Watch for roadside “specials”.** Every part of the country sees its occasional fruit or vegetable vendor set up a roadside stand for a couple of days. If the price is right, stock up!
9. **Don’t follow the pack.** Instead of buying foods that come in extensive packaging, look for unpackaged or minimally packaged foods. Pick brands that use bio-based plastic packaging.
10. **Prepare just enough.** By putting some extra planning into the amount of food you cook will cut back on waste. If it is something that will spoil quickly, avoid making more than you or your family can eat.

<http://greenliving.suite101.com>

<http://playgreen.typepad.com>

<http://www.thedailygreen.com>

This material was funded partially by USDA’s Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program



provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet.



Made Available By:
Layne A. Langley
Extension Agent- FNP & FCS
West Baton Rouge Parish
225/336-2416