

Locally Produced Foods



So you've cut your energy consumption at home started recycling and cut down how much you use your car - what next to tackle in the pursuit of going green? Next on your list should be where you take your shopping list. Shopping local and investing in locally produced foods is another way to do your bit for the environment.

Changing your shopping habits to become locally friendly has two parts to it. Firstly, it's about making the choice between purchasing an item made locally versus purchasing one that has had to be transported thousands of miles for a place on shop shelves. Secondly, it's about changing where we shop and how we go about our weekly or daily shopping, supporting small local businesses and food producers as well as making more ethical decisions about food from supermarkets.

Shopping local has many advantages, both for your convenience and the environment...

Good Food on Your Doorstep

A great thing about shopping local is the fact that you don't need to travel far to do it; that's the essence of supporting your local food producers. This means you don't necessarily need to use a car or public transport to do your shopping and can combine exercise – walking or cycling – with getting your shopping done.

Less Food Miles

Food in the UK travels 65% further than it did two decades ago, which means a product's so-called 'food miles' are on the increase. But you'll be surprised how many fruit, vegetables or other food products you can get from a local supplier. Buying locally eliminates the costs and environmental impact of transport, processing, packaging and advertising. Always take a look at the place of origin

on a food product's packaging and try and select the one with the least food miles. If more people buy local, it will put pressure on suppliers to put more emphasis on the environmental impact of the products they sell.

Knowing Where Your Food's From

Consumers are more concerned than ever about where food comes from and the conditions it has been produced in – what with food scares and outbreaks hitting the headlines. With locally produced food, particularly when purchased from the place of origin, you know where your food has come from and can ask with confidence in what sort of conditions it has been grown or reared.

Supporting Your Local Economy

Another advantage is that shopping local has a direct positive impact on the local economy. Currently over 15% of people buy food locally and this number continues to rise as more opportunities are made available for people to support the local economy, including farmers' markets and local fruit and vegetable box schemes. Supporting local enterprise also creates a sense of community and allows you to purchase direct from the local producer rather than through a middle man.

Fresher, Tastier

Finally, the proof is in the pudding. As it's been produced locally, you can buy and eat your food almost immediately after production. This makes it fresh, tasty and of a higher quality. It also eradicates the need for chemical treatments that are often used on food to keep it fresh while it's transported and extend its shelf-life.

The benefit of locally grown fresh food is that it can be consumed almost immediately after production leading to an increase in food quality and taste as it may be sold fresher and usually riper. Also, the need for chemical preservatives to artificially extend the shelf-life can be reduced or eliminated.

