

Become a Locavore!

On average, produce is shipped 1500 miles before reaching the local grocery store. Take into account the produce imported from other countries and the distance food travels increases considerably. Buy local movements are gaining popularity across the US. As a result, more people are becoming locavores – people who prefer to eat locally grown or produced food. Commonly, locavores focus on food produced within a 100 mile radius of their homes.

Buying local is good for many reasons:

1. **It's fresh.** Produce purchased at a local farmers' market is often picked within 24 hours while the produce at the local supermarket spent days or weeks travelling to the shelves.
2. **It tastes better.** The tomatoes in the grocery store just don't taste the same as the ones fresh from the farm or garden.
3. **It's good for the local economy.** The Center for Popular Research, Education and Policy estimates "for every \$1 million of new farm revenue from local basic food purchases, the local economy could grow by \$2 million in new income and 1.45 jobs." In addition, supporting locally-owned business builds stronger communities, generates jobs, and impacts the local economy. In fact, for every \$100 spent in a locally-owned business \$45 stays in the community compared to \$13 dollars spent in a chain store.
4. **It's healthy.** Fruits and vegetables have vitamins, minerals and other natural substances that protect against chronic disease. Research shows that fresh fruits and vegetables have more nutritional value.

Become a locavore, it's easy:

1. **Visit a farmers' market.** Walton County has three weekly markets: The Seaside market is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon.
2. **Visit a local farm.** Find farms at the ACT Walton page on Facebook, on the Local Harvest website www.localharvest.org, or by contacting your local Extension office.
3. **Support a community garden.** Volunteer or donate to a community garden. Walton County gardens include the Hometown Community Garden in DeFuniak Springs and the Seaside Community Garden. Find out if your child's school has a garden or start a community garden in your neighborhood.
4. **Start your own garden.** Contact the horticulture agent and the Master Gardeners at your local Extension office to learn how. Visit our website for more information. www.solutionsforyourlife.com
5. **Preserve some local food.** Be sure to use safe methods. The National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp> has recipes and instructions on everything from canning to drying.
6. **Shop local.** Visit locally owned stores, vendors and restaurants. Ask them if they use locally grown produce in the food items they serve. Even if they don't, your purchase supports the local economy.
7. **Learn more about local agriculture.** Contact your local UF IFAS Extension office.

Even small steps can make a difference! For more information contact Kendra Zamojski at the UF IFAS Walton County Extension office at 850-892-8172 or Hughson@ufl.edu.



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