



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

LOCAL FOOD

Your pocket guide



*Helping you to find local food
and the best reasons to buy it*

'It is a sign of our increasing separation from nature that we are losing sight of where food comes from and how it is produced. The way we buy it adds to this alienation. Food, once at the heart of towns and communities, integral to their rhythm and reason, is often now a side show. Much of what we buy is highly processed, overpackaged, branded but anonymous, transported from anywhere available at any time. It is hard to remember that these 'food products' come from plants and animals, and are a result of myriad complex interactions of seasons and soil, and from the toil of real people.'

**Monty Don, foreword to CPRE's
*From field to fork: the value of
England's local food webs*
report (2012)**

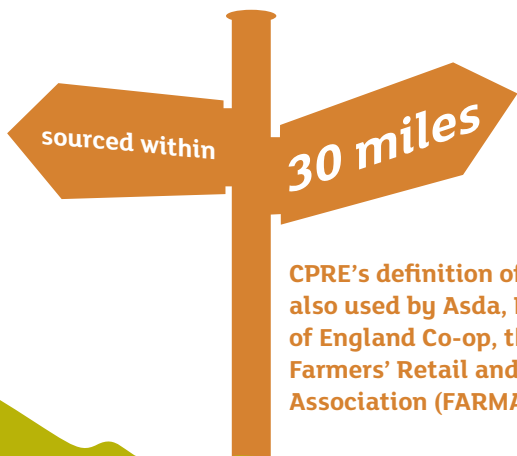
LOCAL FOOD

What's the deal?

There are many good reasons to choose local foods, such as benefits to your health, your community and your local environment. In presenting some of the best for you in this booklet we hope to encourage you to seek out local food, and we're also here to help you find it.

If you usually shop only at supermarkets, it could mean making gradual changes to where and how you shop as, with a few worthy exceptions, supermarkets stock low levels of local food. Shopping around can take a little more time but once you see how rewarding, cost-effective and tasty it can be, you won't regret it!





sourced within

30 miles

CPRE's definition of local food, also used by Asda, Booths, East of England Co-op, the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) and Waitrose



OUR OWN
RHUBARB

FOOD MILES...metres by
wheelbarrow

WHY YOU SHOULD BUY LOCAL FOOD

You can support your local economy

Whether you buy from a local shop or direct from a farm, you're providing a market for local producers where they can get a fair price. Most local food producers are small or micro (with fewer than ten employees) businesses, so you'll be helping them to survive alongside larger companies. What's more, when the whole supply chain is taken into account, spending locally can support hundreds of jobs in your area.

**£6.75
billion**

estimated amount of money spent on local food in England recirculating within local economies



Mrs Darlington's
Farmer's Pickles
Made With Love

You can support your local area

Buying local is one way to get to know where your food comes from and the people involved in providing it, from producers to local shops. You can find out more about what's in your meals, give people feedback and positively influence both the way they run their businesses and your local community. In particular you can support smaller, traditional and mixed farms by giving them a fair income and ensuring that the character of your local countryside is protected for the future.



You can choose the healthier option

Local food has travelled a much shorter distance to your plate and so is usually fresher. Local producers are also free to choose what they grow for flavour rather than varieties that travel well or have a long shelf-life. Local food promotes a healthier lifestyle as buying more raw ingredients, like newly-picked fruit and vegetables, can encourage you to cook more and take control over what goes onto your plate. This can work out cheaper and improve the freshness, taste and quality of your meals.



You can look after the environment

If you don't buy seasonal, local food, your food could have an unnecessarily high carbon footprint, especially if it has been flown in from across the globe and trucked up and down the country. Also, non-local food needs to be packaged to stop it deteriorating, creating millions of tonnes of wrapping waste made from oil-based plastics that we can't yet easily recycle. Local food travels a much shorter distance, and is often sold unpackaged or in simple recyclable containers. Seeking out seasonal and local produce is an easy way to do the right thing for the environment.

34%

of shoppers see cutting food miles as a key reason to buy local



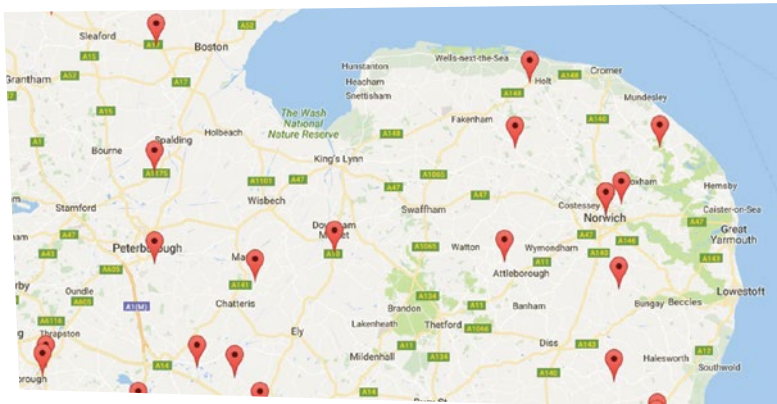
WHERE TO FIND LOCAL FOOD

Internet

The internet is, of course, a hub for finding local food sources. The best general websites we've found so far are **Big Barn** and **FARMA**. Both of these are well-maintained and have map tools so that you can search using a postcode or place name, to bring up a wide range of local food outlets: farm shops, farmers' markets, delicatessens, independent shops such as butchers, and community-supported farms.

The **Food Assemblies** website is also a great, new way to find local food – buy from a range of local producers online then pick up your order from them weekly at one central location. An excellent way to start!

Sample map of FARMA registered market



Shops

Traditional 'specialist' food shops – butchers, bakers, greengrocers and fishmongers – and delis can be excellent places to find local food. Sourcing locally is part of the traditional way they work to ensure produce is of high quality and can be trusted. Get to know your local independent stores and speak to the staff to find out what's local.

Farm shops are also a good bet for local produce. They usually have to sell a high percentage of their own produce, though many also buy in from elsewhere to extend their range or season.



Markets

Farmers' markets come in all sizes and rules can vary about where produce comes from. But, in general, producers must sell their own produce on their stall, so they are a very good source for local food. Some markets only allow produce to be described as local if it comes from within a 30-mile radius.

Traditional markets are generally under-acknowledged as sellers of local food. In many ways, market stalls are not much different from specialist shops like butchers, bakers, greengrocers and fishmongers, with similar and often local produce. If it's not clear, just ask sellers what's local and in season.

There are also over 300 **Country Markets** held weekly across the country selling home-made and home-grown produce on a co-operative basis. Give them a try!

2,000+ markets are held regularly across the UK



Box schemes

Box schemes score highly for providing fresh, seasonal produce, especially fruit and vegetables, and for supporting smaller producers. Our research shows that box schemes usually supply very high percentages of local food. They can be a convenient alternative if getting to the shops is difficult, and often they can deliver meat, dairy, eggs and drinks as well as the traditional fruit and veg. The **Soil Association** has a helpful map with a postcode and place-name search function for your most local organic box scheme.



Farms

Farms with Pick Your Own (PYO) schemes are worth seeking out in your local area or nearby. Whether you're picking strawberries, asparagus or apples, PYO can be a fun, family-friendly day out and you'll come home with fresh fruit and vegetables to cook and eat. **Big Barn** can help you search for local farms and you can also try the **PYO Farms** website.

Many farms also sell produce such as eggs, honey, milk and fruit at the gate that you're welcome to pick up and buy.



Community-supported farms

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) has grown rapidly over the past decade with new farms starting up across the country. Sign up as a member and commit yourself to a regular supply (often a year) of local, freshly picked fruit, veg and sometimes other produce (such as meat or honey); most will be organic. This gives the farm a secure stable income and a decent return to the farmer.

Members are encouraged to volunteer and get involved with planting and harvesting, and it's a fun way to meet new people and make friends. It's also a great way to eat really fresh, sustainable and fairly-traded local food and to be connected to its production. You can find if there is a CSA project in your area at the **CSA Network** website.

70%

of CSA members say their overall quality of life has improved since joining their local community farm



Where to start

www.bigbarn.co.uk

www.farma.org.uk

www.thefoodassembly.com

www.country-markets.co.uk

www.soilassociation.org/boxschemes

www.pickyourownfarms.org.uk

www.communitysupportedagriculture.org.uk

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All statistics from CPRE report *From field to fork: the value of England's local food webs*, 2012

CPRE has campaigned on local food since 1998 when we published **Food Webs**, a pioneering report on the local food network in Suffolk. Since 2011 we've published research into 19 local food webs across England, engaged national politicians in the issues and helped local food to be seen as a key part of a more sustainable food and farming system.

Join CPRE and help us to do more to support local food in your area.

For more information on local food, as well as CPRE's other work, please visit our website.



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