

Benefits of San Diego Grown 365

There are many reasons to buy local, or *San Diego Born & Raised*, produce. To name just a few, local purchases support small farmers and the local economy, reduce the environmental impact of transportation, and help preserve specialty varieties and the genetic diversity of crops. Other benefits to consider are the superior taste and nutrition of local products.



Local is Fresher

The freshest foods available are those grown closest to home. Local food typically arrives at the place of purchase within **24 to 48 hours after harvest**, and sometimes even the same day! This contrasts sharply to traditional distribution channels, where products may travel hundreds or thousands of miles to reach their destination many days, even weeks, later.

Fresher is Better



Why do fresh local fruits and vegetables taste so good and generally have higher nutritional value?



Some of the benefits of freshness are obvious, some less so. Let's look at some differences between local growers and today's commercial growing models.

Most large **commercial farms** focus on a single crop or a handful of popular hybrid varieties, such as red delicious apples, iceberg lettuce, or russet potatoes. This occurs because industrial farmers need to choose from a small group of hardy crops that offer **high yields and long shelf lives**, and can also withstand heavy duty harvesting equipment and the rigors of long distance transportation.

Fruits and vegetables that undergo **long-distance shipping** are typically **picked long before they ripen**. Early harvesting often results in lower nutrient content compared to food picked when ripe or close to being ripe. Picked "green" fruits and vegetables don't absorb as many nutrients from the vine as ripened produce, and generally don't develop key sunlight-related nutrient powerhouses.



By contrast, farmers growing for a **local** market favor **taste, nutrition and uniqueness** over shipability. Many varieties are heirloom, carefully culled with seeds passed down from generation to generation. These broad crop options translate to greater taste and nutritional diversity.

Local produce for local markets is typically not shipped far or warehoused for distribution, so it can be picked when it is ripe, yielding top flavor. This key peak-time harvesting, combined with speedy local delivery, helps ensure consumer access to the freshest fruits and vegetables with the **best taste and highest nutritional content** possible. Go with *San Diego Born & Raised!*

For more information, visit: <http://www.sdfarmbureau.org/BuyLocal/SD-Grown365.php>

