



## Spice, The Variety of Life

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It's finally Spring for real and it's Farmer's market season.

There is something special about waking up early Saturday morning, grabbing a coffee and heading out to your local market. What is it about the farmer's market that captivates us so? Is it the food itself, fresher and usually less expensive than the chain grocers? Is it the social interaction, spending time with like-minded people? Or maybe the sense of community, helping support local businesses and catching up with your neighbors? How about the fact that most food is grown without the use of chemicals?

No matter what your reason is, I think we can all agree that it's worth getting up early to experience a farmer's market. I personally think that part of the charm is reconnecting with our shared past when the town square market was the heart of a village. It's a little bit of a break from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. Let's look at the history of the town market and its journey to today's version. Enjoy



While there is very little written history from the early days of town markets, most historians agree that once our ancestors settled down, began farming and realized that a division of labor was a much more effective way for the tribe to survive, there needed to be a way to share the resources that each individual contributed. As the tribes grew and encampments began turning into towns and villages, the method of trading and sharing resources grew as well.

Cue the visual of Indiana Jones walking through the marketplace in the first movie. Hustle & bustle, an explosion for the senses, voices, colors, smells permeate the small, enclosed space.



*Gwen*

Over time, as the variety of goods increased and bartering became more traditional commerce, these markets evolved into more permanent businesses with each farmer or craftsman creating their own shops that were open to business throughout the week, not just on the weekends.

The next big shift came as travel became more common and what we call trading posts began to appear in more remote areas. The creation of the "Middle Man" became the foundation of what we know today as Retail Commerce.

Over time, as the population increased, growers struggled to keep up with the demand and science turned its attention to increasing production and reducing loss. Without getting too deeply into this aspect of food production, the old slogan "Better living through chemicals" became the mantra and large scale, combine farms dominated the market. That is until the early 2000's when we hit a tipping point.

The struggle to balance preservation of our environment and our own health has been going on for almost as long as we have been creating the need for that oversight. The difference seems to be that now it isn't just a small, marginalized group calling for a better life. Mainstream America is finally waking up to the fact that we need to do better. The desire for fresh, chemical-free meat and produce has led to a resurgence of local markets.

The 1980's saw the beginning of larger scale change with Whole Foods and Mom's Organic Market hitting the national scene, but the early 2000's saw a dramatic increase in the smaller side of the business. There were 1755 registered markets in 1994 and by 2006 that number had increased to 4385. 2009 saw 5274 markets and 2013 hit an amazing 8144. New York City alone had 107 markets in 2012 and Los Angeles saw 88 in

2014, many supporting the Hispanic and Asian population. Even the Federal Government got on the bandwagon with SNAP and WIC on board supporting the new commerce channel.

All in all, there don't seem to be any downsides here, so if you don't already have a favorite market, you might want to check out one or more of these.



Old Town Farmers' Market - Alexandria

301 King Street

Saturdays, rain or shine 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Del Ray Farmers' Market - Alexandria

2311 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Saturdays, rain or shine 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market

4109 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Mid April -early December 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Check website for opening & closing dates

[www.4mrmarket.org](http://www.4mrmarket.org)

West End Farmers Market – Alexandria

Parking lot 4800 Brenman Park Drive

Sundays 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Columbia Pike Farmers Market - Arlington

2820 Columbia Pike

Sundays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Westover Farmers Market – Arlington

1644 N. McKinley Road

Sundays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. April – November

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. December – March

Fairfax Farmers' Market – Fairfax

10500 Page Avenue

Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. May 10 thru Oct.

### Burke Farmers Market – Burke

5671 Roberts Parkway

Saturdays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. April 19 thru  
Nov. 22

### Lorton Farmers Market - Lorton

8994 Potomac Bend

Sundays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. May 4 thru Nov.  
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## What's new

I wanted to share a recipe with everyone. This was sent to me by two of my more adventurous chefs, Paula and Matt.

### Famous Oven Fries



Cut 3-4 large potatoes, irregularly ( that way some get crispy, and some stay soft for a wonderful mix of textures.)

Toss with Sesame oil, salt flakes, black pepper and a mix of King's Curry and Bay Style Seafood Blend.

Bake at 425 for 45 minutes on a sheet pan.

Enjoy!

## Where to Find us

### May 3

So. Riding Mosaic Festival

Town Green, 43080 Center Street

2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### May 17

McLean Days

Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road

11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### June 7

Old Town Arts & Crafts Fair

Waterfront Park, The Strand & Prince Street

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.