

In the news, social media and numerous menus, you have most likely heard the term farm-to-table. However, we aren't talking about the food preparation and food safety process that takes place from when food is harvested to the steps before it is served on your customer's plate. We are talking about the farm-to-table initiative that has swept the nation and encouraged many restaurants, cafeterias and other food service facilities to buy food *locally*. Other than the obvious benefit of supporting your local economy and community members, instilling a farm-to-table approach at your restaurant is advantageous for a variety of reasons – ones that many customers are willing to pay more for.



### **Who doesn't appreciate fresh food?**

One farm-to-table [restaurant](#) in New Hampshire prides itself on the freshness of its food. Meat is ordered on Monday, processed at the farm on Tuesday and delivered within the same week. Not only will customers rest assured that their meat is fresh and from a farm within a 100 mile radius, but there won't be a plethora of frozen meat taking up space in the freezer. With a system like this, inventory remains lower resulting in fresher foods, improved food quality, reduced waste due to over-ordering and most importantly, smiling customers. All of these benefits in addition to helping your community flourish – seems like a hard thing to pass up.

### **How can I afford to buy locally?**

Yes, buying farm-fresh food locally can cost more, but you are eliminating costs along the way. Buying food from a local farm eliminates the middlemen, which may include packagers, processing plants and vendors. Your travel expenses are also reduced. This not only saves you money, but also is beneficial to the environment. In addition, many customers are willing to pay a little extra for fresh local food. One [study](#) published in the *International Journal of Revenue Management* further revealed that customers are even more likely to purchase local food when it is priced a dollar higher than the non-local alternative. However, if priced too high, customers may opt for the non-local entrée.



### **Don't you want to capture the health-conscious consumers?**

When buying food locally, it is fresher *and* healthier. From fruits, veggies, cheeses to meat, eliminating processed foods by buying locally can boost your customers' health. Eliminating the many preservatives, sugar and fat found in processed foods will result in more healthy options on your menu.

### **Why not enhance the overall experience at your restaurant?**

When taking a farm-to-table approach at your restaurant you can improve your guests' overall experience. Providing a changing menu, maybe even daily, based on what food is currently locally available lets your guests experience new flavors and indulge in their senses. Take it a step further and reference the local farms right in the menu so your guests know exactly where their food is coming from. With seasonal varieties on your menu, guests won't become bored with the same entrée options each time they visit. One Wisconsin restaurant takes the experience to the maximum level by harvesting its food from its own onsite farm. [Parkside 23](#) has its very own 10,000 sq ft farm, presenting the freshest meals to its new and repeat customers.

Your food ingredients don't have to be the only thing your restaurant purchases locally, but why not purchase local wine too? Let your guests explore the aromatic blends of regional wines produced in their very own state. Supporting local vineyards will increase their profile and may even unleash a new customer-favorite wine.

The advantages of running a farm-to-table restaurant are there. Why not give back to the very community that helps your business thrive? Why not deliver the freshness, quality and experience of local food at your restaurant? The next time a guest visits your restaurant, guarantee a local taste on their fork.

Are you a farm-to-table restaurant?