Harvest Time in Maine

From orchards to wineries, homestead cheese to pick your own pumpkins, discover, experience and enjoy the bounty of Maine’s harvest season.
A Message from Governor Paul R. LePage

Harvest season in Maine is an opportunity to give thanks and reflect on the important contributions made by farmers and producers to our economy, health and way of life. Maine’s 8,200 farm operations provide wholesome foods, thousands of jobs and over $740 million in farm receipts, not including direct sales at farms or farmers markets.

This is an exciting time for Maine-made products and Maine agriculture. You experience this by taking part in some of the many harvest season offerings highlighted in this publication and by attending agricultural events throughout the year.

Maine agricultural enterprises large and small continue to grow and expand. This growth is reflected in the increasing number of Maine farms, despite a national decline. My administration, through the efforts of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and other state agencies, is working hard to help Maine reach its full potential. Farmers, producers, processors and distributors have an even greater potential to help feed our neighbors, the region and the world.

One example of the rapid growth in Maine agriculture is in artisan cheese makers. The number of Maine cheese businesses has increased from 35 in 2008 to a current total of nearly 100 businesses offering various cheeses for sale. These cheese businesses include cow, goat and sheep cheese—even water buffalo cheeses. Nearly half are making aged cheeses. According to a University of Vermont study, Maine is the fastest-growing artisan cheese-producing state in the country, trailing only New York in terms of the number of licensed artisan cheese makers.

The success of Maine farms, as well as the hard work that produces these impressive results, can be seen when you visit agricultural operations throughout Maine and talk with the men and women responsible for putting local, quality, sustainable food on your table. Please join me in celebrating their efforts.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor

Join us for some special Maine fall food events.

Maine outdoors is especially welcoming in the fall season. An autumn foliage trip can easily expand into a local food experience by tasting the “flavors of the fall” at a Maine orchard, winery or artisanal creamery. You should mark your calendar for a fall tasting tour, or pick your own journey on Maine Apple Sunday, Sept. 10th; Maine Open Winery Day, Sept. 16th; and Maine Open Creamery Day, Oct. 8th.

We encourage you to use this guide for family excursions through the fall color to these inviting destinations that feature flavorful, award-winning Maine products grown and prepared in the community. Your family will experience Maine quality and craftsmanship when you visit one or several locations highlighted within this fall farm activity program.

Picking the apple that catches your eye, studying the unique composition of a Maine wine or sampling a fresh batch of specialty cheese all build a direct connection to the Maine family that combines science and art in creating these local foods and beverages. There is not an equal to being right there where the food we enjoy starts.

On these pages are numerous suggestions for self-guided tours that can be enhanced by linking to the mainefoliage.com site or the get real get Maine! Maine Agri Tourism map. Maybe you’ll find a Maine Agricultural Fair nearby.

At the Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry we take pride in being a partner with Maine farm families that emphasize quality, safely-prepared foods. We encourage you to head into the country and visit the origin of many outstanding farm products.

Fall in Maine features farm stands, farmers’ markets, pick your own orchards, corn mazes, pumpkin patches and much more. It’s a long list with an expansive variety. Your family will especially enjoy the fall ride and the fall flavors on Maine Apple Sunday, Maine Open Winery Day and Maine Open Creamery Day.

Travel Safely,

Walter E. Whitcomb
Commissioner

Need Financial and Planning Assistance for your Renewable Energy Project?
The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) has received funding from USDA Rural Development through their Renewable Energy Development Assistance (REDA) program to provide free technical assistance to rural small businesses and agricultural producers in Maine on how to develop renewable energy systems.

Eligible projects include: solar, wind, biomass, geothermal, small hydro and others. Rural small businesses and agricultural producers can also learn how to access USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grants and guaranteed loans to fund these systems.

For more information, or to sign up for a free technical assistance appointment, contact Jennifer Brennan at the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) at 774-9861 Ext. 229.
The Maine State Pomological Society presents the 17th annual Maine Apple Sunday on September 10 with about 20 participating orchards around the state. Maine Apple Sunday starts the peak of the apple harvest when summer apples are still available but the main crop is ready for its first pick. Apple orchards from Sanford to Caribou will celebrate by offering special activities and free samples of apple products. To find a participating orchard near you, visit maineapples.org.

Founded in 1873, The Maine State Pomological Society is the state’s leading organization for apple growers. The society supports apple growing and all aspects of Maine’s apple industry. The society supports research for apple pests and diseases and works with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to disseminate the results.

For more information on Maine Apple Sunday, September 10, visit maineapples.org.
Maine Orchards continued from Page 3

**Orchard Ridge Farm**

Steven & Amy Bibula
236 Sebago Lake Road,
Gorham, ME 04038
(207) 229-0442
www.orchardridgefarm.com

Activities: Orchard Ridge Farm is a family owned, year round farm market and bakery, with blueberries, apples, European pears and Asian pears. Apple season events: U-Pick fruit, sample local foods, pony petting, live music, outdoor photo sessions; please see website and Facebook for daily details of events. Full restroom available. Hours: Open daily.

**Maine-ly Apples**

John & Elaine Olsen
346 Moosehead Trail
Dixmont, ME 04832
(207) 234-2043
www.maileyapples.com

3,700 trees. We have a farm stand selling apples and our own made apple cider. We also have pick your own apples. On Maine Apple Sunday, we will offer hayrides, free samples and pick your own. The Dixmont rescue squad will be offering a barbeque lunch. Hours: 10-5

**McDougal Orchards**

Ellen & Jack McAdam
201 Hanson Ridge rd.
Springvale, ME 04083
(207) 224-3034
www.mcdougalorchards.com

Activities: McDougal Orchards is a seventh-generation family farm celebrating 45 years in the u-pick business. On Maine Apple Sunday, we’ll kick off the season by raffling off some fabulous fruit related items. Hours: 9-5

**McElwain’s Strawberry Farm**

Frank & Joan Mc Elwain
711 Sweden Street,
Caribou, ME 04736
(207) 498-8276
www.mcnelwainstrawberryfarm.com

Activities: McElwain’s Strawberry Farm’s Harvest Day will feature over 40 varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds along with corn stalks and straw bales to complete fall decorating needs. Our Harvest Day Celebration will include hay rides through our orchard to the u-pick pumpkin field, apple tasting, a kid’s straw bale climbing pyramid and Cinderella’s Pumpkin Coach. Hours: 12-4

**Mullis Orchards**

Shaker Road
Corinna ME
(207) 278-3574
www.mullisorchards.com

Activities: Find us 2 miles north of Corinna, just off Route 7. Pick your own apples at the Orchard. Hours: 10-5

**North Star Orchards**

Jennifer Dimock
97 Orchard Road
Madison, ME 04050
(207) 696-5109
www.northstarorchards.me

Activities: North Star Orchards is a u-pick business. On Maine Apple Sunday, we’ll offer your own apples or buy them freshly-picked, enjoy spectacular views of the western Maine mountains from our picnic area, and ride our wagon on autumn weekends. Join us on Maine Apple Sunday and sample ice cream with our own apple pie topping. Open daily September-December, weekends year-round. Hours: 10-6

**Pietree Orchard**

803 Waterford Rd.
Sweden, ME 04040
(207) 647-9419
www.pietreeorchards.com

Activities: We will be offering wagon rides into the orchard. Apple picking will be open. Cider donuts, baked goods, pizza available at farm stand. Hours: 9-4

**RICKER Hill Orchards**

285 Buckfield rd
Turner, ME 04282
(207)225-5532
www.rickerhill.com

Activities: Hard cider/ wine tastings, live music and food truck. U-pick apples, farm activities, donuts made fresh, and baked goods. Running a special on carbonate sweet cider. Hours: 8-6

**Romac/Lakeview Orchard LLC.**

David Cote & Wil Cote
1149 H Road
Acton, ME 04001
(207) 608-3800

Activities: Romac offers a wide variety of apples, hay rides, and walking trails, along with one of the most scenic views in southern Maine. Walk or ride to the top, picnic and make your apple picking a true experience. Hours: 9-5

**Sullivans Orchard**

Ken & Cheryl Sullivan
356 Puddledock Rd
Charleston, ME
(207) 285-3072 or (207) 570-2482
Activities: Pick your own apples or ready picked. Jams, honey, pickles, maple syrup. Hours: 10-5

**Treworgy Family Orchards**

3876 Union St.
Madison, ME 04950
(207) 696-5109
www.treworgyorchards.com

Activities: There’s always lots to do and see at Treworgy Family Orchards. Come fill a bag with one of our great varieties of apples. We will have free hay rides running all day. Our corn maze, petting zoo, pumpkin patch, café and gift shop will be open. Enjoy a ride in a horse drawn wagon as you tour the farm. Hours: 10-6

**Whole Foods Market Portland Fall Festival**

Saturday, September 30 • Noon-6pm

**Here’s a Great Reason to Celebrate the Season!**

Whole Kids Foundation® works to support schools and inspire families to improve children’s nutrition and wellness.

**Our Local Food Partners**

- **Local Foods**
- **Artisan Purveyors From Maine**
- **Kids’ Crafts**
- **Live Music & More!**

**2 Somerset Street, Portland ME**
207-774-7711
Open 8:00am-10:00pm, daily • WFM.com
If you’re a beer drinker in Maine, chances are you have a local favorite (or two). With over 86 licensed Maine breweries and counting, there’s a lot of choice. From traditional styles to beer brewed with oysters, there’s probably one being brewed right in your hometown (or near it).

But it’s only part of the story of a larger national trend. It’s The Golden Age of Beer, and Maine’s not only feeding it, it’s becoming a bona fide beer nexus. (Travelocity recently featured both Portland/Biddeford and Bangor in its “Top American Beer Destinations” index.)

According to Sean Sullivan, executive director of the Maine Brewers’ Guild, recent years have been the busiest in Maine’s history in terms of number of new licensed breweries.

“Maine’s brand is built on quality products built by real people,” said Sullivan, “and our craft beer industry really leverages that in an authentic way.”

Ultimately, said Sullivan, beer drinkers are looking for a connection built on that authenticity.

“A lot of new people are getting exposed to craft beer,” he said. “People who’ve never thought about drinking craft beer are seeing their neighbors opening breweries in remote areas of the state—so they stop, check it out, and make a connection with the product.”

The future, said Sullivan, is in those connections. At breweries like Mason’s Brewing Company in Brewer, that philosophy is key. Since opening last year, Mason’s has earned a reputation as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

“Being here [at Mason’s] gives everybody a sensory overload,” said Chris Morley, Mason’s owner and brewer, in a 2016 Bangor Metro interview. “You can see the brewing, you can taste the beer...there’s so much competition in the market that you have to set yourself apart. Nobody’s beer tastes like anyone else’s.”
Explore Fall with the Maine Agri-Tourism Map!

Maine’s unique agri-tourism destinations are highlighted on the new Maine Agri-Tourism Map! Farm listings encompass a variety of education, retail and recreational opportunities.

The Maine Agri-Tourism Map is available online at getrealmaine.com. Search listings for products and services, including pick your own fruit and vegetables, farm stands and special fall activities!
On September 16, wineries across the state will host tastings, tours, and special events to celebrate Maine Open Winery Day. It’s an opportunity for Maine’s winemakers to showcase their wineries and for customers to learn more about winemaking.

Starting with a single winery in 1983 making blueberry wine, Maine winemakers are now using grapes, native fruits, and even maple syrup to produce wines that are garnering regional, national and even international awards. Each winery has special products, great stories, and a lot to share with the public.

Open Winery Day is sponsored by the Maine Winery Guild, which represents 21 wineries in all corners of the state. An updated list of events can be found at mainewineryguild.com.

Participating Maine Wineries

**Anthony Lee’s Winery**
Mark Libby
377 Dover Road
Dexter, ME 04930
(207) 924-2209
www.anthonyleeswinery.com
Activities: Live music featuring JT Curran. Serving cheese and crackers, along with our normal tastings. Music from 1pm-4pm. Hours: 11-6

**Bartlett Maine Estate Winery & Spirits of Maine Distillery**
Robert & Kathe Bartlett
175 Chicken Mill Rd
Gouldsboro, ME 04607
(207) 546-2408
www.bartlettwinery.com
Activities: Wood fired pizza 12pm-3pm, tour with maker/distiller at 3pm, tastings 10am-4:30pm. Hours: 10-5, tasting until 4:30

**Boothby’s Orchard and Farm**
Rob & Denise Boothby
366 Boothby Road
Livermore, ME 04253
(207) 754-3500
www.maine honeycrisp.com
Activities: Wagon rides through the orchard, cows to meet, barn tours and walking paths, wine samples. Bring a picnic. Hours: 10-5

**Breakwater Vineyards**
Bill & Jean Johnson
35 Ash Point Drive
Owls Head, ME 04854
(207) 994-1721
www.breakatervineyards.com
Activities: Tours of the winery and vineyards, wine tasting, special wine and pizza pairings. Hours: 12-5

**Catherine Hill Winery**
Eric & Susan Meyer
661 Blackswoods Rd.
Cherryfield, ME 04622
(207) 546-3426
www.catherinehillwinery.com
Activities: Wine making demonstrations, tastings of our grape and berry wines including a barrel tasting and a variety of locally produced food and treats available. Hours: 2-5

**Cellardoor Winery**
Bettina Doulton
367 Youngtown Rd.
Lincolnville, ME 04849
(207) 763-4478
www.mainewine.com
Activities: Vineyard talks, winery tours and wine tastings. Hours: 11-3

Maine Wineries continues on Page 8
Summer and fall in Maine are known as “fair season”. No matter which way you turn, there’s an agricultural fair happening for you to enjoy. Check out these annual Maine fairs—be sure to check their websites for dates and times!

**JUNE**
- Mapleton: Maple Meadow Farm Fest

**JULY**
- Bangor: Bangor State Fair
- Presque Isle: Northern Maine Fair
- Pittston: Pittston Fair
- North Waterford: Waterford World’s Fair
- South Hiram: Ossipee Valley Fair
- Houlton: Houlton Fair

**AUGUST**
- Aroostook: Aroostook County Fair
- Presque Isle: Northern Maine Fair
- Pittston: Pittston Fair
- South Hiram: Ossipee Valley Fair
- Houlton: Houlton Fair

**SEPTEMBER**
- Harmony: Harmony Fair
- Springfield: Springfield Fair
- Clinton: Clinton Lions Agricultural Fair
- Litchfield: Litchfield Fair
- Oxford: Oxford County Fair
- New Portland: New Portland Lion’s Fair
- Farmington: Farmington Fair
- Unity: Common Ground Fair
- Cumberland: Cumberland Fair

**OCTOBER**
- Fryeburg: Fryeburg Fair

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**Maine Wineries continued from Page 7**

**Hidden Spring Winery**
- Richard & Jean Sloat
- 1087 White Settlement Road
- East Houlton, ME, 04730
- (207) 651-9335
- www.hiddenspringwinery.com
- Activities: We will be demonstrating apple crushing and pressing for the juice to ferment into wine. Also, a wine bottling demonstration. We will serve lunch and have local vendors on display, such as cheese, butter, locally grown and more. Tasting room. Hours: 11-5

**Portersfield Cider**
- David Buchanan
- 318 Orrills Hill Road
- Lebanon, ME, 04027
- (207)233-5534
- www.portersfieldcider.com
- Activities: We will offer cider pressing, pairings of local cheeses with small batch hard ciders from wild seedling and heirloom apple trees, kids’ activities, and a workshop on home cider production. Hours: 1-5:30

**Prospect Hill Winery**
- Richard & Anita Carle
- 255 Elmwood Road
- Pownal, ME, 04069
- (207)233-5534
- www.prospecthillwines.com
- Activities: Take a vineyard tour, seeing grapes almost ready for harvest and learn how they go from vine to wine. Tasting room. Hours: 11-4

**Ricker Hill Orchards**
- Richard & Jean Sloat
- 295 Buckfield rd
- Turner, ME 04282
- (207)225-5552
- www.rickerhill.com
- Activities: Hard cider/ wine tastings, live music and food truck. U-pick apples, farm activities, donuts made fresh, and baked goods. Running a special on carbonate sweet cider. Hours: 11-6

**Savage Oakes Vineyard & Winery**
- Holly and Elmer Savage
- 174 Barrett Hill Rd.
- Union, ME 04882
- www.savageoaks.com
- Activities: Wine tasting all day. Joining us will be FIORE Artisan Olive Oils & Vinegars. Back 40 Backhouse and Appleton Creamery samples and sales. 11am: grape testing & tasting; 12pm: lunch; 1:30pm: grape testing & tasting; 3pm: winery tour. Hours: 11-5

**Sweetgrass Winery & Distillery**
- Keith & Constance Bodine
- 347 Carroll Rd.
- Union, ME 04882
- (207) 785-3024
- www.sweetgrasswinery.com
- Activities: Special tastings, tours, and food. Owners will be giving a talk and answering questions about wine sensory analysis through-out the day. Medomak Valley Land Trust (MVLT) and Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) will be joining us to talk about land use and leading nature tours at 1 pm and 3 pm. Graffam Bros Seafood will have cooked lobster and other food for you to enjoy. Hours: 11-5

**Tree Spirits Winery and Distillery**
- Bruce Olson
- 152 Fairfield Street
- Oakland, ME 04963
- (207) 465-3007
- www.treespiritsofmaine.com
- Activities: Wine and spirits tasting. Absinthe demonstrations. Tours of production facility. Chocolate tasting with Christopher Hastings Confections. Hours: 11:5-30pm

**Two Hogs Winery**
- Ann Dube
- 186 Mudget Hill Rd
- Vassalboro, ME 04989
- (207) 690-5594
- www.twohogswinery.com
- Activities: Wine tasting and tasty artisan cheese, crackers, sweets, chocolates. Hours: 11-4

**Vista of Maine Vineyard & Cidery**
- by Ricker Hill
- 158 N Hills Ridge
- Greene, ME 04236
- 9am-6pm
- (207) 754-2527
- http://vistaofmaine.weebly.com/
- Activities: Sample our wines, award winning hard ciders, and sweet ciders. U-pick apples and farm store. FREE can of our lightly carbonated sweet cider with purchase of $10 or more on Open Winery Day. Hours: 11-6

**Younity Winery & Vineyards**
- Clem & Jeri Blakney
- 317 Albion Road
- Unity, ME 04988
- (207) 948-7777
- www.younitywinery.com
- Activities: Tours of large functional grape vineyard, full tour of production room, always free wine tasting. Hours: 9am-9pm

**Wallingfords Fruits House**
- Perkins Ridge Road
- Auburn, ME
- Activities: Hard cider/wine tastings, u-pick apples, farm store. FREE can of our lightly carbonated sweet cider with purchase of $10 or more on Open Winery Day. Hours: 11-6
Open Creamery Day:
Sunday, October 8th

Visit many of Maine’s cheese makers in their creameries, meet the animals, and learn the stories behind Maine’s 150+ artisan cheeses. Along the way, you can also visit a farmers’ market, stop at an orchard, explore one of Maine’s premier breweries or wineries, pick fruit at Maine’s legendary orchards, and drop-in on one of the many artisan bread makers our state has to offer.

To the right are just a few of the creameries that you can visit on Open Creamery Day. For a full list of participating creameries, visit mainecheeseguild.org.

From vegetables and fruits to flowering plants and dairies, the ag industry allows all of us to buy local and buy fresh. Supporting local agriculture also means supporting the livelihoods of our neighbors. That’s simply a win-win.

A Bounty in Our Backyard

As local agriculture continues to flourish, Farm Credit East is committed to working with owners in growing their businesses. Competitive lending rates, ag-specific financial services, and a deep understanding of the challenges in your industry — that’s what we bring to the “Buy Local” movement, and we’re proud of it.

Farm Credit East
FarmCreditEast.com
800.562.2235

Farm Loans / Country Home Loans / Tax Prep / Payroll
Financial Record-Keeping / FarmStart® for New Businesses
Many young farmers are joining the Maine agricultural community despite long hours in the fields and barn, labor-intensive tasks, and few days off. Farm jobs can be very fulfilling; however, farms often find it difficult to recruit and maintain a qualified workforce.

With labor being a concern of many Maine farms, industry partners have determined that a need exists for a centralized database of resources to assist farmers as well as job seekers. The Farm Labor Link Network is an agricultural jobs network linking farms and facilities processing agricultural products grown in Maine with available workers who wish to work on a farm or in a local food industry. Whether you are an employer or someone interested in pursuing the rewarding work of farm and food production, this is a first step towards meeting your goals.

From the JobLink Career Center, where employers can post job opportunities free of charge, to the Maine-at-Work Initiative that provides free trainings to businesses, there are a variety of resources for farmers and prospective employees. Additional resources include on-farm safety guidelines to prevent work-related injuries, agricultural mediation programs to assist with conflict resolution, and educational workshops pertaining to skills and technical training. The Farm Labor Link Network further provides information regarding colleges and universities that offer degrees and coursework with an agricultural focus, as well as statewide internship and apprenticeship opportunities through organizations like Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) and the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program.

Visit the Maine Farm Labor Link Network to learn more about upcoming events and trainings, including the 2018 Ag Trades Show Career Fair and Spring Labor Field Day. These events will be hosted in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor and will provide participants with the opportunity to learn about careers in agriculture, interviewing techniques, skills training, and tips for success in the agricultural job market.

The Farm Labor Link Network is a collaborative effort of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Department of Corrections, Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Maine Department of Health and Human Resources, Maine Department of Labor, and University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information, visit maine.gov/dacf/ard/farmlabor.

Canning and freezing are great ways to preserve the summer’s harvest and enjoy Maine produce into the winter months, but it is important to follow proper practices to ensure safe food products for you and your family.

Canning preserves food primarily by using heat to destroy the bacteria that cause spoilage. Heat processing forces air out of the jar causing a vacuum to occur. When the jar cools, a seal forms. The processing times and temperatures noted in Cooperative Extension and other approved publications have been set using scientific research. For safe, high-quality home-canned food, it’s important that you follow these directions carefully. Altering these directions in any way can result in improperly canned food, which can be dangerous to consume.

### Food Canning Basics

Fresh foods spoil for a variety of reasons. Microorganisms such as bacteria, molds, and yeasts can cause spoilage. In addition, enzymes naturally found in many foods can cause spoilage. Microorganisms live and multiply quickly on the surfaces of fresh food and inside bruised, damaged food.

Proper canning techniques will stop the growth and activity of microorganisms and can prevent spoilage and quality loss. Use these techniques to ensure safe food canning practices:

- Carefully select and wash fresh food. DO NOT use produce from diseased plants or those that have been frost killed.
- Be sure to use clean potable water to wash fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Prepare canned foods according to Cooperative Extension publications or fact sheets, reputable canning books or other approved canning authority recommendations.

- Approved recipe sources include, but are not limited to: Ball canning books such as the Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving, So Easy to Preserve, the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, and University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s Let’s Preserve canning series. Please visit extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu. Another canning internet resource is the National Center for Home Food Preservation.
- Use recommended jars with dome lids and screw bands.
- Two-piece dome lids with metal screw bands are recommended.
- Dome lids should be used only once.
- Canning jars with wire bails and rubber seals are no longer recommended.
- One-piece zinc, porcelain-lined caps, and plastic one-piece lids are also no longer recommended. They do not form a proper seal.
- Paraffin wax is no longer recommended.
- Glass canning jars may be used several times as long as they are free of chips and are cleaned thoroughly. The rim should be inspected carefully for defects.
- Process jars in a boiling-water bath or pressure canner according to the instructions for the correct period of time.

### FOR SAFETY’S SAKE: Pressure canning is the only canning method recommended for foods that are naturally low in acid, which means the pH of the food is above 4.6, such as meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables. Clostridium botulinum is a spore-forming bacteria that can cause a foodborne illness called botulism from eating improperly canned foods. Pressure canners reach a higher temperature than a boiling-water bath. Call 800.287.0274 or 207.581.3188 for information on publications and program offerings from University of Maine Cooperative Extension, or visit extension.umaine.edu.
Maine Farmers’ Markets
an abundance of produce, foods, fun

COURTESY MAINE FEDERATION OF FARMERS’ MARKETS

Fall is the perfect time to explore a farmers’ market! There are more than 110 summer markets throughout Maine, most of which continue through early October or later. This time of year, expect to find an abundance of both summer produce (such as greens and tomatoes) as well as fall favorites (such as squash, root vegetables, and cranberries), and a wide array of other foods. When the air turns crisp, finds like fresh-roasted coffee, baked goods, apples and pumpkins are at the top of many shoppers’ lists. Farmers’ markets are also ideal for picking up staples like meats, cheese, yogurt, and eggs, as well as for finding seasonal specialties when cool weather makes cooking a favorite pastime again. Market shopping is not just an errand, it’s an experience!

The farmers’ market tradition in Maine dates back to the 18th century. Most of Maine’s farmers’ markets still follow the old model, and are collectively operated by the vendors. The result is that each is unique and reflective of the character of its community. In contrast to much of the food in supermarkets (which typically has travelled thousands of miles to get to Maine), farmers’ market vendors travel an average of 23 miles or fewer. That means the local product is significantly more fresh (and will store much longer in the fridge), and it also requires a lot less fuel from farm to table. It’s easy to learn about growing, harvesting, and distribution practices at the age-old farmers’ markets, where you can speak with producers directly.

There’s much more to the farmers’ market experience than food and other local products. Exploring the sensory wonderland of a market is great fun for many children, and some learn to love a wider variety of foods by sampling them and talking to the market vendors. Adults often enjoy the time chatting with neighbors and getting to know farmers. Frequently there are childrens’ activities, cooking demonstrations, educational presentations, and even live music to add to the convivial atmosphere. More than 30 markets accept SNAP/EBT (go to maineharvestbucks.org to learn more), and most have farmers who accept WIC checks. Farmers’ markets are welcoming to people of all ages and incomes.

Aside from the good food and social atmosphere, it’s also important to remember: spending your food dollars at farmers’ markets is good for the local economy. Every dollar spent at markets circulates multiple times in the community. Shopping directly with farmers is also good for farming, since USDA research shows that farms that focus on direct-to-consumer sales are more likely to succeed over a five year period.

Farmers’ markets offer local foods at peak freshness, and a chance to engage with farmers and the community in a fun atmosphere that encourages wholesome, healthful eating. Autumn is the perfect time to explore a market, whether it’s for fall food favorites, grocery staples, fresh flowers, fall decorations, or to get a lead on holiday gift shopping. If you haven’t visited a Maine farmers’ market lately, now is the time! Locate one near you at mainefarmersmarket.org
Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Maine Agricultural Events

Maine Day at The Big E, September 16th, 2017

Maine Agricultural Trades Show, January 9th, 10th & 11th, 2018

Maine Maple Sunday, March 25th, 2018

NELE Kids Day, May 17th, 2018

Maine Open Farm Day, July 22nd, 2018

Celebrate Farm Fresh on Saturday & Sunday November 11 & 12, 2017, 10am-4pm

Admission: $8, Children 12 and under free
Cross Insurance Center • 515 Main Street, Bangor, ME • 207-561-9300

Over 35,000 S.F. filled with State of Maine chefs, State of Maine growers and their harvest, bakers, cheese makers, vintners, brewers and fiber artisans. There will be live demonstrations, sampling, sales, toe tapping music and much more!

www.maineharvestfestival.com