



MINDFUL NUTRITION COUNSELING
5061 N.PULASKI RD.
CHICAGO, IL. 60630
773.539.9364
WWW.MINDFULNUTRITIONUSA.COM

Why we love summer

It is hard not to feel good during Summer. The promise of longer days, abundant sunshine, and more casual schedules can put a spring in anyone's step. We often feel energized, lighter in our breezy attire, and well, more robust from June through September. So, are we really healthier during the summer months?

Studies show people have higher levels of the feel-good chemical, serotonin, when exposed to light therapy during Winter when natural sunlight is diminished. In fact, individuals who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) sometimes experience less depression in the summer. Recent research published in the *Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience* found that serotonin levels in laboratory animals were higher during daylight hours. Additionally, human post-mortem exams revealed higher levels of serotonin in individuals who died during Summer months versus those who died in the Winter. It is also known that increased exposure to Vitamin D through the sun, boosts immunity, thus decreasing the risk for flu.

Longer daylight hours make it easier for us to get moving after our work day is over since we don't have the hassle of having to get bundled up to go outside. We often make more healthful food choices in warmer weather by choosing salads, fruits, grilled meats and other, lighter fare. Many communities have farmers' markets that offer an abundance of fruits and vegetables; many of which are organic and even a bit more exotic. Whatever the reasons may be, Summer seems to bring out the best in us!



be safe & have fun in the sun!

stay hydrated
Drink water even if you are not thirsty. Young children and the elderly are at increased risk for dehydration. Fruits, vegetables, gelatin, fruit smoothies, and popsicles also provide fluids.

keep covered
Wear a sun block that contains an SPF of 30. Apply 30 minutes before sun exposure and every two hours while in the sun. The sun's rays are most damaging between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

eat energetically
Consume alcohol in moderation. Maintain energy by eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Limit energy-depleting high fat and sugary foods.

be prepared
If you or a child has asthma or other respiratory conditions, check the air quality before heading out. Don't store inhalers or medicines in your car where temperatures can soar.

Shop locally!
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Fresh From the Garden

farmer's market fun!

Cool & Innovative

<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/americas-best-farmers-markets/1>

<http://www.ohio.com/news/first/is-anything-healthier-than-fresh-produce-1.208515>

http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/on-air/as-seen-on/Kids_Run_Farmers_Market_Hartford-125463593.html



Summer is the perfect time to explore your local farmer's market. Visit any one of these bustling markets and you will see tables overflowing with beautiful vegetables and fruit, crusty loaves of bread, creamy local cheeses, and gorgeous pastries. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, as of mid-2010, there were 6,132 farmers' markets operating throughout the U.S. This figure represents a 16 percent increase from 2009. Why are so many of these enterprises popping up in large and small cities alike?

The idea behind farmers' markets is to encourage interaction between consumers and local farmers who grow fresh produce. Increasing numbers of shoppers are shunning highly-processed food in favor of wholesome, farm-fresh foods. Urban markets provide consumers with access to nutritious foods when options are otherwise limited. Additionally, farmers' markets promote nutrition education, offer creative recipe ideas, and bring revenue to the community.

click here
for recipe
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Pick up at the farmers market on
Wednesday!

- Two large vine-ripened tomatoes
- One bunch of fresh basil
- One head of garlic
- One bag of sun-dried tomatoes
- One large onion
- Container of Kalamata olives
- A bottle of extra virgin olive oil
- One pound of whole wheat fettuccine
- Fresh parmesan cheese
- Loaf of french bread

It can be a little overwhelming at your first visit to a farmer's market, but you will quickly learn the in's and out's of this type of shopping. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your experience:

Walk, don't Run

Take your time and scan the area, taking note of stands that look especially interesting. If you miss one farmer's goodies, chances are he or she will be back the following week.

Empty your Piggy Bank

Cash is the preferred currency. Bring plenty of singles, five's, and quarters to make even change.

BYOB

Bring your own reusable shopping bags with sturdy handles. Many merchants have bags or boxes, but they are often flimsy and don't always hold up well during transport.

Be a Nuisance

Ask a lot of questions, especially about items you are not familiar with. Farmers love to answer questions and even share cooking tips and recipes.

Leave the Heels at Home

Wear comfortable walking shoes and dress appropriately for the weather. Grab your sunscreen and plenty of water for you and any kids you may be toting around.

Be an Early Bird, or Arrive Fashionably Late

The best selections are typically early, when the market just opens. Plus the produce looks the prettiest. You can often find great deals just before closing time since the vendors want to avoid taking produce back home.



Pasta with Fresh Sun-Dried Tomato Basil Sauce

Take advantage of locally-grown, fresh produce at your farmer's market to make this delicious entree. Pair with a tossed green salad and piece of crusty bread for a truly delightful meal!

- ½ pound whole wheat fettuccine or other pasta
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ large onion, chopped
- ¼ cup thinly sliced sun-dried tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup fresh diced tomatoes
- ½ cup pitted, sliced Kalamata olives
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh basil

1 In a large pot, cook pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and return to pot.

2 Heat olive oil in a saute pan on medium-low and saute onions for three minutes, stirring occasionally.

3 Add garlic and sun-dried tomatoes to onions and cook for another minute.

4 Add chopped tomatoes, black olives, and basil to the onion mixture. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste.

5 Heat tomato sauce on medium-high until it reaches a boil, then reduce heat to simmer. Cover pan and simmer on medium-low for 10 minutes.

6 Pour sauce over cooked pasta, tossing gently to thoroughly coat the noodles.

Top with freshly grated Parmesan cheese before serving.

Serves: 4 (1 C) servings

Calories:	288
Carbohydrate:	48 grams
Protein:	10 grams
Fat:	7 grams
Fiber:	6 grams