

Madison Magazine: Outdoor farmers' markets are back!

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Over the weekend, Madison saw a true sign of spring, something that made the city's residents excited for a future filled with warm weather, Terrace hangouts, Concerts on the Square and patio dining to our heart's content. I'm not talking about a day without rain, temperatures allowing us to ditch coats, tulips blossoming or green leaves on trees, but the first outdoor Saturday Dane County Farmers' Market.

DCFM is a local institution and this year marks its 50th season. That's 50 years of spotlighting local farmers as the largest producers-only farmers' market in the U.S. Farmers' market Saturdays are a weekly tradition for my partner and I. We always start at the Main Street corner, largely because it's a convenient walk from our apartment, but also because it's not as crowded as the State Street corner. During the first lap, we grab snacks consisting of cheese curds (usually from [Forgotten Valley Cheese](#)) and a treat from one of the bakers — [Cress Spring Bakery](#) is a favorite stop — to tide us over on our initial exploration. Then, we usually go on a second circle to pick produce for the week and a couple bags of popcorn from [Steinke's](#) to bring to my mom in Indiana when I visit next.

We time it so we're done by 10 a.m., when the crowds get even bigger, but also The Old Fashioned opens for brunch. We like to snag seats at the bar on the left side of the restaurant. We'll chat and plan the rest of our day while eating our meal and drinking a couple breakfast Old-Fashioneds — if you've never had one, it's a personal must. The Old Fashioned typically substitutes in orange juice or grapefruit juice for sweet or sour respectively. It's overall an amazing way to start the weekend.

While DCFM is certainly the biggest, it's by no means the only option — there's one

every single day in the area. The smaller markets are a great way to really interact with and get to know the farmers. A couple years ago, Madison Magazine published this [guide to local farmers' markets](#). One of the useful elements was [a page with times and locations](#) of other options — be sure to check that COVID-19 has not shifted the times, but it's a great starting place to see what's in your area. Also [this link](#) has some good advice to make the most of your experience.

Happy farmers' market-ing!

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