

Easton Market Square

A Vibrant European Marketplace

by
Dorothy Whitcomb

In the last five years there has been an explosion of interest throughout the U.S. in wholesome, locally grown foods. More and more people, it seems, actually care about what they eat and pay attention to where their food comes from. They want to know that it is fresh, nutritious, and, more often than not these days, hormone and pesticide free.

Called the locavore movement, this trend picked up momentum in

2006 after the publication of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. The book topped bestseller lists for months and provided consumers with ample reason to reconsider how they sourced their food. Apparently, learning that, on average, fruits and vegetables traveled 1,500 miles before reaching a grocer's shelf and generated 30,800 tons of greenhouse gases in the process got people's attention.



Easton Market Square has something for everyone!

In quick succession, the documentary film “Food, Inc.,” which focuses on the darker side of the perfect pork chop, and *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, Barbara Kingsolver’s memoir about her family’s year of eating locally, ramped up interest in the topic. And it shows little sign of waning. Google “locavore” today and 354,000 entries pop up, many of them designed to help consumers move towards a more sustainable way of life.

There is good news in all of this, especially for Maryland’s Eastern Shore. In season, Farmers’ Markets throughout the mid-shore are booming and participation in Community Supported Agriculture groups (CSA’s) has grown dramatically. There are other benefits for Mid-Shore communities as well. Studies show that farmers’ markets and city markets

revitalize main streets and attract tourists, boosting revenues for merchants as well as farmers.

The benefits don’t stop there. Local and regional restaurants have begun to respond to their patrons’ preference for locally sourced foods by including them in their offerings, often citing the farms they sourced right on the menu. As more and more restaurants and local specialty stores jump on the locavore bandwagon, farmers produce more, a cycle that impacts their communities in increasingly positive ways.

Dr. Wen-Fei Uva, an agricultural economist and local farmer, explains: “Eating locally produced food is not only good for us nutritionally, but good for the communities we live in. Money that is spent locally multiples. Every dollar that’s spent in a community



Easton’s Farmers’ Market

generates another four dollars for that community.”

Uva owns Seaberry Farm in Federalsburg with her husband Richard. Two years ago, she began bringing her farm-grown flowers, beach plum jams, peaches, and heirloom melons on a limited basis to an outdoor cart at Easton Market Square, a new multi-faceted city market in Easton’s historic downtown. Community response was so enthusiastic that she added additional greenhouses to the farm and this year is open year-round inside the central Market House.

Easton Market Square, which draws inspiration from the ancient market tradition of Europe, is being developed by Lehr Jackson, an urban planner and redevelopment expert with an impressive list of accomplishments. Jackson made his reputation revitalizing landmark urban markets like Faneuil Hall in Boston, Union Station in Washington, D.C., Queen’s Quay in Toronto, and Belvedere Square in Baltimore. He also led the \$175 million renovation and re-merchandising of Grand Central Terminal in New York City and was centrally involved in the renaissance of Times Square.

Jackson believes in the power of markets to bring people together and build communities. He says: “Easton Market Square is a brand new market with a 300 year-old

heritage. It’s a lively, vibrant spot where customers can connect with farmers, shop owners and neighbors. And since the market experience is never the same twice, people enjoy coming back again and again.”

By creating a base of operations for sustainability-oriented farmers and gourmet food providers, Jackson and Kathleen Witte, his partner in the venture, have created a hub of locavore activity for the Eastern Shore. “Easton Market Square is quickly becoming the go-to spot for farm-fresh produce and flowers, fresh baked goods, hormone and antibiotic free meats, artisanal cheeses, and freshly smoked fish,” Witte says.

Shoppers looking for fresh produce have plenty of choices, she adds. Trappe-based Davon Crest II Produce offers gourmet micro-greens, unusual vegetables, edible flowers and exotic lettuces among its array of seasonally changing selections. Later this spring, Cleo Braver of Cottingham Farm in Easton will bring her heirloom tomatoes, vegetables and herbs to the market.

Those in search of a quick lunch, light dinner, or special snack can also count on Easton Market Square to provide unique, high quality choices. Neopol, a Baltimore favorite for over 25 years, is justifiably famous for its custom smoked meats, fish and shellfish.

Its handcrafted savory pies, freshly prepared seafood & chicken salads, smoked vegetables, and sandwiches are worth lingering over.

You'll find a taste of France, at Chez G Crepes and Confections where you can watch owner Gerit Marks make traditional crepes the old-fashioned way. Marks sources all the fillings for both his savory and sweet crepes from local farmers markets and growers. Traditional French sandwiches and world class chocolates from California & France are another Chez G specialty.

Locavores with a sweet tooth have plenty from which to choose. Praline Bakery and Patisserie was founded in Bethesda by Susan Limb and Patrick Mussel, two classically trained pastry chefs with White House experience under their toques. Praline offers delectable breakfast pastries, cookies, exquisite tarts, authentic croissants and brioche, and special occasion desserts. All of Praline's pastries and breads are made fresh daily using only the finest and purest ingredients available.

For a homier treat visit The Cup Cake Lady. Pam Zak, who has built up quite a following on the Shore through the years, has finally come to rest at Easton Market Square. A changing array of specialty cupcakes sit alongside well-loved favorites like lavishly iced and decorated chocolate, coconut,

and vanilla.

Nuts to You made its reputation offering gourmet nuts and dried fruits at 17 farmers' markets from Florida to Delaware. Tasty – and healthy – treats at Nuts to You include glazed, raw & dry roasted nuts, seeds, dried fruits, nut butters, and gourmet Trail Mixes. Visitors to the Market can also mix their favorite nuts and fruits into Baltimore's famous Moxley's ice cream.

Local and regional home and garden specialists have also come to roost at Easton Market Square. Jean McHale Design offers interior design services as well as custom furniture and antiques. Joshua Tree Home & Garden is a unique source for high quality plants and elegant garden décor including Walpole Woodworks products. Lavender Fields offers a wide range of farm grown and farm made lavender products including fresh and dried bouquets, skin care and bath products, medicinal and culinary lavender, and candles. Arbec Orchids, run by Roger Cole, an internationally recognized orchid hybridizer, provides orchid lovers with beautiful plants that they are unlikely to find anywhere else.

Easton Market Square is located at 137 N. Harrison Street in Easton. The Market is open Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and on Satur-

day from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. For additional information please visit www.eastonmarketsquare.com.

