

Downsizer Local Shopping Week 2005

Contributed by Jonnyboy

Welcome to the Downsizer Local Shopping Week 2005! This is the first year of our campaign to get you all out of your cars, out of the supermarkets and into your local shops.

There are some really good reasons for doing this, but you will be glad to know that the main ones are utterly selfish; your wallet and your taste buds.

Firstly, there's something important to get out of the way. We are not 'anti' supermarkets, but we do strongly believe that the power of supermarkets has grown to a point where they wield an unhealthy influence over our lives. If we do not exercise our choice to go elsewhere for our food then this choice will soon be lost, indeed in many places it already is.

Supermarkets and multiple chains have this power for a reason; we have given it to them. For far too long we as a nation have abdicated responsibility for our food; where it was grown, how it was grown, the welfare of those who provide it, the welfare of the animals we eat, the impact on the environment, even the ability to cook our own food has by and large been lost.

We have sacrificed our love of food at the altar of price. Tomatoes with bullet proof skins that any European would gag at. Flaccid farmed salmon full of colourings to disguise its trash diet. Pale hock-burnt, 8 week old chickens who only view the sun on their trip to the slaughterhouse. Bread where the essential ingredient is Mono and Di - Acetyltaric Esters of Mono - and Di - Glycerides of Fatty Acids (yum). Yes, it's evocative phrasing but the alternative is apathy.

But hopefully we can point you in the direction of some great replacements, if you are really lucky your high street will contain gems such as a butcher, greengrocer, baker or rarer still a fishmonger. Places where you can enjoy the delights of well hung beef, free range chicken, carrots that have mud and green fronds rather than plastic as an accompaniment, juicy local plums, bread that rises as a result of yeast, and fish that tastes of the sea rather than ammonia.

If the high street causes a problem then we'll show you how to stock up at farmers markets, farm shops, box schemes or even via the web.

We know that it's hard to break away from the supermarkets, they are so damned convenient! But we know that a lot of you have already made a change to your shopping habits and would like to make more. If you can cut one item of shopping from your supermarket and get it from a local, seasonal supplier then this is a success.

As with all things Downsizer, this campaign is a result of hard work by the members, whose collective knowledge is a privilege to share. Eat it up.

Local Shopping Week articles (this will be updated daily with articles by members over the course of the week)

Quitting the supermarket habit
Box schemes
Todmorden Market, a view from a stallholder
Farmers markets