



PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION

MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE BOOTHS



The farmers' market has long held a special place in the heart of their communities for the vibrancy and life that they bring to their respective neighborhoods. Much more than just an outlet for fruits and veggies, the farmers' market creates a space for growers, makers, and artisans alike to showcase their talents and passions. People from all walks of life can achieve their dreams, start a business, and connect with other people all through the farmers' market. It is a place to show the world what you have to offer and put a little slice of yourself out there for other people to enjoy, and a great step towards expanding business as well.

This month we set out to the markets to learn more about how some of these unique small businesses first got their start. Each entrepreneur felt inspired to bring their individuality to the marketplace and share their passion with the community, hoping to enrich the lives of others through their work.

For example, the three Malik brothers first decided to start their business, [Roti](#), after first working in the farmers' market for Sukhi's Gourmet Indian Food for 10 years. Qasim Malik said it was during that time that they noticed a lack of Pakistani food available in the farmers' markets, and they decided to go into business for themselves in 2017 and purchased Sukhi's kitchen in Hayward. Roti is fueled by the brothers' desire to introduce more people to authentic Pakistani cuisine, using age-old family recipes and fresh farmers' market ingredients. The Malik brothers travel to over 40 farmers' markets around Northern California and hope to keep expanding and opening more minds and kitchens to genuine Pakistani flavors.

[Companion Farms Microgreens](#) is a small farming operation run by two friends on a

mission to grow the highest quality certified-organic microgreens and sprouts and to familiarize more people with the immense health benefits associated with microgreens. Pierre James and Jose Perez were first inspired to go into business by Perez's grandfather, Buddy, who became familiar with the health benefits of microgreens years ago after being diagnosed with cancer. Buddy spread the word across the Santa Barbara area about the wondrous health properties of microgreens for 25 years, and after his passing, his grandson and friend decided to start their business as a way to carry on his legacy. Companion Farms is one of the only certified organic microgreens growers in California, and their dream is to continue expanding and growing a wider variety of produce for communities small and large.

[Wisdom by Wisdom Natural Soaps](#) first got her start in 2005 after leaving a career in computer analytics to pursue something more rewarding. Upon realizing that she wasn't familiar with any of the ingredients or chemicals listed on commercial soap packaging, Wisdom decided to teach herself how to craft her all-natural body care products. She began marketing her products door to door while living in Jacksonville, Florida, and then returned home to Oakland with confidence to continue on her dream of owning her own business. Wisdom has been selling her soaps, lotions, and deodorants at the [Vallejo](#) and [Jack London Square](#) for more than 10 years, and even uses farmers' market ingredients in her processes. In the future, she hopes to expand into wholesale markets, but still loves being able to connect with the community and educate people about the benefits of all-natural skincare.

[3-19 Coffee](#), a small batch coffee roaster in the heart of Oakland, aims to connect with people through coffee and art. Their motto, "coffee made creative," comes from the idea that great art, just like great coffee, makes everything better - and their goal to give back to small artists while selling high-quality coffee from small farmers around the world. 3-19 cares about the artistry that goes into crafting the perfect cup of coffee, starting with how it's grown down to how it's brewed, and their dedication shines through the delicious final product. There's nothing better than strolling the farmers' market with a warm cup of coffee, and knowing that you're supporting a family farm, small artist, and local roasters.

The farmers' market is more than a destination for seasonal produce. It's a place to learn more about another culture, to try something new, to become more educated about how to nourish bodies from the inside and the outside, and to become inspired. By shopping at a PCFMA farmers' market, you're supporting the hundreds of small business owners turning their passions into a profession, and making dreams come true is always in season.