

Teresa Marie

Organic Food Guide



If you're not exactly clear on the organic produce movement is about, you're not alone. The term organic has been around for eons and it can be a tricky and somewhat controversial one. First, it's a battle to get folks to eat more real food, then you need it to be organic (i.e. more expensive) too?

In short, organic produce is safer, healthier and tastes better – but it's also more expensive. In some cases, by A LOT! So where do you draw the line and get the best bang for your organic buck?

Is Organic Food Worth the Cost? In some cases, yes. In this guide, I'll show you how to get the most for your organic buck. How to protect your pocket book when you can and improve your health and the planet while you're at it. This guide is designed to shed just a tiny bit of light on the topic so you feel confident when making your produce purchases!

What does being organic mean?

We know eating real food is good for us, but sometimes our real food was produced with some creatively engineered products which can have a negative impact on our health. More than [600 active chemicals](#) are registered for agricultural use in America. Many of them were approved by the EPA before extensive diet testing.

Essentially, organic products are free from these toxic chemicals because the animals weren't fed antibiotics or growth hormones and the fertilizers are free from synthetic ingredients.

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Why should we choose to eat organic foods?

Quite a few reasons actually. Clearly, not eating chemicals is a good start. You know not to buy a box at the store labeled “pesticide” and eat it, so why would we let it sneak in on the food we eat? But let’s also point out that the nutritional quality of your fruits and veggies can be higher because the soil is cared for in a sustainable manner.

With the better nutrition comes better flavor. Lastly, organic and ideally, locally grown products are also better for the environment. You can feel good about supporting a sustainable ecosystem, smaller farmers and if locally grown, your community as well.

Does everything you eat need to be organic?

Chemical free, more nutrition, better for my body and helps keep the planet healthy? All this considered, eating organic is a no brainer! Until you see how the costs stack up at the market. On average, organic products can cost [upwards of 40%](#) more than their conventional counterparts. Ouch.

So yes, you should buy organic, as much as your lifestyle and pocket book will allow. The efforts to grow organically are greater, and so are the costs. But not all your organic bucks will have the same impact on your health.

Packaged foods to prioritize when shopping organic:

There is a lot of weight and confusion behind the term organic, and marketers know that. When you’re walking down the center aisles of the grocery store, try to stick to these guidelines:

- **Avoid GMO ingredients:** Items like corn, wheat, soy, sugar, canola oil and HFCS (high fructose corn syrup) are all highly likely to contain GMOs. In case you’re wondering, GMO =genetically modified organisms. Now you know its bad right? ha! To be an expert there, you’re going to need to do a little detective work and investigate nutrition labels when buying things like breakfast cereals, veggie burgers, salad dressing, cookies, and popcorn. The organic label on these of foods is a good thing.

- **Avoid pesticide residue:** Foods like apple sauce, baby food, ketchup and tomato sauce can have residual pesticides so organic here is also a good idea. And keep an eye on your bread choices because it can have left over insecticide as well.
- **Aim for healthy animals:** Buy hormone free milk, grass fed beef, pastured chicken, and wild caught fish over farm raised. In theory, these animals should have been cared for in a more humane manner and the quality and flavor will be greater just as it is with organic produce.

Produce to prioritize when shopping organic:

You may have heard of the [dirty dozen](#)? These foods have soft skin so chemicals can easily sneak in there. These are also foods that we often consume with the skin on, meaning maximum toxic absorption.

So whenever possible, these guys should be purchased organic:

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|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apples | <input type="checkbox"/> Cherry Tomatoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strawberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Snap Peas | <input type="checkbox"/> Bell Peppers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grapes | <input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Nectarines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celery | <input type="checkbox"/> Kale | <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Collard Greens | <input type="checkbox"/> Cherry Tomatoes |

On the flip side, we have the clean fifteen. They are kind of the exact opposite of the dirty dozen, with thicker skins that we don't consume.

You're better off saving your organic dollars when shopping for:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avocados | <input type="checkbox"/> Melon | <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Corn | <input type="checkbox"/> Papayas | <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pineapples | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiwi | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggplant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mangos | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Peas | <input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grapefruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Onions | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet Potatoes |

Happy Produce Shopping!