

# **The Secrets of Organic Food**



**What You Need To Know Before You Buy Organic Food**

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# What Is Organic Food

“Food just seems different than when I was growing up,” my grandmother kept repeating on a recent excursion to the supermarket. At first I thought she was referring to changes in taste or rising prices, but after some thought I realized her words revealed something much greater than evolving taste-buds or food costs.

Her generation ate apples that weren’t perfectly round, tomatoes that came in shades other than red, and meat freshly butchered by someone they knew and trusted. Their food was grown in their backyards or on farms near-by, free from unpronounceable chemicals, preservatives, and genetic alterations.

Oh, how the times have changed! Thanks to modern agricultural engineering, food today is grown for the best shelf-life and visual appeal. With little concern of their impact on health, corporate farmers use pesticides, hormones and genetic modifications to help maximize their profits. They do this by preserving their products for as long as they can to ensure they do not spoil before they make it onto your table.

Insecticides and herbicides combat garden nuisances, but they can also lead to adverse affects when consumed by humans. Preservatives keep your sauces and dressings edible for weeks, but what else do those chemicals do once inside your body? Genetically modified foods are engineered to be bigger and more resistant to disease than natural foods but not without large scale environmental impact. With these health implications in mind, you are probably wondering what you can do to protect yourself and your family from these harmful substances. Luckily, the solution is easy—organic foods.

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Organic foods are an alternative to chemical riddled produce and meats, but what exactly makes a food “organic?” The term organic refers to the way an agricultural good is produced. An agricultural authority regulates what chemicals are prohibited from use during the growing of crops and the raising of livestock. If the product meets their stringent requirements, the product is given the ‘organic’ label.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, for a crop to carry the “USDA Organic” label the land cannot be treated with forbidden substances within three years prior to harvest. Genetic engineering, ionizing radiation and sewage sludge is also banned from organic production in the United States. The stringency of these standards varies from county to country. No matter where they are located, organic farmers take pride in raising fresh produce and healthy livestock free from unnecessary chemicals or suspect processes.

Buying organic means that you are placing a high value on you and your family’s health. Common sense dictates that foods free of chemicals and preservatives are better for you than ones that contain them. But what does scientific research say on the benefits of organic commodities? Not surprisingly, gut-instinct is backed up by medical evidence. Cancer, birth-defects, and even obesity all have documented links to the preservatives found in everyday foods.

My purpose is not to terrify you into throwing out everything in your pantry and refrigerator, but rather to open your mind to healthy solutions to conventionally produced goods. Organic foods offer many nutritional benefits not found in goods manufactured to a lesser standard. The health and environmental risks associated with pesticides, preservatives, irradiation, and genetic modification are being uncovered more and more every day. I will show how to protect yourself and your loved ones from [Get A Juicer Today For All Your Organic Juicing Needs](#)  
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these toxic harms. Simple, low-cost measures such as paying attention to product labels, buying from farmers' markets, and growing your own produce all make an impact in minimizing your exposure to destructive chemicals. Going organic is much easier than you think; don't worry I am here to show you how.

## **Why You Should Eat Organic Foods**

Across all food sectors the organic food industry is growing the fastest. What is driving this dramatic growth? The answer lies with a savvy group of consumers unwilling to allow big business to dictate the safety of the food they consume. What do these folks know about organic foods and their benefits that you might not? Let's explore some of the reasons why you should choose organic foods over conventionally produced ones.

The most often cited reason for "going organic" is food safety. Foods grown organically have lesser residual pesticides, contain lesser added hormones and antibiotics, and do not utilize genetic modification or ionic radiation.

The dangers of pesticides have been established for years. Research published in 2004 suggests that farm workers who were constantly exposed to pesticides had a higher risk of several types of cancer, including leukemia, prostate, multiple myeloma, and Hodgkin's disease. This same research indicates that even low-level exposure to common pesticides can cause a broad range of symptoms from insomnia, headache, nausea, depression, anxiety, and lack of concentration. Your health is at risk every time you fill your plate with groceries treated with pesticides.

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Contamination on the farm is frightening enough, but it's not the whole story. During processing, your food is modified yet again with a new batch of chemicals and toxins. Food you eat on a regular basis could contain some of these dangerous additives.

- **Sausages, deli-meats, and bacon contain high levels of nitrates**, a known cause of cancer.
- **Cheese is dyed yellow and orange**. In many countries, the color of cheese **is** enhanced with titanium oxide, though this dangerous chemical is now banned in Europe.
- **Produce is coated in wax to last longer on the shelf**. Fruits keep their color longer after being sprayed with paraffin wax, but do you really want to eat wax coated produce?

By buying organic foods, you can bypass these worries.

Beyond the concerns of food safety, organic shoppers find their foods taste better. While pesticides and preservatives might not directly alter the taste of the product, organic farmers are more concerned with quality and flavor than conventional producers. Organic produce typically is grown with biodiversity in mind—the more variety of species, the wider array of flavors. Preservatives make an impact on the quality by delaying nature's progress. Foods with fewer preservatives have to be fresher. If you have ever made homemade marinara sauce or vegetable soup, you know it can't sit for weeks in the fridge before it's eaten. So why should you trust a food that can?

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The organic way of life is a way of sharing your values. By choosing pesticide-free apples or organically raised beef, you're getting more than just peace of mind. You're telling the world that your dinner plate is not a science experiment. You're reducing you and your family's risk of exposure to chemicals that have a purpose to kill. Organic food will taste better to you because it is fresher and preservative free. While there are a number of reasons to buy organic, you only need one to begin an adventure that could change your life. Let that adventure begin here.

## **Harmful Effects of Pesticides and Preservatives**

*Ethylene bis-dithiocarbamate, phenoxyacetic acid, and butylated hydroxyanisole.*

These words might sound scary, but what they do to your body is even more terrifying. This list of hard-to-pronounce substances is just a few of the commonly used pesticides and preservatives that have been linked to diseases that could kill you.

While these chemicals were originally developed to improve our food supply, their negative impact on our health and environment overshadows any intended benefit. Luckily, organic foods are not treated with these lethal compounds.

- **The Horrifying Lessons of DDT.** One of the first modern synthetic insecticides, DDT, was celebrated by farmers as a scientific breakthrough. Used to fight malaria and other insect-spread diseases, the production of DDT was widespread during the first part of the twentieth century.

Then hospitals began to fill with sick patients from areas sprayed with the pesticide. People who handled DDT on a regular basis exposed themselves to a

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greater risk such as cancer and brain disorders. Cancers of the lungs, prostate, brain and pancreas took the lives of many pesticide victims. Parkinson's disease was also widespread among those constantly exposed to the toxins.

Public outcry eventually led to a ban on DDT. But because this compound doesn't breakdown easily, it could still be tainting your food years after it was applied to the soil. Today's pesticides affect our bodies and surroundings in ways that are just as dangerous. Scientific research on pesticides in foods tends to focus on the effects of individual chemicals. However, everyday you are exposed to hundreds of mini-doses of pesticide residue in your meals. What is so worrying about this is that little is known how these compounds act together. They could easily be more harmful in combination than they are separately. The horrors of DDT should have been a wake-up call to consumers.

The growing number of organic supporters shows that we will not accept food treated with pollutants. With a history marked by death and destruction, all pesticides should be avoided when they can be. By choosing organic foods, you are minimizing your health risk and protecting the environment.

- **Dyes, preservatives, and other bad stuff.** Preservatives and additives are chemicals commonly used in food production. Many of these byproducts have not been tested directly on humans. The grocery-buying public acts as guinea pigs until an illness is discovered, then authorities react by taking the product off the market. I am not willing to wait and see if I get cancer or brain disease from treated food, and neither should you.

Expectant mothers and infants are at particular risk from these chemicals. While pregnant, everything a mother eats is passed along to her unborn baby. If she eats

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a piece of fruit that was sprayed with pesticides, it could have long-lasting, detrimental effects on her developing child.

A newborn is not protected from toxins going directly to his or her brain until the age of six months. If a child eats or drinks a toxic substance, he or she could be handicapped for life. Many doctors recommend that children should avoid foods with preservatives until he or she is one year old. The obvious choice for healthy and preservatives-free food is organic. Organic producers do not use you or your families as test subjects, because their foods only contains what Mother Nature has designed.

Pesticides, preservatives, chemical additives—these are the weapons used by big agribusiness to protect their wallets, not your health. But chemicals are not the only weapons in their arsenal. Genetic modification is the latest method corporate farmers are using to tinker with Nature. Doesn't everyone know you shouldn't play with your food?

## **The Dangers of Genetically Modified Foods**

In 2002, the president of Zambia shocked the globe by rejecting an American shipment of corn and soy at a time when his country needed it the most. Millions of people in his southern African country were at risk of starvation, but he dismissed the food aide as “poison” and refused to import it.

The American government hadn't literally tried to poison the food sent to Zambia. But the way it was grown—through genetic engineering—might have the same

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effect. The genetically engineered corn and soy posed a danger to the health and livelihood of those it was supposed to help.

Genetically modified (GM) organisms have been around for about the past decade. Scientists change the genetic code of plants or animals in order to strengthen or weaken specific characteristics. For example, genetic engineers have created types of plants that are supposedly more resistant to insects, able to decay slower, and more herbicide tolerant. Biotechnology companies promised that genetic modification would dramatically increase crop yields and reduce pesticide use.

However, GM crops are not more abundant than natural ones and still require harmful pesticides. They also carry quite a risk of affecting your health. You might have eaten GM cereal for breakfast or GM chips for lunch and not even known it. That is because not all governments require these potentially dangerous products to be labeled. In Europe, public outrage over “Frankenfoods” forced companies to specify if their products contained genetically modified ingredients.

Not all countries place the same high standards on health and safety. Many countries, including the United States, do not require corporations to inform you if a product contains genetically modified ingredients. Responsible food companies, who take pride in using all-natural products will, however, carry the label, “GM-free” or “GMO-free.” This is to let you know you’re eating food that won’t put your health at risk.

While only a little research has been conducted on genetic engineered food, the results are still shocking. Scientists found a “growth-like factor” in the stomachs and small intestines of lab rats that ate a diet of GM potatoes. This abnormal growth was linked to GM foods. If these unusual effects can occur in lab-rats, it’s a good guess similar incidents could happen in humans.

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In the year 2000, a genetically modified corn crop contaminated a natural crop, which then made its way into American corn tortillas. The GM corn was never approved for human consumption because there was evidence it could lead to food allergies. Yet these tortillas were served by some of America's most popular restaurants before the government could issue a recall. Perhaps, you even unwittingly dined on these tortillas before they were taken off the market.

Thankfully, the most frightening danger of genetic engineering has yet to occur. When genes are manipulated, they can easily recombine in unexpected ways. Think of the way Native Americans were decimated by viruses they had never been exposed to. Now imagine what would happen to all of humanity if a super-virus formed and spread across the globe.

You are probably wondering if there are any measures you can take to avoid genetically modified foods and their harmful effects. By following a few simple steps, you can lessen your exposure to these laboratory creations.

- **Purchase products with the “GM-free” or “GMO-free” label.** This product has been especially prepared without genetically modified ingredients.
- **Write the manufacturers.** If you live in a country that does not require product labeling, write directly to the food manufacturer to find out how their product is made. If enough people demand genetically modified-free products, the corporations will have no choice but to take notice.
- **Buy from farmer's markets and local butchers.** Their products might not be GM-free, but at least you can discuss how the food was grown with

someone who will know. Because these business people work directly with their customers, they are more likely to take your concerns to heart.

- **Grow your own produce.** You do not need a yard the size of a football field in order to grow your own food. Fresh herbs and tomatoes can be grown in pots in your window. Even the smallest back yard can be transformed into agricultural oasis. Read ahead for advice on how to get started.

This straightforward advice will allow you to make wiser decisions about choosing the food you consume. Buying organic and GM-free foods are more nutritious and don't necessarily have to cost more. To learn why, keep reading and be amazed by how easy it is to preserve your health.

## Is Organic Food More Nutritious?

So far I have told you about some of the benefits to eating organic foods, such as avoiding dangerous pesticides and genetically modified ingredients. But there is another benefit —the food is more nutritious, too. Some out there might argue organic produce and meat are no more nutritious than conventionally produced ones. However, more and more scientific research is coming to a different conclusion. Let us explore some contemporary studies that reveal the nutritional benefits to organic goods.

- **Organic Foods Contain More Anti-Oxidants.** Danish researchers published an article in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* that suggests organic foods contain higher flavonoid levels than conventionally grown foods. Flavonoids are a crucial part of the human diet and show strong anti-

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oxidative properties. Linked to lower rates of heart disease and some cancers, anti-oxidants are integral to healthy diet.

- **Organic Foods Contain More Essential Vitamins and Minerals.**

According to the UK advocacy group, Soil Association, organic foods contain higher levels of essential vitamin C and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron and chromium. This study was supported by a 2005 report on the nutritional content of organically and conventionally grown potatoes. The flesh and skin of organically grown potatoes produced higher concentrations of phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, copper, and sulfur. A diet low in essential vitamins and minerals can contribute to osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer as well as diminished energy and premature aging.

- **Organic Livestock Have Less Saturated Fat and More Omega-3 Fatty Acids.** Omega-3 fatty acid helps promote improved brain functions and can combat neurological and psychological disorders. Livestock that forage for food have higher levels of omega-3 and lower levels of saturated fat than livestock that eat processed feed. As most organic farmers allow their animals to graze naturally, you can predict that organic meat will have better fat content than conventionally produced meat.

- **Organic Foods Have a Better Defense Against Toxin-Producing Molds.**

A Dutch study found that organically processed wines have better defenses against toxin-producing molds. Grapes treated with fungicide may stress the mold until it produces dangerous toxins. Organic grapes are not treated with fungicide, and therefore have lower levels of the mold toxin.

I want to make myself clear. A diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins is preferable to one that isn't made up of such nutritious foods. So many of our bodies' critical functions are dependent on the nutrients these foods provide. But if you're faced with the choice between conventionally and organically grown foods, choose organic.

Now that you understand the nutritional benefits to eating organic, we should take a look at how you can add them into your diet without breaking your budget. Also, I will show you a method of farming that requires no back-breaking work! It sounds too good to be true but it is actually a method that has been around for more than seventy years. These are just a few of the uncomplicated ways to incorporate organic values into your life.

## **Is Organic Food Really Worth the Cost and Effort?**

It's hard to put a price tag on your health and peace of mind; only you know what food safety and nutrition are worth to you. The main reasons people say they don't buy organic foods are that they're worried about their budgets or they think organic food is hard to find.

The truth is organic foods cost the same price or only slightly more expensive than non-organic foods. You no longer have to go all the way to find a health-food store specializing in organic items. Many major chain grocery stores are jumping on the nutrition band-wagon by offering selections grown organically.

Follow these cost-cutting and time-saving methods to introduce organic foods into your life without any headaches.

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- **Ask for manufacturer's coupons.** Write, call, or email the customer service departments of your favorite organic manufacturers. I've saved hundreds of dollars this way. Most companies are usually happy to mail you some coupons along with brochures or newsletters about their products. Not only do you get some great reading materials, but you also make your organic purchases a lot cheaper!
- **Buy in Bulk.** Go to grocery and health food stores that let you buy in the quantities you want. Bulk items, such as rice, pasta, legumes, tea, and herbs, are less expensive because they take up less shelf space and require less packaging. Also, food will be fresher when you only buy what you need rather than packaged portions.
- **Shop on the same days of the week and make a list before you go.** This might sound like common sense, but if you take a look at how you spend your money, I bet you'll see a significant portion of your money is spent on quick trips to the store. You'll shop more efficiently and cost-effectively if you have a solid game-plan in mind.
- **Fill your plate with veggies.** Organic meats can be quite pricey, but with one bite you know they are worth every penny. You don't have to carve meat out of your diet all together. Fill your plate with more vegetables than meat and you'll feel just as full. Did you know that the average steak serving is between six to twelve ounces, yet recommended portion sizes are only three to four ounces. By cutting your meat serving by half and filling up with veggies, you'll not only get what you crave, but also won't bust the bank.

- **Visit healthful restaurants and delicatessens.** You don't have to be a gourmet chef to embrace all that's good with organic food. Restaurants across the globe are cooking up scrumptious meals made with organic ingredients. If you can't find a healthy dining option in your hometown, try the delicatessen of your local grocery store. You'd be surprised by how many organic, or at least preservative-free, options you'll find there.

A healthy lifestyle doesn't require expensive foods or lengthy scavenger-hunts. With more people embracing organic values, prices will only go down and more food options will become available. For those just starting this fabulous journey, I hope you now see that integrating safe and wholesome organic food into your diet is not as hard as you might have thought. Now, let's take a look at a farming method that will please even the biggest (organic) couch-potatoes!

## **Healthy Alternatives to Organic Foods**

The benefits to eating organic foods are clear; you are safe from harmful chemicals and unsound growing practices, get higher nutritional content, and help to preserve the environment. Unfortunately, organic foods are not always available. However, with a few basic tricks you can dramatically cut your exposure to the harms that lurk with non-organic products. By properly washing vegetables, selecting the right types of produce, and using green household chemicals, you can make your kitchen a health-food heaven.



- **Washing vegetables properly is the best way to reduce exposure to chemicals and deadly bacteria and viruses.** The easiest way to clean your non-organic produce of some of its chemical residue is just by running it under the faucet for thirty seconds. Not all pesticides can be washed away. Some are fat-soluble, meaning they don't dissolve in water. Some pesticides are even systematic. This means they can infiltrate the entire cell. While organic foods won't be contaminated with these substances, even conventionally grown foods can be made safer through proper washing.

There are commercial fruit and vegetable washes, such as FIT™ and Environné Fruit and Vegetable Wash, that claim to rinse away 97% or more of all chemicals on your produce, but these items can be very expensive. You can make a home-made rinse by combining a tablespoon of lemon juice, a tablespoon of baking powder, and two cups of water. Dip your fruit or vegetable into the rinse for about 10-20 seconds, then rinse with plain water. Make sure to use a scrub-brush on produce with lots of crevices. Germs, dirt, and chemicals can hide in these nooks and crannies.

Rinsing your produce not only reduces chemical residue, but also cuts your risk of contracting life-threatening food-borne illnesses, i.e. *E. coli*, calicivirus, and *Staphylococcus aureus* can be transmitted through the foods you eat. These illnesses cause painful symptoms such as nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, headache, and fever, and even death. When you think about how many hands have squeezed the foods you just picked up at the grocery store, it makes sense to give them a good scrub.

- **Certain types of fruits and vegetables have lower levels or no pesticide residue.** By prioritizing your non-organic options, you can actually minimize the amount of chemical deposits on your food. Take a look at this list to see how common fruits and veggies rate on the pesticide residue scales.
- **Higher Levels**—Peaches, strawberries, nectarines, apples, grapes, cherries, pears, bell peppers, celery, spinach, lettuce, and
  - **Lower Levels**—Avocados, asparagus, sweet peas, bananas, cabbage, broccoli, pineapples, mango, kiwi, onions, and papaya

A good rule of thumb when selecting from non-organic produce is to choose foods with thick outer layer, like bananas and cantaloupe. As you do not eat these external shells, you will have better odds of avoiding chemical deposits.

- **Green household cleaning products are free from toxic synthetic chemicals.** Dishwashing detergents, degreasing solutions, glass cleaner, floor cleaner and multi-purpose soaps are all going green. Manufacturers like Seventh Generation™ and Mrs. Meyers® offer a wide variety of natural, biodegradable cleaning products all of which are non-toxic. Using these green products in the kitchen helps to protect food preparation surfaces and storage areas from harsh chemicals. Green cleaners are usually free of phosphates, chlorine, and ammonia, but they clean just as well as their traditional counterparts.

Another important tip to keep in mind—make sure your edible grocery purchases are separated from your other non-food items. I cannot tell you how

many times I have corrected a teenage bagger who wanted to pack my laundry detergent next to my apples. Keeping an open eye out for possible contaminants can help you prevent accidental food poisoning.

## **How Can You Grow Your Own Healthy Organic Garden?**

*“The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.” –natural farmer, Masanobu Fukuoka*

Hands down, the best way to control how your food is grown and processed is by doing it yourself. But not everyone has a green-thumb; not everyone has a yard. Don't worry—these are challenges easily overcome with a little creativity and patience.

In 1930's Japan, a young microbiologist became disenchanted with new methods of farming. The farmers in his homeland were caught up with the use of synthetic chemicals and plowing machinery. This young man began to wonder if maybe his fellow citizens had it all wrong; maybe Mother Nature should be left alone to progress naturally.

This bright young agriculturalist is Masanobu Fukuoka. He has gathered his ideas into several books, including the *One-Straw Revolution*, that offers an alternative to the invasive methods of modern science. His objectives are straightforward:

- To use no cultivation, fertilizer, weeding, or pesticides
- To use only a fraction of the cost and labor of scientific farming

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- To maintain endlessly fertile soil, free from all pollutants

He believes that vegetables and fruits flourish in a “semi-wild” state with little human intervention. Vegetables and fruits become hardier by competing for resources with weeds and grasses. Through this hands-off approach, Fukuoka’s philosophy of agriculture is a perfect complement to the organic way of living.

The following are a set of instructions on how to start your own Fukuoka-style garden with very little effort and resources.

- Choose a plot of land that you won’t mow, preferably one that contains a lot of clover
- Till a deep layer of organic matter (e.g. lawn-clippings, compost, pesticide- and fertilizer-free mulch) into the ground, and then don’t cultivate it again
- Spread straw or hay across the soil
- Select native, non-genetically modified seeds appropriate for the season. You can get this information on the seed packet or by asking the in-store horticulturalist.
- Scatter the seeds along the soil. There is no need to bury them according to Fukuoka’s method.

Gardens don’t grow overnight, so don’t be surprised if it’s a growing season or two before you see the fruits of your labor. While this method is not fail-proof, it’s the easiest and most natural way to start an organic garden.

For those folks who don’t have land for a garden, you can still grow fresh produce at home. Fill your home with the intoxicating aromas of fresh herbs by putting together a simple herb garden. While there are a number of reasonably priced starter kits, you can create your own with just a few items.

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- Several medium to large sized terra-cotta pots
- Pesticide- and fertilizer-free organic potting soil
- Herb seeds or seedlings from non-genetically modified plants (basil, parsley, chives, and cilantro are very easy to grow indoors)
- An energy efficient indoor light bulb or lamp - if you don't have window that gets direct sunlight.

Depending on the seeds you have chosen, you may need to let them germinate inside a damp paper towel for 2 to 3 days. Seeds with hard outer shells usually require this to help the growing process along. Fill pots  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way full with potting soil. Plant seeds or seedling about an inch to an inch and a half below the surface of the potting soil. Water the soil and place in window sill or under grow lamp for at least eight to twelve hours a day. Within a few weeks, you'll have flavorful fresh herbs, free of harmful chemicals.

Like Fukuoka said, "Farming is not about the growing of crops" but rather the experience of improving yourself. When you plant your own organic food, you are really growing yourself!