



HOW TO EAT ORGANIC ON A BUDGET

By Food Babe

The one tried and true worry I get about living an organic lifestyle is the cost. It's likely the only immediate downside because everything else about living organically is pretty magical. Remember, non-organic food often contains cancer-causing hormones, immunity destroying antibiotics and dangerous pesticides. Pesticides by nature are designed to kill, they are poison. So when given the choice, I don't know why anyone could logically buy food with poison sprayed on it? Pesticides can cause neurological problems, cancer, infertility, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, allergies and asthma, wheezing, rashes and other skin problems, ADHD,

birth defects and more. That's why buying quality organic food and eating the most nutritious foods on the planet will save you BIG BUCKS down the road in medical costs, prescription drugs and doctor visits...like my friend Birke always says "We can either pay the farmer or we can pay the hospital". – It's totally up to us.

In hopes to mitigate the initial money pains of buying organic, I want to share the top organic money saving ideas that I've gathered from my friends and family members. And, let me tell you, I learned a lot myself while putting together this list and combining everyone's tips into one cohesive guide. I can't wait to put some of these new ideas into practice. Let the savings begin!

Piggy-bank

Find and use organic coupons. Check the websites of your favorite companies for coupons and special promotions, almost all of them have some. Join your favorite company's social media pages for special coupons and deals. For example, if you join Nutiva's Facebook page, they will give you access to a \$10 dollar off coupon. This is perfect for stocking up on chia seeds, coconut sugar, coconut oil, etc. (They also run huge discount specials every Tuesday.). Check out various organic coupon sites. Some of my favorite examples include Mambo Sprouts, Saving Naturally, Organic Deals, Organicfoodcoupons, Healthesavers, Organic Deals and Steals for organic food/natural living coupons, and money savings ideas. Simply Organic who makes spices, seasoning mixes and baking mixes always have coupons on their website here - sometimes more than a dollar off. Whole Foods has coupons here every week for various products throughout the store. Earth Fare has coupons here every week for various products throughout the store. Most stores take each other's coupons, so don't be afraid to use them all in one shopping trip at your most convenient or favorite store.

At home and in the kitchen

Stay organized. Plan out your meals for the week according to organic foods that are on sale and/or that you have coupons for. Write out a weekly and monthly budget to help you keep track of both erratic spending and responsible spending. This will allow you to see your spending habits and help you prioritize purchasing organic food within your budget. Do it yourself, rather than buy it. Make your own organic granola bars, kale chips, smoothies, juices to replace store-bought with more overhead. Learn how to portion and prioritize – it is a necessity to always buy organic meats and dairy products, and, therefore, learn to portion your consumption of these products each week. For example, keep meat to 4 ounces or less per serving. Invest in a 4 stage water filter installed directly under your sink to avoid having to buy bottled water. Also, check the Environmental Working Group guide on choosing the right water filter for you. Check out the book "Wildly Affordable Organic" for organic menu planning on \$5 a day or less.

Use your freezer

9 times out of 10 the organic frozen produce at the store is cheaper than fresh, especially if the fruit or vegetable is out of season. Freeze all left overs using inexpensive mason glass jars or silicone ice molds for smaller portions. Freeze homemade cookie dough and other

treats like almond freezer fudge, so you can have a treat ready to go in the appropriate portion size. Buy local produce when in season and freeze to save for out of season, for example in the spring and summer spread berries on a sheet pan and freeze overnight and then store in jars for the fall and winter. Double recipes and freeze leftovers, this works great with soups and stews. Freeze core kitchen staples like butter, cheese and bread scraps for bread crumbs or homemade croutons.

Make choices



Meat & dairy (animals products like chicken, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, milk, etc.) are the most important to buy organic because of the combined risk of pesticide, anti-biotic and cancer causing growth hormone exposure. Whatever you do, do not skimp here. Reduce meat and dairy consumption if you cannot afford organic – One way to do this is to be vegan before 6pm, as Mark Bittman explains in his latest book. For example, have a green smoothie for breakfast with Ezekiel toast, and then a large salad with lentils at lunch or a wrap made with hummus and then at night choose high quality meat in small portions. Reduce amount of organic meat used by substituting half the portion with organic beans. Buy a whole organic chicken for less per pound, vs. just the breast, legs or wings which are more expensive per pound. You can use the carcass to make your own chicken broth. Use the “Clean 15” and “Dirty Dozen” lists available on ewg.org to help you navigate which products to buy organic (or take with you when you travel). For example, if you have a

choice between more expensive organic red peppers and less expensive conventional asparagus – choose the asparagus. Asparagus naturally repel pests allowing it to be grown with minimal pesticides. Include red pepper in your diet when it is in season or you can find it cheaper at another grocery store. Do not buy pre-washed and ready to eat fruits and veggies, as they can cost twice as much. Skip conventional Starbucks (and other coffee shops). Buy organic coffee and tea such as: Larry's Beans Organic Coffee and Numi and make it yourself. This will actually save you time in the morning too. Eat out only twice a week – eating organic at home is significantly less expensive than eating at organic restaurants.

Buy in bulk

Take advantage of the 'buy one get one free' sales or buy one get the other for a discounted price. You never know when it will go on sale again, so make sure to take advantage of it and store for later use. (This trick only works if you really love the product and it is a staple at your home – otherwise this could lead to wasted food). Always buy packaged staples on sale. Buy unpackaged foods from bulk dispensers – I personally save a ton of cash by doing this, I buy everything from oat groats, to nuts, to dried fruit and lentils. Bring measuring cups with you to the grocery store if you are buying from bulk containers. That way you can get exactly the amount you need for a specific recipe and you won't be paying for extra. Buy smaller organic spice packets or jars, old spices lose their medicinal qualities so it is smarter to buy in smaller quantities. For example, Earth Fare has little pre-portioned tiny ziplocs with herbs and spices available at the fraction of costs compared to a whole jar. Buy the whole animal and freeze the portions you don't use. I personally know someone who is on a budget and does this all the time. You can also do this by contacting your local farmer and then splitting the cost with a group. To satisfy a sweet tooth, skip the full size packages of candy and chocolate. Buy a few pieces in the bulk section, for example go for a few pieces of organic dried fruit or 10 chocolate covered almonds. Find out what foods are in season and buy those in bulk, as they are significantly cheaper. Join a buying club with your neighbors, friends or family and buy large quantities at a discount. For example, United Buying Clubs (unitedbuyingclubs.com) serves more than 3,000 clubs in 34 states through its website.

Buy online

Green PolkaDot Box - this service delivers organic and non-GMO food directly to your door step. It is membership club like Costco and Sam's Club with some of the lowest prices available for organic staples, meat, dairy and other goods. (FYI – become a club member by Friday, May 25, 2012 to get 10% off the first order with the code "FOODBABE"). Amazon – one of my favorite shopping sites, because they basically have every brand available and ship free over \$25.00. VitaCost – another low cost website that has a wide variety of organic and healthy foods, vitamins, etc. Herbs Pro – another low cost website that has a wide variety of organic and healthy foods, vitamins, etc. Before you check out online, visit Retail Me Not for online promotional codes and discounts for all your favorite online stores and sources.

Choose organic brands that save you money

Choose more inexpensive grocery store brand products like Trader Joe's, Earth Fare, 365 brand, ShopRite, Wegman's, Kroger, Publix, Harris Teeter. Regardless of the brand, they are all required to follow the same guidelines set forth by the USDA organic certification program if they contain the USDA organic seal and chances are that you won't be able to tell the difference between a brand name and store brand. Join grocery store loyalty programs for discounts. For example, if you join Earth Fare's tomato bank program, you get a dollar back for every 100 points you earn. Use your rewards cards always. Most convenient stores, grocery stores, and drug stores allow you to sign-up for a rewards or savings card that will help you save money on a few of your items at the checkout counter. Even if this time of purchase does not contain organic food, the extra money that you are saving on your items can be put towards buying it when need be. Always remember that if you are not satisfied with your organic product, most grocery stores and organic food companies offer you money back guarantee. This also works for companies you bought in the past that you are now boycotting like Kraft's Back to Nature :). Check Ebay's section for food and beverages, prices are really cheap!

Buy local

Local food can be significantly cheaper than food shipped from miles away. Find a farmers market near you through LocalHarvest.org or the USDA - get to know your local farmers, create a personal relationship and negotiate prices. Ask your farmer about his farming practices. Some farmers do not spray pesticides on their crops but do not seek USDA certification to keep prices lower. Be the last person to leave the farmer's market. Farmers will likely cut their prices at the end of the day, so they do not have to take their produce back to the farm. Buy a share in a community-supported agriculture CSA program. It's nice to contribute to a local farm's operating expenses while getting a weekly box of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Grow your own food

Plant an herb pot in your kitchen or somewhere convenient so you can always have fresh herbs on hand. Organic herbs are one of the most overpriced items at the grocery store. Follow these tips from The Organic Consumers Association to grow organic food inside your home year round. Check this amazing guide that details out all the options and information you need to start urban farming at your home regardless of how much space you have. Once you start growing produce, give herbs, fruits and vegetables as gifts to family and friends (saving money on other material objects they might otherwise not use or collect). Remember to buy non-GMO seeds, check out Sow True Seed for lots of options. Check out growing lessons learned from 100 Days of Real Food. Learn how to can the produce you grow, here's a how-to-guide for strawberry jam. Get a couple of chickens and hatch your own eggs. One friend of mine has so many eggs she doesn't know what to do with them. You could also sell them to your neighbors or give them as hostess gifts.



Travel with organic food

On a road trip use EatWellGuide.org to find out where to buy local, organic and sustainable foods from point to the other. Remember, a pricey restaurant doesn't equal organic or quality food – going to a grocery store and picking up some organic food will save you money and your health. Bring your food with you in a cooler – even if you are flying. Did you know you can check a cooler? Bring organic tea with you and ask for hot water. A cup of tea can cost up to \$5 dollars, vs. \$1 dollar you would tip the barista or server. Bring filtered water with you wherever you go in a reusable safe water bottle so you never have to buy expensive bottled water. Always carry snacks like homemade trail mix in your purse

or bag for emergencies. At the movies, bring your own organic popcorn and snacks if they do not offer them. There is no reason to pay a premium for conventional food.

Stop wasting food

Quick fact: Americans waste an estimated 1,400 calories of food per person EVERY SINGLE DAY. Raw nuts and flours should be kept in the refrigerator to last longer without going rancid. Line your refrigerator's crisper drawer with paper towels to absorb excess moisture. They'll absorb excess moisture which will help keep produce longer. To repel bugs, place a bay leaf in containers of rice, flour and pastas. Buy and keep bananas separated from one another, they spoil slower. Turn almond butter, yogurt, sour cream, tahini and cottage cheese containers upside down when stored in the fridge – this creates a vacuum seal, keeping them fresh longer. Do not throw away nut meal from homemade nut milk – use it for smoothies, baked goods like biscotti or to make nut flours by placing the pulp on a baking sheet and drying it out in a 250 degree oven or dehydrator. Repurpose vegetable pulp from juicing to add fiber to soups, smoothies or make crackers or bread. Placed limp celery, baby carrots and radishes in water with a slice of potato to make them crunchy again. Keep all organic citrus fruits in the fridge – they will last up to 1-2 weeks longer. Do not wash organic dark leafy greens or berries until they are ready to consume. Store herbs, spring onions, asparagus upright in a large glass filled with an inch of water. Learn tips and recipes on how to use over the edge food. For examples, panzanella with stale bread and banana bread with overripe bananas. If you know you will not have a chance to eat it, freeze food before it goes bad. Choose to eat less, use a smaller plate to help you control the amount of food you might eat or end up wasting. Compost all food waste to put nutrients back in your garden (you will spend less on fertilizer).