

Eating Organic

Can Be Easier Than You Think

By Todd Tuell

Tips from a Local Expert



It is common sense that eating organic is better for us and our families. Maybe it's the limited access or the presumed higher cost of organic items at the local grocery store, but for one reason or another many of us stick with the conventional when shopping and cooking.

"It's kind of just common sense," says Lacy Boggs, a food writer and local blogger who is helping consumers realize the benefits of making the switch. "If you go out in the woods and pick a wild strawberry, it tastes amazing. It tastes like pure summer. If you go to the grocery store and buy one of those gigantic containers that come from California, fumigated with methyl bromide, it tastes like nothing. So it makes sense that foods that are grown most naturally will be the most healthful."

"For me it's two-fold," she says of the reason she shops organic. "It's about knowing what I'm feeding my family. I know that organic produce does not have all the pesticides that conventional produce has. "The second part is that it pollutes our environment. A crop has to have all kinds of things sprayed on it. Some of that gets into the water supply. Some of it gets into the soil. By buying organic I'm also ensuring that I'm being a good consumer."

Something you might not think about one way or the other is potatoes. "This one really surprised me," Lacy notes. "Conventional potatoes, because they are the root of the plant, soak up a ton of pesticides. They are one of the most polluted vegetables you can buy. They get it through the leaves. They suck it up from the soil." In comparison if you peel an orange, you're getting rid of the pesticides sprayed on it. But if you peel a potato it doesn't matter because everything gets sucked in.

"It is just as important with milk and meats," Lacy adds, "because animals are being fed antibiotics and chemicals in their feed." By buying organic you are ensuring those things are not getting to your table.

Feeding a family organically yet on a budget can be tricky. Lacy is Chief Foodie at the blog LaughingLemonPie.com. "Laughing Lemon Pie is a resource for the family foodie," she explains. "I try to put together resources, tips, recipes, and technique posts for the mom or dad who wants to feed their family like a foodie even with a budget and a crazy life." She addresses everything from budget conscious shopping to cooking quick meals that are really impressive at the same time.

Particularly she focuses on tips for organic shopping and cooking. "One of the biggest things is knowing a sale when you see one," she says. "Organic foods tend to be a little more expensive than the

conventional which we all know. But they do go on sale, so you can get the organic foods for the same price or less than the conventional if you know when to buy and when to stock up."

Finally, Lacy suggests ditching the processed foods entirely even if your Oreos or Pop Tarts are labeled *organic*. "The more you can eliminate those kinds of convenience foods, the more money you're going to save," explains Lacy. "If you really can't live without them, you can find all kinds of recipes online and you can make your own. They'll be a thousand times tastier anyway."

From fruits and vegetables to milk, eggs, and meat, it's really important to be conscious of what you're paying for organic. In her free downloadable eBook *The Ultimate Guide to Eating Organic on a Budget* found on her web site, she offers 21 additional tips.

"Focus on what the Environmental Working Group deems the dirty dozen," suggests Andrea Daily, Director of Marketing at Door To Door Organic. "If you're going to be buying organic produce, be choosy, especially with items like apples and strawberries. Also peaches and spinach which are great local organic items."

Door To Door Organic [DoorToDoorOrganics.com] is a company focused on getting the best produce directly to consumers. "People go to the store and can't always get what you want," says Andrea. "We have what's in season now. We offer a variety of different produce boxes all certified organic." Starting in late June, they offer a local farm box with only Colorado-grown produce. Additionally, they also offer locally produced organic meats, milk and eggs.

"One way to really save on organic," Andrea says, "is to look at what's in season. That's when you'll see the best deals. She notes leafy greens like lettuce and spinach for the early summer. "And we are starting to see local fruits like apricots and cherries." Another thing they offer is a coop program when four or more individuals band together for delivery at a single location. They are able to pass some of the delivery cost savings on to these consumers as a discount. She suggests finding neighbors or coworkers to form a coop.

So next time you do your grocery shopping, keep in mind that you can serve both masters: you pocketbook and your family's health.