



9 EASY WAYS TO GO ORGANIC ON A BUDGET



9 Easy Ways to Go Organic on a Budget

Are you looking to add more organic foods to your diet, but are concerned that the additional costs will increase your grocery bill by epic proportions? No longer relegated to the “natural” section of the grocery store, organic foods have become mainstream, making it easier than ever to include organic foods in your cart while still sticking to a budget.

Here are my favorite strategies to help you shop smarter for your own health, as well as the health of the planet:



1. Go Generic. Nearly every major supermarket chain now carries its own line of USDA certified organic foods under their own private label, so look for it the next time you're in your favorite grocery store. This not only saves you the cost of an extra trip to a more upscale market or a separate natural foods store, but it can cost significantly less than other organic brands.

2. Buy the Whole Bird. Instead of buying thighs or breast separately, buy a whole organic chicken and ask the butcher cut it up for you; in some stores, buying a whole organic chicken can cost the same amount as two large chicken breasts! You'll save money on your sandwich the next day, too; tuck leftover roasted chicken into a whole grain pita with a half-cup of fresh veggies, and you'll pack in organic protein while spending significantly less than buying pre-cut deli meat.



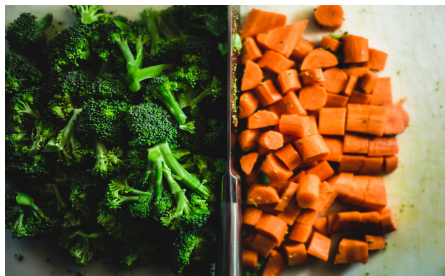
3. Be Picky About Portion Size. At the meat or fish counter, it is standard practice to tell a customer to estimate 6-8 oz per person when determining how much to buy. Stick to 3 oz per person instead and cut your “main course” bill in half instantly. You can then use the extra savings to buy organic meat or poultry instead (currently there are no organic standards for fish). Enjoy those 3 oz portions with an abundance of whole grains, vegetables and a side salad for a hearty meal that still leaves everyone satisfied.

4. Browse Big Box Retailers. Many people are surprised to learn that everyday staples such as organic milk, yogurt and produce are available at big box retailers, making these items more within the reach of everyone at a good price. And many of the companies who supply these chains offer downloadable coupons on their websites, saving you even more at the checkout counter.



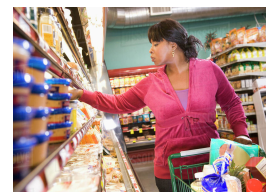
9 Easy Ways to Go Organic on a Budget

5. Fill Up on Frozen. The freezer case is one of the best bargains in the supermarket when it comes to organic; stock up on your favorite frozen organic fruits and vegetables (with no added sauces or syrups) for baking, smoothies, soups and side dishes. The added bonus? Frozen fruits are on your schedule, meaning there's no risk of costly spoilage.



6. Skip the Salad. As a dietitian, I love to encourage people to fill up on foliage, but salad greens are the number-one food item that gets thrown out because of food spoilage. According to a 2007 UK report, a shocking 48% of all salad Brits bought was thrown away. If you're someone who commonly has spoiled produce in the bin, save money by skipping organic lettuce and buying something heartier instead, such as organic sweet potatoes or frozen broccoli.

7. Bulk Up. If your favorite grocery store has them, bulk bins are one of the best places in the supermarket to save money while still buying organic foods. Stock up on the organic versions of some of Dr. Oz's favorite good-for-you staples like brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, teff and more.



8. Love Those Legumes! Dollar for dollar, meat, fish and poultry are some of the costliest calories in your cart. Serving delicious vegetarian meals two nights a week is not only an easy way to help you lose weight and improve your health, it also allows you to free up more food dollars to put toward organic options. Use your favorite organic canned beans (rinse first to remove excess sodium) for a satisfying soup, or save even more by soaking dried beans or lentils overnight. Sprinkle beans with organic taco seasoning for delicious Southwestern bean tacos that will even have carnivores asking for more.

9. Pass on Organic Junk Food. Just because it's organic doesn't mean it's healthy! Organic soda, ice cream and potato chips, for instance, are still high calorie splurges that can pack on the pounds and pad your grocery bill. Make sure at least three-quarters of your cart is loaded with minimally processed foods that look as close to their natural forms as possible.



Following some or all of the above tips keep both your food bill and your waistline lean!