

GREEN LIVING NOW

THE FRUGAL FOODIE

EATING CLEAN & SAVING GREEN



The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Amy Hartshorn

Table Of Contents

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green	1
Introduction	3
Who Owns Organic?	47
Why buy from independent organic food companies instead of corporate owned ones?	48
Independent Organic Food Companies List	49
Who is Amy Hartshorn?	52

Introduction

Congratulations for taking this significant step on the journey to live a greener healthier lifestyle--while also maximizing your shopping dollars.



In this eBook, The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green, you'll learn:

1. 38 money saving tips for buying certified organic food.
2. The current list of independent organic food companies as of the publishing date of this eBook and why buying from them first is important.

All of these tips are ones that I've been using myself for years and they'll give you valuable, practical, useful information that you can put into action right away. Whether you're just starting out on your green living journey, or you've been pursuing a healthy lifestyle for a while, you'll learn some valuable insights and practical real-world advice for how to navigate creating a non-toxic, greener lifestyle.

Whether we realize it or not, the truth is that we're all facing the realities of a poisoned food supply, a "sick care" system, and a toxic way of life that is neither healthy nor sustainable. We must make positive changes, and yet it can be overwhelming.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

I've found that it's a step-by-step process. We aren't striving for perfection, just learning how to choose safer, more environmentally friendly products and practices.

Please note that **none of this information should be consider medical advice.**

Do your own research and trust your intuition.

These are the things that have worked for me over the years.

Buying green products requires a change in our perspective.

When I've been strapped for cash, it's easy to fall into the trap of picking the cheapest products on the shelf.

I've fooled myself into thinking I'm getting more.

But, more of what? How soon will the product break or wear out and need to be replaced?

What kind of pollution is that company spewing into the air, soil and water as a result of making that product?

What are their labor practices? How do they treat their employees, or the animals they raise? What happens to that product after you throw it away? Does it leach toxic chemicals into the landfill?

As a result, I've been a very dedicated and conscious organic shopper for many years. And, it may surprise you that I don't always buy 100% organic.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Sometimes I can't find what I want in an organic version, or I find that something else might be better, like butter that might not be organic, but is from grassfed cows.

Or, half & half that is local (to me in Vermont) and doesn't ultra-pasteurize. Sadly, nearly all of the organic brands are ultra-pasteurizing their products.

These tips have saved me a lot of money though.

1. Buy in bulk from local organic co-ops, natural food stores, and even supermarkets



Buy in bulk-especially when organic food is on sale.



I do this all the time; it saves a good chunk of change. Head to your local organic co-op, natural food store, or even a regular grocery store and take full advantage of the organic items in their bulk bins. Here you can stock up on pantry essentials like grains, beans, and nuts--and even coffee, sugar, flour, and Himalayan salt, at a fraction of the cost. By buying in bulk, you can save money in the long run and reduce the amount of packaging waste too.

2. Shop at farmer's markets for discounted produce

Shopping for organic food at a farmer's market can be cheaper due to the absence of middlemen and the direct connection with local farmers.



Additionally, many farmers' markets feature a wide variety of fruits and vegetables at competitive prices, allowing consumers to compare and choose the most affordable organic options.

Sometimes at the end of the market some farmers will discount prices further so that they don't have to lug home the remaining produce. You can always ask the farmer if they're willing to discount the price if you buy a larger quantity.

This direct market-to-consumer model not only supports local farmers but also makes it more cost-effective to purchase fresh, organic produce. Be sure to ask the farmer about their farming practices, especially if you don't see a sign that says they're certified organic. "Growing according to organic standards", unless they're certified isn't really accurate. The rules change each year and they don't have to be held accountable to anyone without a certification.

3. Join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program

Much like shopping at farmer's markets, joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program can save you money when buying organic food because it also offers an opportunity to purchase directly from local farmers, cutting out the middleman and reducing markups.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

By paying upfront for a share of the farm's harvest, you can often receive a variety of fresh, organic produce at a discounted price compared to buying individual items at a store. Some CSA's offer special extra perks too.



There are different CSA models. Some CSA's (like our organic farm) allow you to choose how much you want to spend, give you free choice on what you can select, and allow you to shop whenever you want rather than pick up a box of farmer selected produce, once per week.

You should know that the CSA model was designed to share the risk with the farmer. In other words, it gives the farmer cash in the beginning of the season before the crops start making money. Farmers have to spend a lot on seeds, soil amendments, packaging, etc. So, it's great to have some cash coming in via the CSA shares.

It was also supposed to provide a hedge against crops that failed for one reason or another, while sharing the bounty of the ones that do really well. Every season is different no matter how much experience the farmer has.



4. Buy frozen organic fruits and vegetables

Consider opting for frozen organic fruits and vegetables when fresh produce isn't available (like the winter and Spring), is too expensive, or travels from too far of distance. Frozen produce tends to be even more nutritious than fresh produce from the store as it's typically frozen at the peak of freshness. It also can be more affordable and have a longer shelf life. Frozen produce can also be very convenient as it eliminates the need to worry about spoilage and can be used straight from the freezer in smoothies, soups, and stir-fries.

5. Look for store-brand organic products

By opting for store-brand organic products, you can save money due to the absence of high marketing expenses typically associated with name-brand items. (This O Organics brand is from Shaw's/Albertsons.)



In addition to being more affordable, store-brand organic products often maintain similar quality and nutritional value as their name-brand counterparts, as they are often produced by the same suppliers.

Many stores offer their own incentives and discounts for store-brand products, including organic options, further reducing the overall cost. This makes store-brand organic products a cost-effective choice without compromising on quality.

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6. Use coupons and look for sales on organic products

Using coupons and looking for sales on organic products saves money by providing discounts and cost-saving opportunities on typically higher-priced organic items.

Many organic brands and stores offer coupons, whether through loyalty programs, websites, or third-party coupon platforms.

For example, we have the Shaw's chain of grocery stores here in Vermont. I have their app on my phone, and they also send me weekly emails with special deals. I earn points when I shop and then can cash them in for discounts--even \$10 off my next shopping trip. I also get better prices with the online deals that I learn about via their emails.

By strategically using these coupons on sale items or during promotional periods, you can significantly reduce your grocery bill. When something is a really good deal, I buy many of them.

7. Start a garden and grow your own organic produce



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Growing your own garden can save you money in various ways, it's also really satisfying.

First, it eliminates the need to purchase expensive organic produce from grocery stores or farmer's markets, as you can cultivate your own organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs at a fraction of the cost.

You'll also get the most nutrients from your fresh picked homegrown produce. Typically, produce that arrives at the supermarket can be two weeks old from when it was harvested!! That means it's really just fiber at that point without much nutrition.

Additionally, the initial investment in seeds, soil, and gardening tools is typically low compared to the savings yielded by the abundant harvests.

Furthermore, tending to a home garden reduces travel-related costs as you won't need to commute to the store as often, minimizing fuel expenses.



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Growing your own organic garden also empowers you to have a sustainable, ongoing supply of fresh, healthy produce, allowing you to save money on groceries and enjoy the satisfaction of self-sufficiency.

Overall, the financial benefits of growing your own garden make it an attractive and cost-effective way to access organic food.

Even though I live on an organic farm, and Dave grows most of the food here, I find growing my own food is so satisfying. That's why I have my own gardens around the house (and the inside of our house looks like a greenhouse with all of my indoor plant babies).



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If you've never grown food and want to learn, there are many resources available online. I have 2 organic gardening courses. You can find them [here](#)

8. Buy cheaper cuts of organic and/or pastured raised or grassfed meat

We eat locally raised grassfed grass finished steak a couple times a week, and I buy the cheaper cuts, which saves me at least \$10 per week. I don't love ground beef, but they do offer bulk packages that are less per pound than the standard pound sized options.



Some of the less expensive cuts of steak include: - Top Round - Chuck steak - Flank steak - Skirt steak - Sirloin steak - Flat iron steak.

These cuts are typically more affordable than premium cuts like ribeye or filet mignon, but they can still be flavorful and tender when prepared properly.

9. Shop at discount grocery stores or outlet stores

Several discount grocery stores and outlets are known for offering good deals on organic food.

One popular option is Aldi, which consistently stocks a variety of organic products at competitive prices. (We don't have any in Vermont, so I've never shopped there.)

Another is Trader Joe's, known for its diverse selection of affordably priced organic items, including produce, snacks, and pantry staples. One downside of Trader Joe's is that you don't know who the producer is on the store label products.

Costco is also recognized for its organic offerings, particularly for those looking to purchase in bulk at a discounted price. I go there monthly and have been very impressed with the savings on organic.

Additionally, Whole Foods Market, often associated with higher prices, offers sales and promotions on organic products, especially for Amazon PRIME members. (You probably already know this, but Amazon bought Whole Foods.

Amazon Prime members get a 10% discount on select items and have access to special deals and offers exclusively for Prime members at Whole Foods.

To get the Amazon Prime member discount at Whole Foods, you need the Amazon app on your phone.

Sign in with your Amazon account to access and apply the discounts at the store. Then you show the cashier your QR code from the app. They scan it and you get the discount.

10. Buy imperfect or "ugly" produce at a discounted price

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One brick and mortar store that I know of, Kroger, offers imperfect or "ugly" produce at discounted prices as a part of their sustainability and waste reduction initiatives. The initiative is named "Pickuliar Picks."

There may be others. Let me know if you know of any in your area.

There are several online outlets.

Online:

Misfits Market, (<https://www.misfitsmarket.com>) (they deliver to most of the West South-Central region, Midwest, Northeast, and some of the West Coast) which I used a few times.

The first 2-3 orders were wonderful, but then the quality declined dramatically. Hopefully, they've improved things since then. I may give them another chance in the winter.

In addition to Misfits Market, there are several other online retailers and subscription services that offer "ugly" or imperfect organic produce at a discounted price, helping to reduce food waste.



Some of these include:

Imperfect Foods

(Imperfect Foods is currently only available in the Midwest, Northeast, all along the West Coast, and in most of the West South-Central region)

(<https://imperfectfoods.misfitsmarket.com>)

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Hungry Harvest (<https://hungryharvest.net>), and **Full Harvest** (<https://www.fullharvest.com>)

I will say that Full Harvest had an annoying chat box that wouldn't go away when I asked it where they delivered.

Hungry Harvest currently delivers produce and groceries throughout Maryland, Washington, DC, Virginia, Greater Philadelphia, Southern New Jersey, Northern Delaware, and Raleigh, North Carolina.

Each of these companies say that they work with farmers and suppliers to rescue produce that might otherwise go to waste due to cosmetic imperfections or surplus production. By offering this "ugly" produce at a lower cost, these retailers provide an environmentally friendly and economical option for consumers to access organic fruits and vegetables while also helping to minimize food waste.



11. Purchase seasonal organic produce and dehydrate, can, freeze-dry, and freeze it

Buying seasonal organic produce when it's abundant and cheaper is a great way to save some cash.

In fact, at our organic farm, we sell sauce tomatoes (the imperfect ones that are getting too ripe) for a discount. Also, pick-your-own berries saves you money versus staff picked fruits.

And if you preserve the excess by dehydrating, canning, freeze drying or freezing it, you can make those savings last even longer.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

That means you won't have to rely on expensive out-of-season produce, and you'll have a stash of organic fruits and veggies ready to use whenever you need them. It's a win-win – you save money and still get to enjoy organic goodness all year round!

Don't know how to can, freeze or dry. Check out this book: *A Guide to Preserving Food for a 12 Month Harvest: Canning, Freezing, Smoking, and Drying; Making Cheese, Cider, Soap and Grinding Grain; Getting the Most from Your Garden.*

As far as dehydrators, I have the Cosori brand, which seems to work well.

We now have a freeze dryer and it's pretty amazing. Cherry tomatoes were out of this world delicious. And, fruit is even sweeter when it's freeze dried.

The upfront cost of the freeze dryers isn't cheap though. The price of freeze-drying machines can vary widely depending on factors such as capacity, features, and intended use. The cost of a typical home freeze dryer can range from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

There are several highly-rated freeze-drying machines on the market, but some of the top-rated options include Harvest Right Freeze Dryers (that's what we got), Cuddon Freeze Dry, and Labconco Freeze Dry Systems. These machines are known for their quality, performance, and reliability, and they are commonly used for home and commercial freeze-drying applications. It's important to research and compare the features, specs, and customer reviews to find the best option for your specific needs.

12. Buy organic eggs from local farms

This typically saves a bit from what those same eggs would sell for at a local market.



13. Purchase organic products in their raw form and prepare meals from scratch

Purchasing organic products in their raw form and preparing meals from scratch can often be less expensive than ordering from an organic meal kit company.

Buying raw organic ingredients allows you to have more control over the portion sizes and the overall cost, as well as the flexibility to use the ingredients for multiple meals.

Additionally, it allows you to take advantage of bulk discounts and special offers, further reducing the cost.

Organic meal kit companies provide convenience and portioned ingredients, but they tend to come with a higher price tag due to the pre-portioned, premium-quality components and the added convenience.

Ultimately, the cost comparison depends on individual circumstances and preferences, but for those seeking more budget-friendly organic options, purchasing raw organic ingredients and preparing meals from scratch is often the more economical choice. This has been my preference. I make most of my meals from scratch.

14. Buy organic dairy products in bulk

Buying organic dairy in bulk can save money and it can be quite convenient too. One way to do this is to connect with local dairy farms or co-ops that offer bulk pricing for organic milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, and other dairy products.

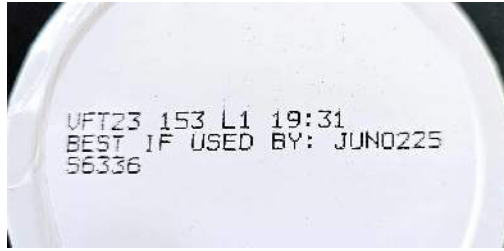
When I drank raw organic milk regularly, I was part of a group that went to the organic dairy and filled up half gallon glass jars with raw organic milk. We switched off each week, so I only had to go once per month.

Some farms even have community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, where you buy a share of their dairy production and get regular deliveries of organic dairy goodies at a lower cost than what you'd find in stores.



And if you have the storage space for it, you can also check out wholesalers and retailers that specialize in bulk organic foods, where you can score some great deals on organic dairy products.

15. Look for organic options in clearance sections of grocery stores



Just be sure to check the "best by", "sell by" and/or "use by" dates to be sure it hasn't passed those dates. As you may have learned in my eBook, *The Comprehensive Guide to Food Label Claims*, those label indicators don't really tell you when the product will go bad, it's supposed to tell you when the product is still at its best, before it starts declining. That said, I always try and buy food that has a date that is at least one week out from when I purchase it.

16. Follow social media pages and newsletters of organic brands for discounts and promotions

Following social media pages or newsletters of organic brands may occasionally save you money on their food.

Many brands offer promotions, discounts, and coupons to their followers or subscribers.

Additionally, they may share information about upcoming sales or special offers on their products.

However, it's important to note that simply following a brand on social media or subscribing to their newsletter does not guarantee regular savings on their products.

It's always a good idea to compare prices and look for deals from various sources before making a purchase.

17. Utilize a cashback or rewards program or apps that offer discounts on organic products.



Utilizing a cashback or rewards program for organic purchases works in a similar way to other cashback or rewards programs.

Typically, when you make a purchase of organic products, you'll get a certain percentage of the purchase price back as a cash reward or points that can be redeemed for discounts, gift cards, or other rewards. I've only done this with my Discover card so far.

Here's a general idea of how it works:

1. Sign up for the cashback or rewards program:

You'll need to register for the program either online or through a mobile app.

2. Link your payment method: You may need to link your credit card or other payment methods to the cashback program, so it can track your purchases.

3. Shop for organic products: When you make purchases at eligible retailers or for specific products that are part of the cashback program, the program will track your purchases and calculate the cashback or rewards you've earned.

4. Earn rewards: Depending on the terms of the program, you'll earn cashback or rewards points based on the amount you've spent on organic products.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

5. **Redeem your rewards:** Once you've accumulated enough cashback or points, you can typically redeem them for cash, gift cards, or other rewards offered by the program.

It's important to read the terms and conditions of the cashback or rewards program to understand how it works and what limitations or exclusions might apply.

Additionally, not all retailers or organic brands may participate in every cashback or rewards program, so it's a good idea to do some research to find the best program for your organic purchases.

18. Participate in food co-ops or buying clubs to get bulk discounts

The details of shopping with a food coop buying club may vary depending on the specific coop and club.



However, in general, when you join a food coop buying club, you typically gain access to purchasing food and household items at wholesale or discounted prices. This is often achieved by buying in bulk as a group, allowing for cost savings that are passed on to club members.

The club may offer a variety of products, including fresh produce, dry goods, dairy, and more. Members may contribute to the selection process, and orders are often placed in advance and picked up at a designated location or delivery can be arranged.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Some clubs may have membership fees, volunteer requirements, or other participation expectations. Additionally, many food coop buying clubs emphasize supporting local and sustainable products and may have a focus on providing healthy, organic, or ethically sourced items. It's a great way to save money, access quality products, and contribute to a sustainable and community-based food system.

Some examples are:

United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI): (<https://www.unfi.com/>) UNFI is a leading distributor of natural, organic, and specialty foods and related products in the United States and Canada. It serves a wide range of retail formats, including buying clubs, cooperatives, and independent natural food retailers.

Frontier Co-op, (<https://www.frontiercoop.com/>) headquartered in Iowa, is a well-known wholesaler of natural and organic products, including herbs, spices, and aromatherapy items. They primarily distribute their products through retail stores, buying clubs, and co-ops across the United States, including in the New England region.



19. Buy (or raise your own) whole organic chickens and learn how to butcher them at home

Buying a whole chicken and butchering it yourself can save money by avoiding processing costs, maximizing the use of all parts, customizing your cuts, and taking advantage of bulk purchase savings, as purchasing a whole chicken is often cheaper on a per-pound basis than pre-cut pieces.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

20. Buy a whole beef cow or share one with other families



By purchasing a whole cow, or a portion of it, the buyer can often negotiate a lower price per pound of meat compared to buying individual cuts from the store. Additionally, sharing the cost of the cow with other families can also help reduce the overall cost for each family involved, as they can split the cost of purchasing and processing the meat. This can lead to significant savings compared to buying smaller quantities at retail prices.

21. Participate in "gleaning" programs to get free or discounted organic produce

Gleaning on an organic farm is kind of like a modern-day treasure hunt! It involves gathering leftover crops after the main harvest. So, after the farmers have collected the bulk of the produce, volunteers or community members can come in to pick any remaining fruits and vegetables.

It's a way to reduce food waste and provide fresh, nutritious food to those in need. Plus, it's a great way to connect with the earth and learn about sustainable farming practices. Call around to your local organic farms and see if it's a possibility.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

22. Visit pick-your-own organic farms for discounted produce (sometimes)



Generally, picking your own berries can save you a significant amount, often around 30-50% less than the retail price, as you are not paying for the labor involved in picking and packaging. It really depends on the farm.

Additionally, some farms may offer bulk pricing or discounts for larger quantities, further increasing the potential savings.

However, it's important to consider the cost of transportation, time spent, and potential entry fees or other expenses associated with the pick-your-own farm experience when calculating overall savings.

On our organic farm, people typically save about 25% off of retail prices, but some farms don't offer any discounts because PYO can actually be a liability for the farm, especially with all of the eating that happens when people pick, as well as the overloading their containers.

23. Look for "manager's specials" on organic products at grocery stores

Just be sure that they haven't expired. In other words, check the "best by" "sell by" and "use by" dates.

24. Take advantage of loyalty programs offered by organic food retailers
As I mentioned above, you can take advantage of deals as an Amazon Prime member when you shop at Whole Foods, and I do this with a local big chain supermarket, as well as a natural food store. You get weekly discounts and special deals.

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25. Utilize (or start a) community food exchanges for swapping organic produce with others.

I've done this with a clothing and seed swap, but this could be great for food, especially in the growing season when people around you have a plethora of something, like zucchini.

In Vermont, there's a joke that goes around about how people leave zucchini everywhere because they have so much at one time. Sometimes people might find some on their car seat if they leave the doors unlocked.

26.. Look for organic options at discount warehouse clubs

Looking for organic options at discount warehouse clubs can save you some serious cash! You can stock up on organic goods at a better price per unit, and many warehouse clubs have their own affordable organic brands. By limiting your options, you can avoid impulse buys and make quick decisions, ultimately saving you more in the long run.

The membership fee might seem like an extra cost, but the savings on organic products can outweigh it.

Keep an eye out for special offers and discounts, and you'll be surprised at how much you can save while still eating healthy.

27. Purchase local, in-season organic produce directly from farmers at their farm stand, their CSA, or a farmer's market



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As I've mentioned in this eBook, shopping for in-season produce directly from a farmer can absolutely save you money, not to mention it's a win for your taste buds and the environment too!

When you buy fruits and veggies that are in season, they're often more abundant (unless there are challenges with that crop that season--pests, crazy weather, etc.), which means the prices are generally lower than in the store.

Plus, when you buy directly from a farmer, you're cutting out the middleman and the associated markups, getting you more bang for your buck.

Apart from the cost savings, in-season produce is absolutely fresher, tastier, and more nutritious. So, hit up those farmers' markets or consider joining a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program to get your hands on some of the freshest, most delicious produce around while keeping more green in your wallet!

28. Buy organic products in family-sized packages for cost savings

Purchasing family-sized organic food products can be a budget-friendly choice as it often offers a lower cost per unit compared to smaller portions. These larger sizes typically provide better value for your money, as the price per ounce or per serving is generally reduced, allowing you to save on a cost-per-use basis.



Buying in bulk also minimizes the frequency of shopping trips, thereby saving time and transportation costs. Additionally, having ample quantities of staple organic items on hand can reduce the need for spontaneous grocery runs or last-minute purchases, contributing to overall savings.

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29. Reduce food waste to save money on organic groceries



Reducing food waste can lead to substantial savings on organic groceries by enabling you to utilize more of the food you purchase.

Organic products often come at a premium, and minimizing waste can stretch your grocery budget significantly.

By strategically planning meals, practicing proper storage techniques, and using leftovers creatively, you can make the most of your organic ingredients, ensuring that they are consumed before spoilage.

This approach reduces the need for frequent trips to the store, limits the disposal of unused items, and ultimately decreases your grocery spending.

Moreover, incorporating food scraps into recipes or repurposing them for future meals can maximize the value of organic groceries and contribute to substantial cost savings over time. By being mindful of food waste, you can make your organic purchases more cost-effective and sustainable.

30. Consider subscribing to a meal kit delivery service that offers organic options--it's likely cheaper than takeout, and much better for you.

Organic meal delivery kits may be a money-saver in several ways (though I have not tried them).

They provide pre-portioned ingredients, preventing waste and the need to buy large quantities, and also save you from purchasing expensive specialty items.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

They can also save time and prevent impulse purchases at the grocery store. While the initial cost may seem higher, the convenience, reduced waste, and avoidance of unnecessary purchases can lead to savings, especially for organic ingredients.

As for whether they save money, it depends on the number of people you're feeding. If you're on your own, you might find the cost a bit higher than buying groceries from a store.



For a small group, however, organic meal kits can actually save money by preventing overbuying and spoilage. Plus, you'll have healthy, tasty meals ready to go, reducing the temptation to order takeout on busy nights.

But for the convenience and guaranteed fresh, organic ingredients, it might just be worth the extra expense. You'll likely save money in the long run by eating out less and reducing food waste.

In conclusion, for individuals, the cost may be a bit higher, but the time and hassle saved can be priceless. And for small groups, organic meal kits can lead to savings by cutting down on wasted groceries and last-minute takeout orders.

Several meal delivery kits feature organic ingredients to provide customers with convenient and healthy dining options.

Some of the meal delivery services known for incorporating organic produce and responsibly sourced ingredients include Sunbasket, which offers a variety of organic meal plans and accommodates dietary preferences such as paleo, vegetarian, and gluten-free.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green



Green Chef is another popular service that focuses on delivering organic and sustainably sourced ingredients, catering to specific diets like keto, paleo, and plant-based options.

Additionally, Purple Carrot specializes in organic, plant-based meal kits, offering innovative and flavorful vegan recipes using organic ingredients. These meal delivery kits prioritize quality, sustainable sourcing, and organic options, providing customers with convenient access to nutritious and eco-friendly meal solutions.

31. Buy organic pantry staples in larger quantities to save money



Buying organic pantry staples (flour, grains, salt, sugar, etc.) in larger quantities can lead to significant cost savings--even more if they're on sale.

When you purchase in bulk, you can benefit from a lower price per unit, allowing your budget to stretch further.

Moreover, buying in bulk reduces the frequency of shopping trips, saving not only money but also time and gas.

Additionally, purchasing larger quantities minimizes packaging waste, contributing to environmental sustainability. By stocking up on kitchen essentials, you decrease the likelihood of running out and resorting to pricier last-minute purchases.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

32. Join a foraging group to find wild organic food (some may be free)

Joining a local wild foraging group is a great way to explore and find delicious food in your own area.



You can learn from experienced foragers, go on hikes, and attend workshops to learn how to identify edible plants and fungi. It's a fun and active hobby that may not cost anything. You'll also get to connect with nature and learn about the environment.

You can search online or check with local community centers, environmental organizations, or nature clubs to find a foraging group near you. These groups often organize events and workshops for people interested in learning about wild foraging.

This may help you find a foraging group: <https://eattheplanet.org/foraging-tours-classes-and-groups-near-you/>

And, if you live in the Northeast:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/243220015866943/>

33. Go to your favorite organic food company's website and print out coupons.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

You can also contact them directly and ask if they have coupons available. Or, you can go to these websites with links to money saving coupons for organic foods:

<https://www.passionforsavings.com/categories/organic-coupons/>

<https://allnaturalsavings.com/>

<https://www.simplyorganic.com/simply-organic-coupons>

Sometimes the product packaging has coupons on it. Cascadian Farms, Muir Glen, Amy's Organic and Stonyfield yogurt are companies that often do this.

34. Consider using an online organic food retailer if you don't have options locally

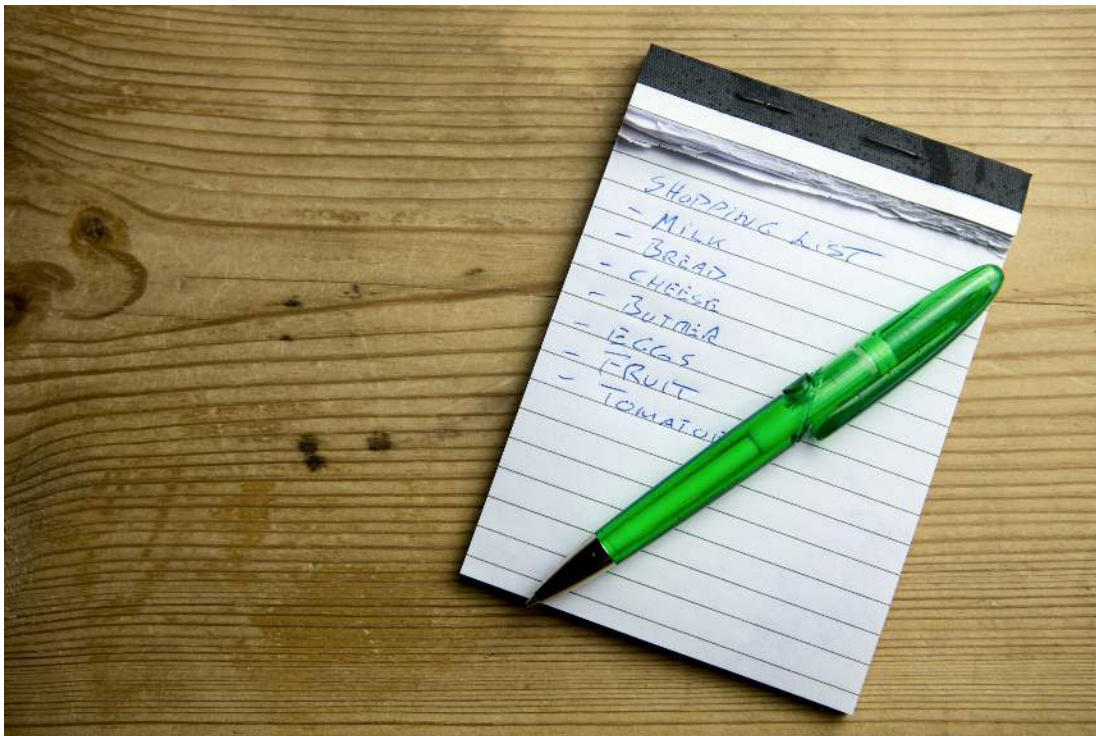
[Whole Foods Market](#)

[Thrive market](#) (has membership fee)

[Misfits market](#) (has membership fee)

[Butcher Block Meat Market](#)

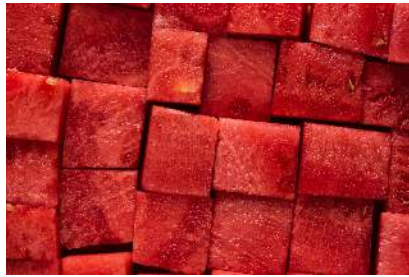
[Green Chef](#)



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35. Shop with a list. Impulse shopping wastes money. And, I'm sure you've heard it's best not to shop when you are hungry as you will tend to buy more than you need. Overall, shopping with a list can help you stick to your budget and avoid unnecessary expenses.

36. Don't buy precut and prepackaged produce, they'll charge you extra for it. It is best not to buy pre-cut and pre-packaged food because they are often more expensive, spoil more quickly, create more waste, and are less nutritious than whole foods that you prepare yourself.



37. Choose brands above or below eye level on the shelf.

It is often cheaper to buy products that are above or below eye level on store shelves because these are the spots where generic or store-brand items are usually placed. The products placed at eye level are usually the ones from well-known brands, and they tend to be more expensive. By looking at the higher or lower shelves, you can often find similar items at a lower cost.

38. Watch the scanners.

It's best to shop with two people. One can unload the cart on to the conveyer while the other watches as the items are scanned to be sure the prices are accurate. My former husband and I used to do this all the time. If he wasn't available, my daughter unloaded so I could watch. I caught numerous errors. Typically the computer scans an item that's on sale, but the sale price hasn't been entered into the computer yet.

Organic Food Brands Shopping List

The following section lists the brands that I typically choose first as they are still independently owned.

This does not mean that I endorse these companies; it only means that at this moment these companies seem to be what they say they are.

Please understand that just because a company is not on my list doesn't necessarily mean there is anything wrong with it. I'm sure I'm not aware of every good organic food company, or their products are not available in my area.

Before I share the list, you should know that big corporations have purchased what often starts out as a great small company.

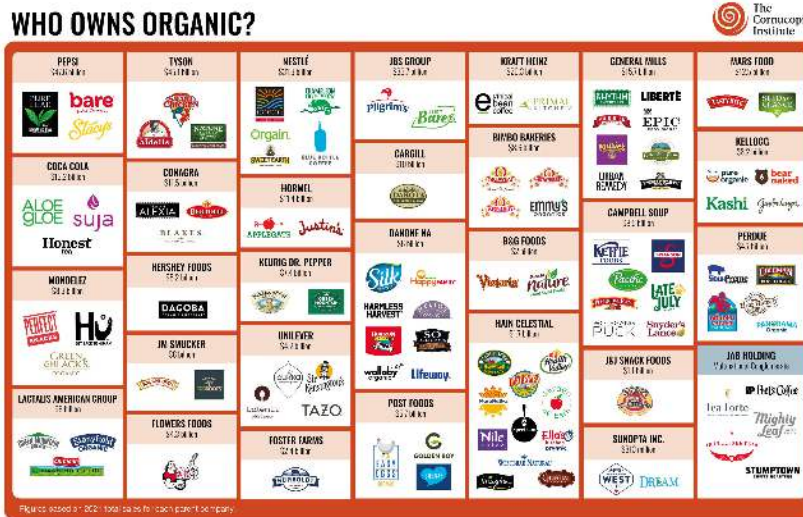
Who Owns Organic?

The first time that I saw this kind of chart, I was shocked.

I also remember when Stonyfield Organic was selling to Dannon the owner, Gary Hirshberg, insisted that he would maintain more control than usual. I'm not sure if that ended up being the case. It's gotta be tough to make that happen.

Same thing happened with Ben & Jerry's, who was starting to introduce some organic flavors before they sold to Unilever. Haven't seen those organic options since they sold.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green



Why buy from independent organic food companies instead of corporate owned ones?

Shopping from independently owned food companies is often considered better for several reasons: 1

1. **Support local economies:** Independent food companies are typically smaller and more rooted in their local communities, so purchasing from them helps support local economies and small businesses. They typically hire local people too.
2. **Unique products and flavors:** Independent food companies often offer unique and artisanal products that may not be available from big corporations. They often take pride in creating high-quality, unique flavors and products.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

3. Ethical and sustainable practices: Many independent food companies prioritize ethical and sustainable practices, such as sourcing ingredients locally or using organic and non-GMO ingredients. Supporting these companies can help promote more sustainable and environmentally friendly food production.

4. Personalized customer service: Independent food companies can often provide more personalized and attentive customer service, as they have a closer connection to their customers and are often more invested in building a loyal customer base.

5. Preserving food diversity: By supporting independently owned food companies, consumers contribute to preserving food diversity and preventing the homogenization of the food industry by big corporations.

Overall, many people prefer to support independent food companies because of their dedication to quality, uniqueness, and integrity in their products and practices.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Independent Organic Food Companies List

- 12 Tides (snacks)
- Alec's Ice Cream (they claim to be regenerative!)
- Alexandre Family Farm (Eggs, Dairy)
- All Clean Food (Rice, Pasta)
- Alvarado Bakery
- Ancient Organics (ghee)
- Amy's Organic
- Ardor Energy Drinks
- Back Roads Granola
- Bearded Brothers Snack Bars
- Better Booch Kombucha
- Big Picture Foods (olives, capers)
- Bionaturae (pasta)
- Bob's Red Mill (Employee owned)
- Butterworks Farm
- Cedarlane
- Chocxo Chocolate
- Dr. Bronner's (chocolate & coconut oil, in addition to castile soap)
- ECOTEAS
- Eden (Rice, Vinegars, Beans, etc.)
- Equal Exchange
- Farmhouse Culture Gut Shot
- Fiddler's Green
- Food for Life (Ezekiel sprouted grain bread, pasta, waffles)
- Forager Project (Plant Based Foods)
- Frankie's Organic Foods (Snacks)
- Fruit Bliss (Dried Fruit)
- GimMe Organic Seaweed Snacks
- GoMacro Snack Bars (Mother/Daughter owned)
- Grandy Organics Granola
- Handsome Brook Farm Eggs
- Hodo Tofu (not a fan of tofu, but...)
- LivBar Snack Bars
- Jambar Energy Bar
- Jom Organic Candy
- Jovial Ancient Grain Products
- Kate's Real Food Snack Bars
- Made in Nature Snacks

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

- Maine Coast Sea Vegetables (employee owned)
- Maple Hill Creamery (Dairy)
- Mooala Plant Based Beverages
- Mountain High Organics (Pasta, Rice, Legumes)
- NadaMoo (Dairy Free Ice Cream)
- Natural By Nature (Grassfed Organic Dairy Products)
- Nature's One Organic Formula
- Nature's Path
- Navitas Organics (Superfood Blends)
- Newman's Own
- Nixie Organic Sparkling Water
- Norr Organic Grassfed Probiotic Skyr
- Numi Organic Tea
- Nuts For Cheese (Plant Based Cheese)
- Obread
- Once Upon a Farm Baby Food
- One Degree Organic Foods (Corn, Bread, Flour)
- Organic Prairie (Farmer Cooperative)
- Organic Valley
- Pacific Natural
- Peeled Snacks (Organic Fruit Snacks)
- Pickle Juice for Muscle Cramps
- Potter's Crackers
- Pumpkin Tree Organics/Peter Rabbit Organics
- Shiloh
- Philosopher Foods Sprouted Almond Butter
- Pure Bliss Organics (Snacks, Baking)

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

- Rigoni di Asiago (Fruit Spread)
- Rise Brewing Organic Beverages
- Sambazon Acai Products
- Skout Organic Snack Bars
- Sno Pac Foods Frozen Fruit and Veggies
- Solana Gold (Apple Sauce, Apple Juice, Apple Cider)
- Straus Family Creamery
- Sunwink Plant-Based Superfood Beverages
- Taza Chocolate
- Tierra Farm (Nuts, Seeds, Coffee)
- Top Seedz (Crackers and Seed Snacks)
- Tosi Snack Bars
- Traditional Medicinals Tea
- Trimona Yogurt
- Truvani Snack Bars
- Turtle Mountain
- Uncle Matt's Juice
- Urban Remedy (Ready-made Meals, Cold-pressed Juices, Snacks)
- Vermont Bread
- Vermont Coffee Company
- Yogi Tea
- Zen Pudding

Ready to go deeper?

[Your Nontoxic Kitchen, Reimagined course](#) takes you beyond the swap lists.

Most experts hand you a checklist: throw out this, buy that.

You'll finish this course with something more valuable: the questions to ask about anything in your kitchen, so you stop guessing and start knowing. Five short videos, plus companion text that walks you through exactly what to look for and why it matters.

By the end, you'll know what actually belongs in a healthy kitchen, and you'll have a framework you can use for every other room in your home.

Who is Amy Hartshorn?



For over 34 years, I've helped people create nontoxic homes, eat clean, and embrace holistic health practices that genuinely support well-being.

Every recommendation I share comes from personal research and hands-on experience across green living, clean food, and natural health — not from brand affiliations or product commissions.

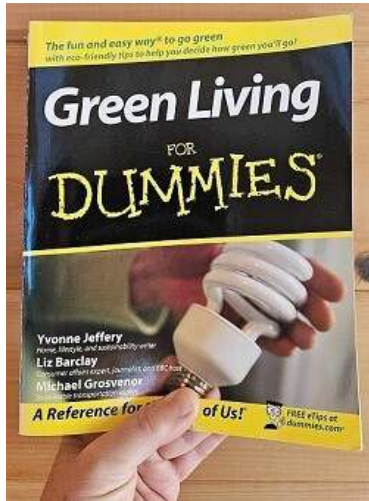
My path began early. My mom was all about nutrition, my stepdad was a chef, and I learned to cook from scratch at the age of 8.

I started working at a health food store at 16, and then there was my aha moment during pregnancy. I stumbled upon a revelation— everyday household products were loaded with harmful synthetic chemicals. Shampoos, cleaning products, carpets, you name it. I had no idea. — learning about toxins in our everyday environment and how they affect our health — that set me on a 30+ year mission to help others live cleaner, healthier lives.

The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green



I'm the host of the [Green Living Now podcast and YouTube channel](#), technical editor of Green Living for Dummies, and founding Executive Director of the Household Toxins Institute, launched by the founder of Seventh Generation.



My work has been featured on HGTV, Vermont Public Radio and Television, and Rachel Ray Everyday magazine, and many other places. I'm also a confirmed TEDx speaker (Fall 2026).



I've called Hartshorn Organic Farm in Vermont's Mad River Valley home for 17 years, where my husband, Dave, and I grow food organically, cook from scratch, and share our lives with our two dogs, Charlie and Leila.



The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

I've hosted [educational farm tours](#) and here for more than 16 years — for people who want to connect what they learn to how food is actually grown.

My goal is simple: to help you take control of your health before symptoms start, rather than chasing solutions after the fact. Progress over perfection, always.

Be well,

Amy

greenlivingnow.com



The Frugal Foodie's Guide: Eating Clean & Saving Green

Progress is better than perfection in the quest for a healthier lifestyle.

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