

# Organic: The Dent In Your Wallet

by Adrian Sandoval

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The grocery store. A maze of food. Wandering around the aisles, lost. Your eyes continuously drawn toward prices, your hands reaching towards the cheapest items. Everything is going fine. Until you reach the organic aisle. You know it's all healthy. You're not sure why, you've just heard it somewhere. Everything here can damage your prized most possession, your wallet! Why does it all cost more than its conventional counterparts?

Throughout the span of March 10 - 19, 2015, Consumer Reports conducted a comparison of prices from more than 100 product pairings. On average they found organic to be 47 percent more expensive than their conventional counterparts. While this can seem like an extreme price difference, I believe it's worth the cost. I'll leave it to you to decide.

Any farmer that would like to grow organic must be certified by the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) organic regulations. Farmers that are certified by these standards are banned from using synthetic chemicals, forcing them to rely on crop rotation, soil and plant health, and biological controls such as specific insects to bid good riddance to weeds. According to the ENOAS, "The substitution of chemical inputs in organic agriculture generally results in higher demand for labour in comparison with conventional counterparts." As might be expected, more labour results in more time which farmers convert into expenses, which is totally fine with me. Similarly, the more chores you completed as a kid, the larger the reward, right?

When consumers hear the word "Organic," their brain immediately begins blaring the word, "Healthy". It's an inevitable reaction. Yes, it's true that organic foods have many health benefits, but what other benefits does organic contribute to? If you're going to squander all this money, then you would at least like to spend it on something that will contribute to making a difference. The question I always seem to be asking myself is, if people knew more about the benefits of organic food, would they be willing to pay the price?

The average American spends around \$100,000 a year on healthcare. Organic foods can help reduce the need of wasting this money, while providing you with fresh, healthy food. I understand that many of you reading might be confused at the moment. You might believe that conventional is the way to go, because it's cheaper, which in retrospect, is probably what I would have believed if I hadn't known the facts. In reality, Industrial food is full of pesticides, bacteria, and chemicals, which in the end, could possibly lead you to making more visits to the doctor than you would have liked. What's worse? A dent in your wallet? Or a dent in your health?

The Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture has explained that, "Food in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles to make it to your refrigerator." By shopping at local organic markets, you are promoting a less polluted environment, while eating healthy. Local farms also aid in creating more job opportunities in small communities. Consequently, organic farmers must pay the assistants they hire, thus causing the bump up in prices.

There is no doubt many of us know organic for being the healthy choice. We've all heard this remark at least once in our lives. Organic foods do not contain pesticides which can seriously damage small children. Due to the fact that children have developing organ systems, they are less able to detoxify dangerous chemicals. Pesticides have been linked to a wide variety of human health hazards, from short-term impacts such as headaches and nausea, to severe impacts such as cancer, reproductive harm, and endocrine disruption.

Organic sales have rocketed since they first appeared on the market. "Approximately 2% of the U.S food supply is grown using organic methods. Over the past decade, sales of organic products have shown an annual increase of at least 20%. The fastest growing center of agriculture," states the Organic Research Foundation. The percept of organic food is one that really captivates me. I just wish it was more affordable for everyone to enjoy.

In whole, attempting to eat healthier can become a frustrating experience. I've given it up multiple times. Nevertheless, I'm a new man, equipped with a multitude of motivation. I've

unleashed my waves of knowledge upon you in hopes that you'll join me in my adventure. So;  
will you make the change?