

Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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More Consumers Seeking Organic Foods

The array of products lining shelves in grocery stores are already enough to stagger the average shopper. Throw organic food into the mix and the choices multiply, with a lot more information to consider.

Organic food is most commonly known as food produced without the use of chemicals or pesticides. The USDA's requirements state that food labeled organic or 100-percent organic can't be produced using excluded methods: sewage sludge or ionizing radiation. Any product bearing the organic claim by retailers must follow these standards.

Prices on many products can run higher than regular foods. Connie Burke, owner of an organic store in Oregon, said that may be one reason she thinks organic foods haven't become popular on a wide basis. "I think if you could educate this community a little bit more about organic foods, it might catch on more," she said. "But no, I don't believe it's caught on as a whole."

Burke sells organic products at her store and said although her experience has been limited to a certain niche, she has faithful shoppers. "People buy it because it looks better, tastes better," she said. "And for health reasons ... the chemicals that we consume in regular foods build up in the body ... as you get older they begin to affect you."

While many people go organic to avoid chemicals in their food and for health reasons, including food allergies, taste is a primary motivator for resident Nola Wilcox. She and her husband Lee have read up on the subject and chosen to go with as much organic food as possible. "In ordinary stores,

the yams will be watery and no flavor," she said. "With organic — yum. The flavor is that much better."

Wilcox said the couple began researching organic foods after facing a number of health problems. She cites Dr. Joel Wallach

and his book "Dead Doctors Don't Lie" as one of her primary resources. While Wilcox acknowledges that organic food can cost more and limits her choices, she feels the cost is worth it.

"We don't get organic food totally

because of the expense, but we eat as much organic as possible," she said. "I encourage anybody to go for organic food. I mean, why even bake a squash if you're not going organic?"

Wilcox also said being a careful shopper, consumers can find organic food that doesn't cost a fortune. While she is a devoted customer of her local organic store, she said some of the bigger stores also have additional organic foods to consider.

In fact, the larger supermarkets have taken notice of a national growth among consumers in purchasing organic foods. Safeway has launched an entire product line of organic foods — O Organics Food by Nature.

"We found organic sales were growing by 20 percent a year," said Bridget Flanagan, a public affairs director for Safeway. "Today's consumer is very savvy, interest has peaked, the people have responded well.

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Harvest Blend Regular

- Alfalfa Sprouts
- Baby Carrots
- Hass Avocado
- Sweet Onions
- Zucchini
- Green Peppers
- Spinach
- Romaine Lettuce
- Cameo Apples
- Lemons
- Kiwi
- Bananas
- Navel Oranges
- Kent Mango

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

You Don't Say

"My favorite sandwich is peanut butter, baloney, cheddar cheese, lettuce, and mayonnaise on toasted bread with catsup on the side." - Hubert H. Humphrey

"I don't like to say that my kitchen is a religious place, but I would say that if I were a voodoo priestess, I would conduct my rituals there." - Pearl Bailey

"I tell kids they should throw away the cereal and eat the box. At least they'd get some fiber." - Richard Holstein

"My kids always perceived the bathroom as a place where you wait it out until all the groceries are unloaded from the car." - Erma Bombeck

"A fruit is a vegetable with looks and money. Plus, if you let fruit rot, it turns into wine, something Brussel sprouts never do." - P. J. O'Rourke

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While I can't give you numbers because that is proprietary information, sales have been brisk."

The O Organics Line came out last fall and will eventually feature 150 products ranging from ice cream bars to balsamic vinegar. Flanagan said the USDA regulations that began in October 2002 have helped with the launch of their new products. "It's a relief to retailers to know absolutely 100 percent of our stuff is organic," she said.

To the unknowing consumer, there can be some confusion when labels include words such as "made with organic ingredients" or "natural."

That's why someone trying organic foods should do some research first.

Burke demonstrated at her own store why it's important to read the label on products. Pulling out two brands of the same product, she pointed out one label listed "organic" while the other listed "natural."

"Natural is not the same as organic," she said. "It's something you have to watch for, as retailers will use 'natural' or 'naturally healthy.' That isn't to say there is anything wrong with buying natural foods. But if you want organic food, make sure you're getting organic food."

The USDA regulations separate organic into three tiers of "100-percent Organic", "Organic" (95 percent of ingredients are organic), or "made with Organic Ingredients (70 percent of ingredients are organic).

Recipes

Alfalfa Sprout Sandwich

- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1 cup chicken, skinned, boned, cooked and diced
- 1 cup tomatoes, diced
- 1 cup green peppers, diced
- 1 cup lettuce, shredded
- 1/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise
- 6 pita rounds, medium size

Place all the ingredients except pita rounds in a bowl; toss. Cut each pita in half and fill halves with mixture.

Sprout Omelet

- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts
- 1/2 cup bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup green onion, diced
- 2/3 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 1/4 cup water chestnuts, diced
- 1 cup egg substitute
- 1/4 cup skim milk
- 2 tsp vegetable oil

In an omelet pan, sauté vegetables in oil for 1-3 minutes. Add the sprouts and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Remove vegetables and place on a warm plate. Whip together the egg substitute and milk. Pour egg mixture into the omelet pan and cook on both sides. Place vegetables in center and fold omelet over.

Spa Burger

- olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1/2 cup cooked spinach
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese, well drained
- 2 cups fresh white bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup wheat germ, lightly toasted
- 1/2 cup ground walnuts
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh mint
- 1 egg

- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- pinch of cayenne
- 4 sesame burger buns, split
- 1/2 head lettuce
- Mango-Alfalfa Sprouts (see below)
- Bell-Pepper And Cashew Tarator (see below)

Mango-Alfalfa Sprouts:

- 1 1/2 cups alfalfa sprouts
- 1 mango, finely shredded
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- juice of 1 lime

Bell-Pepper and Cashew Tarator:

- 1 1/4 cups fresh white bread crumbs
- 1/3 cup skim milk
- 1/4 cup roasted bell-peppers in oil, drained, oil reserved
- 1/2 cup cashew nuts
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Prepare the bell-pepper and cashew tarator first. Place the bread crumbs in a bowl, pour the milk over, and leave to soak for 10 minutes. Place the peppers, cashew nuts and garlic in a blender and mix to a smooth puree. Squeeze out any excess moisture from the bread, add to the blender, and mix again. Finally add 1 tablespoon of the drained pepper oil. Season to taste. The tarator should be fairly thick in consistency, if not, add a little more bread crumbs. Then prepare the mango-alfalfa sprouts by tossing all those ingredients together.

Heat a little oil in a nonstick frying pan, add the onion and garlic, and cook until softened. Squeeze the cooked spinach in a clean cloth to remove all the excess moisture, then chop it and add to the pan. Transfer the contents of the pan to a bowl, add the remaining ingredients, binding with the egg. Season to taste. Divide the mix into 4 evenly sized burgers.

Heat a thin film of the oil in a nonstick frying pan, add the burgers, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes on each side until golden. Toast the burger buns, spread some bell-pepper and cashew tarator on the bases, then top with the burgers. Finally add a heap of alfalfa sprout slaw on top, close the bun, and serve with the lettuce.