The Organic Top 12

What used to be a confusing little nook of items in the local supermarket's produce section is steadily becoming a plethora of colorful and enticing eats that consumers are demanding. Organic foods are fast becoming the choice of consumers.

Organically grown food is grown without pesticides or synthetic fertilizer.While research on whether organic food is better for you or not is inconclusive, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that some fruits and vegetables have much higher levels of pesticide residue than others—even after washing them thoroughly. So while the researchers are tallying the numbers, in the meantime buying organics just seems to make sense. Fewer pesticides means cleaner soil and water, and buying organic supports local growers. However, organic food can be more expensive than its non-organic counterpart. So how do you know what to buy organic?

Foods You Should Always Buy Organic

Studies done by the USDA, *Consumer Reports* and the Environment Work Group have come up with the following list of 12 produce items that when tested contained the highest pesticide loads, making these the best items to buy organic when you are able.

- Nectarines
- Celery
- Pears
- Peaches
- Apples
- Cherries
- Strawberries
- Imported Grapes
- Spinach
- Potatoes
- Bell Peppers
- Red Raspberries

Other Foods You Might Consider Buying Organic: Lettuce, Milk, Beef and Poultry

Food You Don't Have to Buy Organic

These 12 produce items were found to have the least amount of pesticides. You will note that many of them have thick, protective skins.

- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Corn
- Kiwi
- Mangoes
- Onions
- Papaya
- Pineapples
- Sweet Peas

Local farmers markets offer a wide variety of fresh, organically grown produce which is available in Southern California year round. In addition, farmers market prices are often more reasonable than supermarkets. Support the farmers market in your neighborhood.

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