

# The Cost of Organics

## Why Organics Cost More

Organics aren't expensive; conventional food is artificially and unrealistically cheap mostly due to heavy government subsidies. Organic produce is often priced 20-25% higher than conventional produce. Like conventional items, prices for organic foods reflect cost factors related to growing, harvesting, transportation and storage. However, all of these factors are generally higher for organically produced goods.

### Higher Labor Cost

Organic farmers must meet stricter regulations governing all stages of growing, so the process is more labor and management-intensive. More labor is needed to deal with weeds in the field as organic farmers do not use toxic pesticides and since organic farming tends to be on a smaller scale, farmers pay more per acre to produce and face added distribution costs.

### Shorter Shelf-Life

For organically manufactured products, there often are not the economies of scale. The shelf life of organic ingredients is different than for conventionally grown *(continued on page 3)*

## Value for Money at PizzaSalad

PizzaSalad is America's first pizza restaurant to offer a menu made with only USDA certified organic ingredients. Bite for bite, PizzaSalad's gourmet pizzas and salads are better-tasting and more nutritious for you. "When I eat at PizzaSalad, I don't get that 'weighed-down' feeling I do at other places. You can really tell the difference," says Cheryl, a patron of PizzaSalad. Paying a little extra for an organic meal helps you maintain a healthy body, which, over the long run, is a money-saver!



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### Demand and Supply

In the case of organics, demand dictates supply and supply dictates demand. Individual consumers, not industrial kitchens are stimulating organic demand. As a result, organics are readily available in retail supermarkets but are considered fastidious for big wholesale distributors. The supply of organics in retail packages and at retail prices is viewed as a prohibitive food cost by large restaurants, hospitals, schools and other industrial kitchens.

## Naturally More Expensive

Organic food originated as an alternative to big, industrialized, commodity-based, petroleum-dependent business. Efforts to reduce the price of organics, however, may turn them into the alternative for which they were meant to be.

Wal-Mart, the epitome store of low-prices-at-any-cost, offers organic produce at just 10% more than conventionally-grown fruits and vegetables. It most likely is not small family farms that supply the cut-rate lettuce and broccoli; it's big corporations with thousands of acres around the world producing year-round.

*“It only seems ‘natural’, pardon the pun, to provide our staff organic aprons and T-shirt uniforms when working in an all-organic restaurant,” explains PizzaSalad management.*

### Organic Clothes, Too?

PizzaSalad, The Organic Choice, respects its customers’ and environment’s well-being. From its gourmet menu made only with USDA certified organic ingredients to its sustainable business operations, PizzaSalad is committed to good health.

Staff aprons and T-shirts at PizzaSalad are made of 100% organic cotton. “To further ensure the integrity of our USDA certified organic ingredients, we use only organic solutions for staff aprons and restaurant towels. This way there’s no fear of organic cross-contamination and the solutions are safe for the earth,” says PizzaSalad management.

“Organic T-shirts are better for the earth and they feel good, too,” adds a PizzaSalad employee.

Chain operators, large kitchens and many restaurants cannot offer organic foods as their purchase is often too expensive to justify in their food cost, employee wages, and, therefore, the bottom line.

“We purchase half our organic ingredients at retail prices and sizes. Our certified organic hummus, for example, comes to us in 12 packs of 12 oz each. We pay for packaging we do not need nor want,” comments an all-organic restaurant owner.

#### All or Nothing

Cross-contamination tolerance for organic food is zero. This is especially difficult in restaurants handling both conventional and organic ingredients. To best safeguard against cross-contamination in any kitchen, *only* organic ingredients should be used.

“Offering organic tomato sauce on an otherwise conventional pizza is meaningless. Any health benefit from using organic sauce is erased as artificial substances and chemicals from conventional cheese, vegetables, and meats cook on the pizza,” explains an organic restaurant owner. The integrity of organic food in supermarkets is easier to maintain since foods are sealed, packaged, and stored in separate areas.

#### You Name It

Food labels can be misleading. The definition and use of many claims are not formally regulated. Terms such as ‘natural’, ‘hormone-free’, and ‘no additives’ do not mean free of antibiotics, artificial flavoring, colors, chemical preservatives, or synthetic ingredients. Vendors should explain and be in a position to support their food claims.

With so many food choices and concerns about harmful ingredients and pesticides, consumers obtain the utmost level of security from the USDA certified organic label.

Organics are a bit more expensive than conventionally produced food, essentially guaranteeing their integrity. Perhaps we should be thankful this is where the organic food market appears to have settled, for the time being.



**Why Organics Cost More** *(continued from page 1)*  
 Ingredients because preservatives are added. This means a manufacturer handling organic products may have to run smaller batches because less is available at a time, increasing the cost per batch produced.

#### No Federal Subsidies

Unlike for conventionally grown produce, organic farmers do not receive federal subsidies or price supports for producing (or not growing) crops. Further, there is little research backing from the USDA for organic production. Reports show that organic foods grew from a \$178-million market in 1980 to more than \$5.4 billion in 1998. However, the amount of USDA's research budget dedicated to assisting organic farmers was no more than 0.1%.

Conventional production is artificially priced cheaply because the government subsidizes the difference. Consumers are not made aware of the real cost of growing food conventionally, and how harmful this system is to farmers, both environmentally and financially. Since 1984, the price value of food purchased in a typical grocery cart has increased 2.8%, yet the farmer's share decreased by 37%. In 1956, Americans spent about 18.6 % of their income on food, versus about 9% today. The farmer's share of each food dollar has dropped steadily, from 41 cents in 1950 to only 20 cents in 1998.

#### Conclusion

The combination of various factors such as heavy government subsidies which artificially keep the price of conventionally grown food low, increased labor and administrative costs, and shorter shelf life for organics, leads to their higher price.

## Pesticide Food Facts

Facts about pesticides used on conventionally grown foods:

- 82 drugs, including RBGH, are found in conventional dairy farms; Organic cows are free of antibiotics
- At least 20,000 cases of cancer every year may be linked to US pesticide use
- Certain pesticides found in conventional foods are classified as probable human carcinogens, nervous system poisons and endocrine system disrupters
- Groundwater contamination caused by pesticides has spread pollutants to the world's rivers, lakes and oceans, killing fish, wildlife, and aquatic plants
- Certain pesticides, such as toluene, may be toxic to fetuses
- 60% of all herbicides, 90% of all fungicides and 30% of all insecticides are considered carcinogenic

PizzaSalad's gourmet menu, made only with USDA certified organic ingredients, is free of toxic pesticides and artificial chemicals. For more on PizzaSalad's organic menu, visit [pizzasalad.com](http://pizzasalad.com).





## PizzaSalad The Organic Choice

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*The Organic Choice  
for a Healthy Earth*



## Organic Pizza: A Cost / Benefit Analysis

Heavy government subsidies of conventional food artificially and unrealistically maintain their price 20-30% less expensive than organics. As a result, pizza made with *only* USDA certified organic ingredients may cost more than its conventional counterparts.

Some restaurants are beginning to offer limited organic items in their menus, like organic spring greens in a salad or organic tomato sauce on a pizza. Although these appear to be steps in a healthier direction, they go against the notion of no cross-contamination among organic and non-organic ingredients.

“Offering organic tomato sauce on an otherwise conventional pizza is meaningless. Any health benefit from using organic sauce is erased as artificial substances from the conventional cheese, vegetables, and meats cook on the pizza,” explains an organic restaurant owner.

This being said, PizzaSalad’s pizzas are made entirely with USDA Certified organic ingredients, down to the herbs and spices, not just the flour or tomato sauce. At an average cost starting at \$6 per person for all-organic, gourmet pizza, PizzaSalad is a great value.

### The Benefit

Studies have shown organics contain up to and, in some cases, more than twice the nutrients of conventionally grown food. Given criteria such as nutritional value and average cost per person, PizzaSalad, The Organic Choice, is the *best* choice.

Eating organic pizza at PizzaSalad also reduces your carbon footprint:

- The organic pizza dough ingredients, cheeses, and toppings at PizzaSalad are farmed, produced, grown, and processed sustainably and without harm to the earth
- PizzaSalad uses an energy-smart, natural gas oven which requires lower temperatures recycling hot air from heater to pizza
- PizzaSalad’s pizza boxes are made of corrugated, 100% recyclable cardboard which are printed with non-toxic, wax-free inks
- When you opt for delivery, PizzaSalad uses only company-owned hybrid delivery vehicles
- When dining in at PizzaSalad:
  - Your organic pizza is served on reusable trays made with earth-friendly adhesive and 100% post-industrial wood fiber pulp
  - Your salads and beverages are served in 100% bio-degradable and de-compostable containers
  - You dine on earth-friendly indoor and outdoor furniture

The value of eating organically grown food, higher in nutrients and free of harmful chemicals, outweighs any slight additional cost. Working closely with their organic vendors, PizzaSalad provides a gourmet menu made with only USDA certified organic ingredients at a reasonable price.