What Is Organic?
“Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods. These methods integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.” (USDA) Organic foods must be free of artificial food additives and processes, such as chemical ripening, food irradiation and genetic modification. Pesticides are allowed as long as they are not synthetic. Livestock must be raised with regular access to pasture and without use of antibiotics or growth hormones. To maintain organic integrity from seed to store, not only are the farmers and ranchers responsible to meet organic standards, but also food processors and, in some instances, distributors and retailers.

What Is Natural?
“Natural” is NOT the same as “organic”. According to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), “meat, poultry, and eggs products labeled as ‘natural’ must be minimally processed and contain no artificial ingredients,” such as colors, flavors, sweeteners or preservatives. Labels proclaiming “natural” must explain the term, for example, “no artificial ingredients” or “raised without hormones”. This means that animal products labeled “natural” can be fed genetically modified feed, given antibiotics and/or growth hormones. Use of hormones is forbidden in poultry and pigs.

The natural label does not include farming practice standards and only applies to the processing of meat, poultry and eggs. It is also significant to note that “natural” products do not undergo the certification process and rigorous inspections required for organic foods. Therefore it is difficult to verify a producer’s “natural” claims. There are no “natural” label regulations on foods outside meat, poultry and eggs.

Why Choose Organic?
Choosing organic foods means supporting sustainable farming practices, which means healthier plants, soil, water, air and livestock for present and future generations. It also means healthier farm workers, food processors and consumers, through eliminating exposure to toxic herbicides, pesticides and other farm chemicals.

Is Organic More Healthy?
Yes, organic is healthier on many levels. Not only is it healthier for the environment, it is healthier for you, the consumer, because organic products are produced without the use of antibiotics, growth hormones, synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers that disrupt normal body function. Many commonly used pesticides are xenoestrogens, chemicals that mimic estrogen. These pesticides disrupt our endocrine systems and increase risk for certain cancers. Others are known carcinogens or neurotoxins.

Some studies have found no difference between conventional and organic produce, however, they have primarily focused on vitamin and mineral content, ignoring the greatest difference between organic and conventional produce – the presence or absence of health-depleting chemicals! These studies also fail to recognize health-promoting phytochemicals in plants like polyphenols and isoflavones, both potent antioxidants.

Organic Integrity
According to US federal organic standards, if pests or weeds are uncontrollable through management practices, organic pesticides or herbicides, “a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be applied to prevent, suppress, or control pests, weeds, or diseases.” More and more substances are being added to this list every year in order to keep up with increased demand for organic products. If you’d like to uphold the integrity of organic standards, get involved with organizations such as the Environmental Working Group or the Center for Food Safety.
Deciphering Labels

1) Organic – To display a certified organic seal, 95-100% of ingredients (by weight) must be organic. The less-than-or-equal-to 5% remaining ingredients are either not available organically or are an exception. These “exceptions” must be on the National List of Allowed Substances (determined by the NOP).

2) Made with Organic Ingredients – This label is used when 70-94% or more of the ingredients are certified organic. The product cannot bear a certified organic seal but may list up to three ingredients that are. Remaining ingredients cannot be produced using excluded methods (such as genetic engineering, irradiation, etc.).

3) Contains Organic Ingredients – Used on products that contain less than 70% certified organic ingredients.

Even if a producer is certified organic, the use of the USDA Organic label is voluntary. Here are a few symbols you may see in its place.

- Oregon Tilth Seal
- ID DOA Seal
- WA State DOA Seal
- NSF logo

Look for this symbol, exclusive to health and beauty products.

Look for These Pilgrim’s Market Logos

Used to identify certified organic foods throughout the store, when other organic labeling is difficult to see.

You may notice this sticker on meats or prepared foods. It means it was produced with at least 70% certified organic ingredients, but, because we’re not a certified organic processor, we cannot claim the final product “organic”. Pilgrim’s Market is in the process of becoming a certified facility.

Organics on A Budget

Many people would like to buy more organic products but can’t afford them. Here are some tips for shopping organic on a budget.

• Prioritize organic meat and dairy. Since animals are higher on the food chain, the fat-soluble toxins, chemicals and drugs they are exposed to accumulate in their tissues over time.
• Use the Environmental Working Group’s Dirty Dozen™ and Clean Fifteen™ lists to help you navigate the produce department.
• Buy in-season produce. It’s cheaper and at its nutritional peak.
• Consider frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. Some may be cheaper and more nutritious because they were preserved at their peak flavor and freshness.
• Buy in bulk.
• Purchase foods in their whole form. For example, purchase an organic potato vs. organic potato chips.
• Make high-quality meat a side dish rather than the center-piece of a meal. Eating less means buying less.
• Learn to cook! Cooking at home is more economical and nutritious than eating out, and Pilgrim’s Market is the perfect place to learn. We offer a wide variety of classes, and even have an in-house dietitian to help you with the transition, offering one-on-one assessments, family consulting and grocery store tours.
Organics & GMOs
All methods of genetic engineering technology are prohibited in organic agriculture. Farmers, producers, processors and retailers all must take precautions to avoid cross-contamination when organic and conventional crops are in close proximity of each other or when equipment is shared.

Why Can’t I Find Organic Fish?
Since the USDA does not regulate fish and seafood (the FDA does), it does not fall under USDA regulatory standards. In addition, seafood that is procured from the wild cannot be guaranteed to be free of hormones, pollutants, heavy metals or other chemicals. Not all wild fish are safe, and not all farmed fish are unsustainable. For the most up-to-date information on sustainable fish consumption, visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch website (seafoodwatch.org).

Can Organic Food Be Irradiated?
Also known as “cold pasteurization”, food irradiation is the process of sending ionizing radiation through food products to kill food-borne pathogens. Food that is irradiated cannot be certified organic.

Is Imported Organic Food Still “Organic”?
All imported foods labeled “organic” must meet or exceed USDA organic standards. Foods can be qualified through partnering agencies such as the European Union (EU), the Canada Organic Product Regulations, or international USDA certification agencies.

Use the guide below to help you find organic products at Pilgrim’s Market.

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| Produce     | • Look for certified organic seals, the words “organic” or the Pilgrim’s Market sticker on the package or signage.  
|             | • Go organic with these fruits and vegetables, tested highest in pesticide-residues: apples, strawberries, grapes, celery, peaches, spinach, sweet bell peppers, imported nectarines, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, imported snap peas, potatoes, kale, collard greens and hot peppers.  
|             | • Be aware that conventional zucchini, yellow squash, sweet corn and Hawaiian papaya are frequently genetically modified.  
| Meat, Dairy & Eggs | • Choose meat, poultry, dairy and eggs bearing certified organic seals, the Pilgrim’s Market stickers or labeled “organic”.  
|             | • If labeled “natural”, it means no artificial additives or preservatives were introduced after minimal processing. All foods labeled “natural” need to include explanations of the term. This does not automatically mean the animal was raised without the use of antibiotics or hormones during the last 90 days before processing.  
|             | • Purchasing foods that are “grass-fed” or “pastured” means that the animal ate a natural diet and was not “grain finished”. However, it does not mean that animal is free of exposure to GMO-feed, pesticide residues or antibiotics and hormones. Look for “grass-fed”, “pastured” AND “organic” on the packaging.  
| Seafood     | • Seafood sustainability changes frequently. Consult seafoodwatch.org or try out the EWG’s new Seafood Calculator that offers a customized seafood shopping guide.  
|             | • If anything is added to seafood after processing, such as dyes or preservatives, it must be declared.  
|             | • No seafood can be labeled “organic”.  
| Grocery    | • Look for certified organic seals or the words “organic” on packaging.  
|             | • Remember, an organic cookie is still a cookie.  
| Bakehouse  | • If you see the Pilgrim’s “Made with Organic Ingredients” sticker, you can be sure that more than 70% of ingredients are organic and will be listed on the label.  

1316 N. 4th Street Coeur d’Alene • 208-676-9730 • PilgrimsMarket.com • open 9am-9pm
### Bulk Foods

- Organic bulk products can most often be identified by a bar just below the name of the product that reads “conventional” or “organic”. Choose “organic” and read labels carefully.

### Beer/Wine

- All organic alcohol beverages must meet both the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and USDA regulations. Labeling laws are similar, but different.
- Wines labeled “organic” or bearing a certified organic seal must follow the same agricultural standards (no GMOs or synthetic pesticides) and cannot contain added sulfites.
- Wines labeled “Made with Organic Grapes” must be made with 100% organic grapes and follow USDA organic agricultural standards, however, sulfur dioxide (up to 100ppm) can be added. If it is, it must be declared on the label.
- Beer labeled “organic” must meet all organic certification standards and contain only certified ingredient ingredients (excluding water).
- Beer labeled “Made with Organic Ingredients” can use non-organic hops, but the final product must contain at least 70% certified organic ingredients (excluding water).
- Between the red and white wine sections, you will find the “Sulfite-Free” and “Organic Wines” section. Organic beer is scattered throughout.

### Supplements

- New Chapter, Rainbow Light, Host Defense, Garden of Life and NOW are just a few USDA Certified Organic supplement lines that we carry.

### Health & Beauty

- Since health and beauty products are not intended for consumption, neither the USDA nor the FDA regulates them. Therefore, all labeling is voluntary.
- Products can follow USDA standards and be certified and labeled “organic”. They can also be certified by other agencies such as the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). See seal opposite.
- Acure and Andalou Naturals are popular organic brands at Pilgrim’s Market.
- Read labels carefully in this section. Sometimes there is no organic equivalent for an ingredient, making it impossible to be labeled “organic”, despite all other ingredients being organic.

### Prepared Foods

- If you see the Pilgrim’s “Made with Organic Ingredients” sticker, you can be sure that more than 70% of ingredients are organic and will be listed on the label.

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For More Information:


National Pesticide Information Center - [npic.orst.edu](http://npic.orst.edu)

Oregon Tilth – [tilth.org](http://tilth.org)

Center for Food Safety – [centerforfoodsafety.org](http://centerforfoodsafety.org)

Environmental Working Group – [ewg.org](http://ewg.org)

- Dirty Dozen™
- Dirty Dozen Plus™
- Clean Fifteen™
- Seafood Calculator

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch – [seafoodwatch.org](http://seafoodwatch.org)

This Shopping Guide was researched and written by Darci Barman, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist at Pilgrim’s Market and Pilgrim’s Wellness Clinic.