

Clean Eating Shopping

By Karen McCoy

As you learn to eat ‘clean’, you will inevitably experience the shopping dilemma – your trips to the grocery store become increasingly more frustrating. You may hear yourself say, “Now that I’ve learned about better food choices, where do I shop for all of this stuff? Where do I buy buffalo meat? What is spelt bread? What condiments are good choices? Where do I buy my greens drink? What about healthy snacks?”

Why is this happening? The answer is simple – *if you’ve changed your eating habits, you have to change your shopping habits*. Now that you’re eating clean, light, and healthy, you need to expand your shopping opportunities and start shopping with ‘fresh eyes’. Choose humanely raised meats, and clean fruits and veggies. It’s the decent thing to do!

Traditional Grocery Stores (*Safeway, Thrifty Foods, Great Canadian Superstore, Save on Foods, Sobey’s*). As you start eating clean and healthy, you’ll find your choices in the traditional shopping store changes – *you’ll be purchasing less, your cart will be half empty!* This is a good thing, and the first sign that you’re starting to eat a healthier diet. It means you’re moving away from the conventional, unhealthy eating style and encompassing a healthier way of eating. That’s because traditional/commercial stores do not offer an abundance of healthy foods, but if you learn a few rules, you can navigate your way through safely:

→ **Stick to the outer aisles of the store**, where you find the meats, eggs, fruits and veggies and dairy, your most plentiful purchases (remember, ‘live’ foods are where it’s at!). Your trips through the inner aisles will start to diminish, because they are mostly filled with processed and packaged products – cereals, crackers, soups, condiments, pastas, puddings, snacks etc. (Remember, if it has a label, it’s not a whole food.)

→ **Learn Your Labels** – get educated on healthy labels. More healthy foods are creeping into traditional stores like Safeway and Thrifty Foods every day. In my foray through the aisles, this is what I found. The following is a list of healthy brand names you can trust. (PS You’ll also find most of these foods in health Food stores, so don’t forget to check them out there!).

Healthy (Clean Zone) Foods:

- **Frozen Fruits and Veggies** – Earth’s Best (the fruit is great for smoothies!)
- **Frozen Ready-Made Dinners** – none
- **Frozen Pasta** – 3-Cheese macaroni cheese from O (Safeway organic) brand
- **Juices** (can or jar) – Knudsen, Santa Cruz, Ceres, Blue Sky
- **Juices (tetra boxes)** – Sun Rype 100% apple juice (no added sugars or concentrates, doesn’t apply to any other Sun Rype juices).
- **Soups** – Amy’s, Imagine, Campbell’s organic broths, Wolfgang Puck canned soups
- **Salads** – Earthbound Farm, Organic Girl
- **Rice** – Lundberg Rice – wild, jasmine, brown
- **Dressing** – Annie’s, Newman’s Own
- **Honey** – Babe’s Honey (made in Victoria)
- **Sauces** – Patak’s – chutneys, curry pastes, and stir fry sauces
- **Syrup** – Camp Pure Maple Syrup (remember, Aunt Jemima syrup has NO maple syrup in it at all!)

- **Sugar and Sugar Alternatives** – no natural alternatives yet, Roger’s Organic Sugar, Raw Plantation
- **Pasta** – Mrs. Leeper’s Pastas – wheat free, gluten-free corn spaghetti and rotelli
- **Milk** – none to date that is organic (sometimes Thrifty’s has it)
- **Milk alternatives** – Soy nice, Silk, Ryza (brown rice milk), Almond Breeze, Goat’s Milk (sometimes).
- **Cereals** – Kashi, Nature’s Path
- **Crackers** – Rice Crisps, Lavash, Margaret’s Artisans, Wasa all-rye
- **Meats** – Safeway: only organic meat is frozen bison patties and Spring Creek Bison Burgers. Thrifty Foods has bison meat (not certified but better than commercial beef).
- **Cold cuts** – none to date
- **Margarine** – Becel (non-hydrogenated, so safe to eat.)
- **Oils** – Filippo Berio organic Extra-virgin Olive Oil, Spectrum Naturals (sesame, canola, safflower, almond)
- **Breads and wraps** – (sometimes have sprouted Ezekiel wraps), Kinnikinnick breads and wheat free buns (found in freezer section), Brotman Rye Loaf –found in deli section.
- **Alternative meats** – Yves - Veggie Burgers and Tofu dogs
- **Eggs** – look for free range and/or Omega 3 eggs.
- **Yogurt** – Saugeen, Astro, Fraser Meadows are organic and filled with healthy bacteria. Don’t buy fruit-filled yogurt (it defeats the healthy bacteria). Add your own fruit.
- **Granola bars** – Kashi Chewy granola bars, Nature’s Path granola bars
- **Fruit cups** – Motts Fruitsations (unsweetened brand only)
- **Puddings** – none to date.
- **Nuts and seeds** – no organic to date
- **Spices** – none to date (are all irradiated).
- **Crispy snacks** – Barbara’s Cheese puffs, Kettle Chips
- **Nut butters** – Adams Peanut butter, Nuts 2 You, Maranatha
- **Coffee and Tea** – Salt Spring, Kicking Horse, Ethical Bean (coffee), Tea (Numi, Yogi)
- **Cleaners** – Seventh Generation, Ecco
- **Laundry detergent, dish soap, air fresheners** – none to date
- **Cosmetics, antiperspirants etc** – none to date
- **Toothpaste** – Tom’s
- **Body Care** – Avalon, Burt’s Bees
- **Feminine care** – none to date
- **Supplements** – Safeway (very little), Thrifty’s (because of their Health Shelf, they carry some decent lines. Only 6 stores on the Island have Health Shelf area).

A word about Safeway O Organic brand – Safeway now has over 300 brand name items that are USDA-certified organic. This includes sauces, condiments, spreads, pastas, milk, baby foods and more. While Canadian stores carry many of these items, there are many that are not yet here, as I was told during my interview that it is based on supply and demand. So, when we demand (more of) it, they’ll supply it! For more info on the Safeway O Organic brand, visit www.safeway.com/IFL/Grocery/o-organics.

Health Food Stores

We are blessed on Vancouver Island with having endless Health Food Stores to choose from, but many people are too intimidated to go inside. Don’t be. This is your first defence to health

eating. Here you'll find healthy breads, alternative grains, healthy cereals, unique nut butters, non-processed snacks, live juices, organic fruits, veggies, eggs and meats, and wholesome sauces, dips and condiments. It's a whole other world I strongly suggest you familiarize yourself with. Start small and build from there. Purchase just a few items and try them out. Ask the staff what to buy, and how they use them. Most staff are there because they live the life, so they're an untapped wealth of information. Use them to help expand your repertoire of healthy eating.

Some examples:

- Lifestyle Markets (Douglas St., Victoria and 5th St., Sidney)
- Planet Organic (MacKenzie and Quadra, Victoria)
- Red Barn (Mattick's Farm, Cordova Bay Rd. and West Saanich Rd., Victoria)
- Market on Yates (by Costco, Victoria)
- Island Naturals – Nanaimo, Metral Drive
- Community Farm Store – Duncan, Duncan St.

Organic meats – Red Barn Market, West Saanich Rd. and Mattick's Farm, Cordova Bay Rd. The best place for organic and traditional meats, cold cuts, sausages, cordons, patties, etc.

Local farms and markets

Local farmers markets are great for picking up quality fruits and vegetables (and some sell meat and dairy as well), at usually a fraction of the cost. And they also remind us to eat in season, one of the most important aspects to healthy eating, because eating in season keeps us healthy and in tune with nature, and keeps our digestion and immune system healthy and strong (ie we're not supposed to eat mangos in February). See *Local Farms Directory* and *Eating in Season*

While many local farms are not certified organic, buying local is often healthier than buying strictly organic. For example, if all you purchase is organic, then purchasing that organic strawberry from California has a carrying cost to the environment (4,000 km in gas and chewing up our roads). It also takes from your local community, and doesn't support your body's seasonal food needs. With local farms, we have the privilege of having a direct relationship with the farmer, and we can learn about their growing and farming methods.

A Final Word: Learn to shop at several stores - you won't be able to buy all your food at one store (sad, but true). Example - you won't find organic meats at Safeway or Costco, you won't find organic veggies at Costco, and you won't find wheat-free bakery items at any of them (there are *some* rice breads at Safeway and Thrifty's). **Personally, I shop at 4 or 5 different stores:** Mitchell's Farm, Thrifty Foods (or Safeway), Red Barn and Lifestyle Health Food Store. It works for me, and now that I've learned how, shopping's a breeze!

So try this on for size –purchase your local meats at **Red Barn** (Mattick's Farm) or **For Good Measure** (Cadboro Bay). (I buy meat for the month and freeze it.) Purchase alternative breads, wraps, flours, spreads, sauces, nuts, snacks, yogurt, and cereals at **Lifestyles** or **Planet Organic**, buy your fruits and veggies at your local **farmer's market**, and buy the rest (household items, toiletries etc) at **traditional stores** like Thrifty Foods, Safeway, or Canadian Superstore. It takes creativity and organization, but after awhile, it becomes second-nature. It's truly not a hardship!