

downside, Whole Foods has and continues to be quite anti-union, while the TPSS coop stores unionized about two years ago. At Shoppers Food Warehouse you can find a couple lower-priced (yet still organic/natural items). But, at such time that you have the financial flexibility to do so, would you rather buy organic/natural items from a store that treats them as a specialty item, or from a place where their core business is sustainable agriculture and healthy living?

No farms, no food

Farmers markets are certainly the best place to get the freshest and most local goods, and help keep our region's farmland in the hands of production, out of the hands

of sprawling development. I haven't been able to save much money at the Takoma Park market on Sundays, but I hear that Mike Tabor's Licking Creek Bend stand at Saturday's Silver Spring market has the best deals in the area. You can also save at the market by asking for bulk pricing, seconds, and buying foods that are in the peak of their season.

Make friends with a pressure cooker

You'll save time, money and energy by using a pressure cooker to cook dry beans, along with faster cooking on grains, soups, stews, even vegetables... the simpler and

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Cost comparisons				
Meal for Four	Shoppers	Whole Foods	TPSS (TP)	TPSS (TP)
Dry Black Beans (13 oz.)	\$1.86	\$0.81	\$1.13	\$0.97
Rice (12 oz.)	\$1.67	\$1.97	\$1.79	\$1.64
Sour Cream (8 oz.)	\$1.40	\$1.50	\$1.80	\$1.60
Carrots (4)	\$1.14	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0.90
Meal Total	\$6.27	\$5.09	\$5.71	\$5.30
Vegan Total (no sour cream)	\$4.87	\$3.60	\$3.92	\$3.50

Other items	Shoppers	Whole Foods	TPSS (TP)	TPSS (TP)
100% recycled non-chlorine bleached toilet paper*	\$0.016	\$0.018	\$0.023	\$0.022
organic Arrowhead creamy peanut butter (26 oz.)	n/a	\$6.69	\$5.89	\$5.89
"Organic Valley" sharp cheddar (8 oz)**	\$4.69	\$4.99	\$4.75	\$4.75
organic Stonyfield yogurt (32 oz.)	\$3.76	\$3.69	\$3.75	\$3.75
organic milk (gallon)	\$6.89	\$5.69	\$6.49	\$6.49
free-range eggs (dozen XL)	\$3.39	\$3.69	\$2.75	n/a
Organic free-range eggs (dozen XL)	\$4.49	\$3.79	\$3.85	n/a
organic butter	\$4.99	\$4.79	n/a	\$6.89

* sq ft price ** Whole Foods was 365 house brand

Overall I found TPSS Co-op Silver Spring store had the most items with the best prices, followed by Whole Foods. Each store had at least one item that was the lowest. And some items had only a few cents variation between stores.

The best way to save money is **adjust the type of food you buy, not necessarily where you buy it.**

Note: I used everyday prices, not sale items, including Co-op member prices. I used exactly the same items or most similar items and calculated comparable unit prices, as noted. I chose "green" versions (organic, recycled, free range). You could save more by choosing conventional items or artificially colored, flavored and sweetened items, but I did not include this in my survey.

Shoppers Food Warehouse
6881 NH Ave, Takoma Park

Whole Foods Market
833 Wayne Ave, Silver Spring

TPSS Co-op
201 Ethan Allen Ave, Takoma Park

TPSS Co-op
8309 Grubb Rd, Silver Spring

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