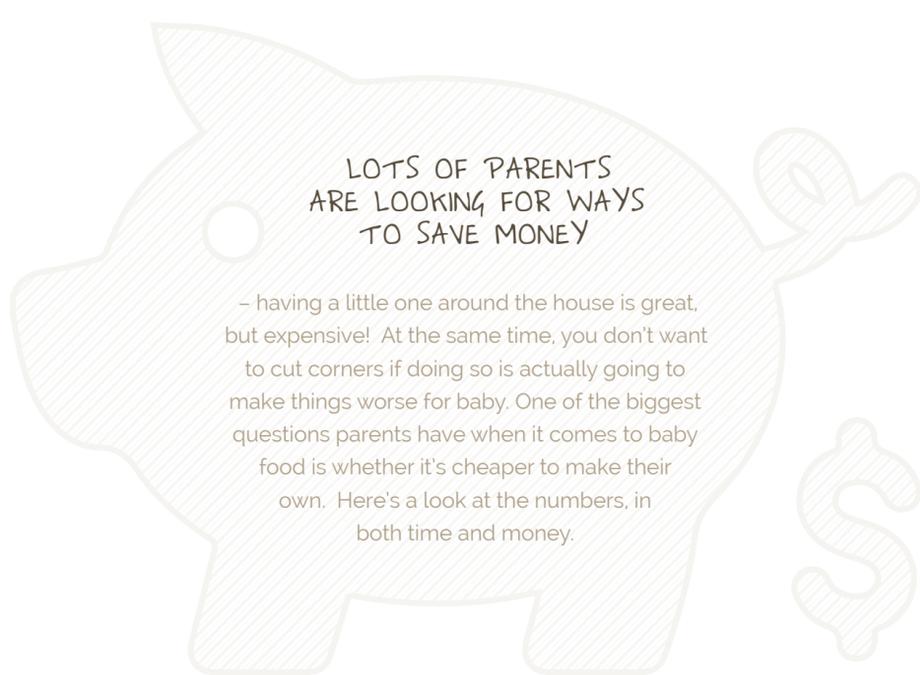


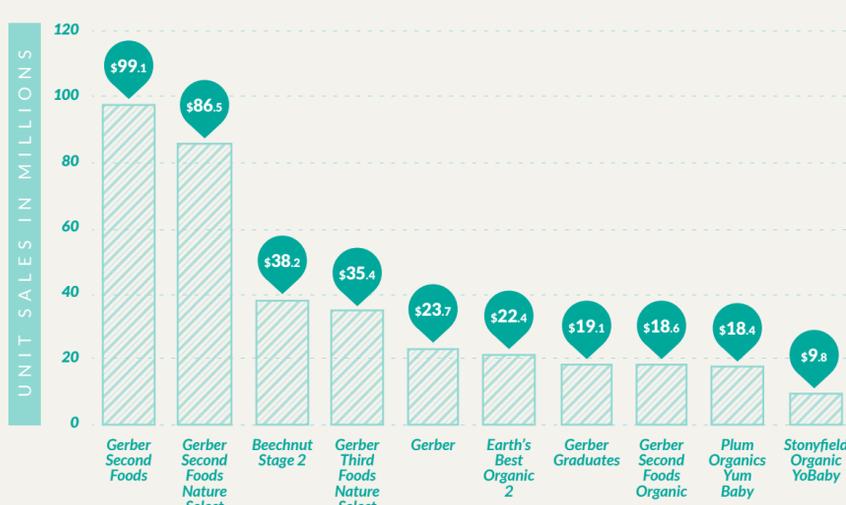
How Cost-Effective Is Making Your Own Baby Food?



LOTS OF PARENTS ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO SAVE MONEY

– having a little one around the house is great, but expensive! At the same time, you don't want to cut corners if doing so is actually going to make things worse for baby. One of the biggest questions parents have when it comes to baby food is whether it's cheaper to make their own. Here's a look at the numbers, in both time and money.

The statistic shows the unit sales of the leading baby food and snack brands of the United States in 2015. Gerber Second Foods was the leading baby food and snack brand in the United States with unit sales amounting to 99.1 millions in 2015.



Source: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/186129/us-unit-sales-leading-baby-food-and-snack-brands/>

Organic Vs. Non-Organic



Organic food is a little better in quality, but it's also more expensive. If you can afford organic baby food, whether you're buying premade food or the ingredients to make it yourself, it's not a bad idea – you're putting better stuff into your baby. Organic fruits and veggies aren't necessarily more nutritious, but they do have a smaller environmental impact.

Organic premade food tends to be about 25 cents more per package than non-organic. The prices on vegetables and fruits vary depending on what you're buying.

Time



Obviously, there's an investment in cooking your own baby food that doesn't exist if you buy it off the shelf: preparation time. Cleaning, boiling or steaming, and mashing or pureeing the ingredients takes a while, and depending on how busy the rest of your day is, you might think the cost of buying premade baby food as opposed to making it yourself is a worthwhile investment. On the other hand, by making the food yourself, you can make as much or as little as you need, as opposed to hoping you have enough jars handy to make it until you go shopping again. One hour's worth of work could feed your little one for up to a week!

The Cost Breakdown

You'll want to compare and contrast at your own grocery, so the math lines up with your actual expenses. It's also important to remember that while a jar of premade baby food will likely cover two servings, you can get ten or more servings' worth of meals out of a one-pound bag of carrots! If your baby eats more than three times a day, or likes big meals, you might find cooking your own food to your advantage regardless of the math.

On average, though, it is more cost-effective to buy the ingredients and put in the work yourself rather than buying premade baby food. One serving of organic premade food can run about 70 cents, where one serving of home-cooked organic ingredients is about 40 cents – nearly half the cost!

The Pros and Cons



Premade food isn't without its advantages – it stores for ages, it's extremely easy to pack up and take with you, and you know you're getting consistent food everywhere you go. On the other hand, premade food contains preservative, which can sometimes sap the nutritive content of the food, and who knows what other ingredients the manufacturer saw fit to throw in there.



Making your own food can come with a higher up-front cost, despite the eventual savings; it takes up a lot of room in the fridge and freezer, doesn't keep as long as store-bought baby food, and takes up a lot of your time in the prep stage. But you know exactly what you've bought to put in it, you get the benefits of fresh ingredients, you can make as much as you need so you don't run out, and you're not limited to the premade flavors – it's a great way to help baby try new foods and flavors.

If you're considering making your own baby food, weigh your options carefully and do a little price comparison, but don't dismiss it just because it sounds like a lot of work.

You might find it worth your while!