



## The Food Store

by Rich Belmont



The Food Store is advertised as Dubuque's Premier Natural and Organic Grocery and Deli. It's really much more than that. It's an exercise in healthy eating, a way of life, a lifestyle, really.

For foodies like myself entering The Food Store is a revelation. Almost everything in the place is labeled organic. In order to grasp the significance of this it is necessary to review the definition of organic food: food produced without conventional pesticides, petroleum or sewer-sludge based synthetic fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or ionization radiation. No insecticides or herbicides are used on crops and meat and poultry receive no antibiotics, growth hormones or feeds containing animal parts.

When you walk around The Food Store perusing all of the items for sale you will notice most of the products have brand names you never heard of. That's because most of them are organic. Some are certified by Quality Assurance International (QAI). Some are classified under the USDA National Organic Program (NOP). The rest are verified to be organic by the staff of The Food Store because they know the producers, manufacturers and farmers personally and know they all follow the standards for organically produced foods.

According to the NOP there are three organic categories:

1. 100% organic
2. Organic made with at least 95% organic ingredients.
3. Made with organic ingredients. This category requires a minimum of 70% organic ingredients with stringent restrictions on the remaining 30% including a requirement excluding all GMOs.



This grocery has been in Dubuque for more than 40 years. It first opened as Life Force Natural Foods. It was sold in 1983 and the name was changed to Breitbach's Farmer's Market Food Store. It was taken over by Mike Breitbach, his wife Pearl and his five children who continued to specialize in all foods organic, naturally and locally produced. Right from the start and to this day the store only sells organic beef, pork, chicken, turkeys and produce. All of their products are locally grown. Most originate in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The staff eats what they sell, they know their inventory and they welcome the opportunity to educate their customers. They are always willing to answer questions about food, medicinal herbs, cleansing, food sensitivities, organic growing and environmental politics.

David Estafen, Maple Breitbach and her brother Jackson (center) took control of the store in 2010 and renamed it The Food Store. Of course, Maple and Jackson already knew how to run the store because they literally grew up in Breitbach's Farmer's Market.



David came into Maple's life and was instrumental in developing the delicatessen. David began working in restaurants when he was 15 year old. He became an advocate of organic and natural foods when he worked at the Mustard Seed Market & Café in Akron, Ohio. That organic foods grocery and restaurant is the largest locally owned retailer of natural and organic products in Ohio. When David moved to Dubuque he cooked at 180 Main and Pepper Sprout. In fact, he credits Chef Kim Wolff of Pepper Sprout with teaching him the culinary skills he needed to run The Food Store deli he began developing in 2001.

When you walk around The Food Store for the first time you might get the impression the grocery is kind of small. Pretty soon, though, you will notice the variety of merchandise is amazing. Just to give you an idea you will find spices, nuts, coffee beans, tortillas, mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, butter, milk, cheese, eggs, ice cream, non-dairy frozen desserts, beef, pork, chicken, herbs, mineral supplements and an amazing assortment of fresh, locally grown vegetables.

To be sure, locally supplied foodstuffs are an absolute requirement in this



store. Some locally sourced suppliers include beef from Heacock Homestead Natural Meats, Bellevue, IA, free-range chicken from Larry Schultz Organic Farm, Owatonna, MN, Pork from Lange Farms, Platteville, WI, Organic Herbs & Spices from Frontier Natural Products CO-OP, Norway, IA and fresh vegetables from Small Family CSA Farm, La Farge, WI and Hideaway Gardens, Durango, IA (Operated by Michael Breitbach, the original owner of Breitbach's Farmer's Market Food Store.)



The Delicatessen is really a small restaurant designed for take-out. However, dining-in is also possible because there is a counter and six stools where you can eat as you look out the window. The Deli is a showcase offering examples of just how good organically grown and locally supplied foods can be. There is something for everyone. It doesn't matter if you are a meat-eater, vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant, casein or gluten sensitive. You will be delighted with the delicious choices available to you.

### The Food Store

1109 Iowa Street, Dubuque, IA 52001  
563-557-1777 • [www.DBQFoodStore.com](http://www.DBQFoodStore.com)  
[facebook.com/thefoodstore](https://www.facebook.com/thefoodstore)

**HOURS:** Mon - Fri : 9 am - 7 pm

Sat: 9 am - 5 pm Sun: 11 am - 5 pm

**DINING STYLE:** Take-out Deli & Natural & Organic Food Market

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Veggie Chili, Hummus Garden, Turkey & Avocado, Italian Beef, Grass-Fed Burgers, Burrito, Falafel, Tuna Wrap or Melt, Turkey Pesto

**LIQUOR SERVICE:** None

**PAY OPTIONS:** Cash, Checks, EBT, Debit, Major Credit

**ACCESSIBILITY:** Ramp to Front **KIDS POLICY:** High Chair **RESERVATIONS:** No **CATERING:** Yes **TAKE OUT:** Yes

**DELIVERY:** No **PARKING:** Metered on street



The Deli is well known for Jack's All-fruit Smoothies. They take a base of strawberries and bananas, add in seasonal fruits like pineapples, peaches, blueberries, nectarines and blend with organic orange juice. Many regular customers order a smoothie boost of kale/spinach, or Spirulina or Iowa Grown Aronia berries.

Spirulina is a spiral shaped algae used as a high quality protein supplement providing quick energy and nourishment. Aronia berries are better known as North American Chokeberries. They were an endangered plant until cultivated by the Sawmill Hollow Family Farms in Missouri Valley, IA. The Aronia berry's antioxidant content is 3 times greater than blueberries and 8 times greater than pomegranates.

The salads are always fresh and immensely enjoyable. Two that stand out are the House Specialty Beets, Beans and Greens. Beets are roasted in a rosemary balsamic dressing and are tossed with a dash of spice, navy beans, red onion, raisins and kale. The other one is Tabouli (Tabbouleh). It's a classic Lebanese salad of fresh parsley, spearmint, tomatoes, cucumber and onions tossed with quinoa and finished with lemon and extra virgin olive oil.

The tuna is just wonderful (wrap pictured below). You can order it in a salad or as a Tuna Avocado cold sandwich or hot tuna melt or even in a wrap. The tuna is described as sustainably caught and dolphin safe. It is labeled sustainable because it is caught with fishing poles or by trolling and not in nets.

A great cold sandwich is the Herbed Turkey and Avocado (pictured above). The flavorful turkey is placed in your choice of spouted grain bread or whole wheat wrap along with slices of fresh avocado, lettuce, sprouts, tomato and onion.



The Italian Beef is a true work of art. Slow roasted thinly sliced Top Round is rubbed with a dry spice of rosemary, Italian seasonings, coriander, paprika and a few other spices. This sandwich took 2nd place Favorite Entrée in the 2011 Taste of Dubuque.



I heartily recommend you enhance your culinary experience by visiting The Food Store often and trying the Daily Specials. Monday is Stir-Fry Day and Wednesday is Burrito Day. On Tuesdays you can explore new tastes because it's Indian Day. The Indian special varies week to week.



Last week it was Saag Paneer. Saag is creamed spinach made with finely chopped spinach, mustard greens, turmeric, cumin, garlic and masala spice blend. It is served with Paneer, a homemade non-melting farmer's cheese which is cubed and fried.



Thursday is Mediterranean Day. This is usually Falafel because it is so popular. Balls made from ground chickpeas, parsley and cilantro are deep fried. They are served either in a tortilla with lettuce and tomato or on a salad. David's Falafel was voted the 2012 Favorite Snack in the Taste of Dubuque contest!

The Friday special is Grass-fed Burger with fresh cut French fries cooked in organic coconut oil. Burgers and fries are available every day. They are served on sprouted-grain buns made from wheat kernels that are allowed to sprout and then ground up and baked into bread. Because the kernels are not ground into flour this kind of bread is often referred to as "flourless".



Fortunately for us, the Food Store is located right where the Dubuque Saturday Farmer's Market begins at the corner of 11th and Iowa Streets. This means you can stop by and enjoy the scrumptious Farmer's Market Breakfast before or after shopping. David stands ready to prepare your made to order omelet with all your favorite fillings like just picked tomatoes, onions, and peppers and organic eggs, cheese and butter. When you order the Omelet Plate you also get herb roasted potatoes, fruit salad and a chicken sausage. Stick around and be entertained by The Food Store's own Broken Rubber Band featuring David (when he is not cooking) and Mike, Jackson and River Breitbach.

Consumption of organic foods reduces exposure to pesticide residue and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Consumption of locally grown foods provides bolder, sharper and fresher flavors since the travel time and distance to market are reduced. (Conventionally grown produce travels on average 4 to 7 days and 1500 miles compared to locally grown produce shipped to market in typically one day and less than 100 miles).

Consuming organic, locally grown food from The Food Store satisfies the foodies' curiosity to experience new tastes while proving eating healthy is delicious and fun!