

- **Organic cotton vs regular cotton**
- **Regular cotton is extremely bad for the environment**
- **Regular cotton's impact on farmers' health**
- **Where is organic cotton grown?**
- **Environmental and humanitarian benefits of organic cotton**
- **Benefits of organic cotton clothing**
- **Improving farmers' health**
- **Organic cotton clothing eliminates allergies and rashes**
- **Organic cotton is the safest fiber for babies**
- **Is organic cotton softer than regular cotton?**
- **Is organic cotton more expensive?**
- **Disadvantages of organic cotton clothing**
- **Conclusion**

Benefits Of Organic Cotton: Why You Should Be Wearing This Sustainable Fiber

Although sustainability has long been a buzzword, during the last decade more and more fashion connoisseurs have been actively trying to take the eco-conscious route. Amidst the many beloved fabrics, organic cotton has been hailed for its softness, strength, and flexibility. The answer as to why lies in the benefits of organic cotton clothing. So, what makes this fiber reign supreme despite its seemingly high cost? Ahead is all the information you'll need to understand why organic cotton is the most splurge-worthy option when it comes down to all-year-round fashion stalwarts.

Organic cotton vs regular cotton

Most people are indeed wondering what is the difference between organic cotton and cotton. To start things off, both are organic fibers. The main difference is that organic cotton clothing is made without toxic chemicals. The life cycle of regular cotton begins with the growth of genetically modified seeds whereas, organic cotton grows naturally, without the use of GMOs.

Regular cotton is extremely bad for the environment

When considering what is the difference between organic cotton and cotton, all we have to do is take a glance at the stats. Global cotton production requires over 250 billion tons of water annually. Additionally, 43 million tons of pesticide-laden dust coming from regular cotton is blown into the air every year. Now on to the outstandingly bad part. Did you know that it takes 10,000 liters of water to produce 1 kilo of cotton? That's equivalent to 2,700 liters to make 1 cotton t-shirt. Now, let's take into consideration that 27 million tons of

cotton are produced globally in a year with more than US\$2 billion's worth of chemicals sprayed on the world's cotton crop yearly.

What's even more terrifying? A study of rainwater in a Brazilian cotton region discovered that rainwater contained 19 different pesticides (12 of which were used in cotton production).

By now, you've probably heard all about the ongoing environmental disaster that is currently happening in Uzbekistan but just in case you haven't heard the news yet, let's explain it. Every year, the country's billion-dollar cotton industry was responsible for enormous environmental destruction which also includes the draining of the Aral Sea. How, we hear you asking? Almost 20,000 liters of water are withdrawn from the Aral Sea for every kilogram of cotton harvested. What was then known as a 66,000 km² water body 50 years ago, has now shrunk to 10% of its former volume.

Regular cotton's impact on farmers' health

It goes without saying that regular cotton's impact on the environment is directly linked to the array of health issues cotton farmers and those who live around the regions suffer from. As Pesticide Action Network UK mentioned, "Nearly 1,000 people die every day from acute pesticide poisoning and many more suffer from chronic ill health."

Unfortunately, that doesn't even scratch the surface. The unethical nature of the cotton industry goes far deeper. The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) conducted an investigation of Uzbekistan's cotton fields in 2005. They discovered unremitting exploitation, multiple cases of rights abuses including the forced labor of tens of thousands of children, as well as the suppression of free media combined with the use of an array of intimidation and torture tactics by police. By now, you might be shaking your head in disbelief, but unfortunately, the humanitarian impact of regular cotton comes with a hefty price.

So, what can we do to change that? Opting for organic cotton is a great start. Unlike regular cotton, it comes with an array of eco-conscious benefits that don't compromise on quality, softness nor durability: enter organic cotton farming.

Where is organic cotton grown?

According to the Organic Cotton Farm and Fiber Report released by the Organic Exchange, 22 countries grow organic cotton with the fiber accounting for approximately 0.6% of all cotton in the world. You can find crops in Syria, Turkey, China, Tanzania, the United States, Uganda, Peru, Egypt, Burkina Faso, just to name a few of the top leading organic farmers

worldwide. As for the US alone, the [U.S. based Organic Trade Association](#) reported that U.S. grown organic cotton makes up for 2.1% of global organic cotton.

Cotton requires a warm climate with enough sunshine and moderate humidity. Once seeds turn into adult plants, they start to flower and then cotton bolls begin to form. The collection process begins approximately 180 days after sowing and can then be plucked by hand and stored in sacks or by utilizing air circulating containers. The best part? Since organic cotton production is chemical-free, it replenishes and maintains soil fertility to keep the circle of life.

Environmental and humanitarian benefits of organic cotton

Do you remember that global cotton production requires over 250 billion tons of water annually? Here is one of the most amazing environmental benefits of organic cotton: To produce an organic cotton crop, the farming process utilized approximately 71% less water than regular cotton as it mostly relies on rainwater for about 80% of needs.

The significant differences in the farming process result in less energy consumption. Organic cotton production saves energy as it does not require all the additional fertilizers that regular cotton requires to grow. Additionally, it also reduces tractor use. So, what's the outcome? Organic cotton uses 62% less energy than regular cotton and if you take into consideration the aforementioned water benefits, the resource usage is very limited.

Furthermore, organic cotton yields tend to be a lot smaller, but because the farming and production costs are far lower than regular cotton, the average profit margins are in fact higher ([between 4](#) and [30%](#) according to a recent field trial in India).

Benefits of organic cotton clothing

Arguably, the organic cotton benefits are many; everything starts with farming. The basic idea behind organic cotton farming is that crops are grown naturally without using fertilizers, pesticides, and other toxic chemicals. Unlike regular cotton, these trees are not sprayed or treated with any chemical. Organic cotton clothing is made with ethical organic farming methods that result in a more sustainable way of living.

Here are some key benefits of wearing organic cotton clothing:

Improving farmers' health

Organic clothing products are way safer for the farmers and for those who wear them on a daily basis. Since manufacturers adhere to very strict standards, cotton's negative impact on

the environment is minimized significantly. Furthermore, it ensures the highest customer. Studies presented by the [Centre for Sustainable Agriculture](#) in Andhra Pradesh, India have proven that growing organic cotton is cheaper than growing Bt Cotton since Bt Cotton is more prone to pest attacks.

Organic cotton clothing eliminates allergies and rashes

With synthetic fabrics comes the huge issue of allergies and skin irritations. Evidently, you don't need to have sensitive skin to understand that some fibers might cause anything from minor inconvenience to full-on allergy symptoms. Another one of the many benefits of wearing organic cotton clothing is they eliminate chemical retentions; hence those who suffer from allergies or have some specific sensitivities to certain fabrics will not get affected. If you ask any cotton clothing aficionado out there, you will most likely also get the answer that organic cotton styles simply smell a bit better than their natural cotton rivals.

Organic cotton is the safest fiber for babies

It's no coincidence that organic cotton clothing is one of the most recommended clothing materials for babies. After all, no one has more delicate skin which is prone to rashes than them.

While we are all familiar with the benefits of opting for organic food, the same thought doesn't always apply to organic cotton clothing as well. [Benzothiazole](#) and many of its derivatives are often used in regular cotton clothing that undergoes cyanine dyes, herbicides, insecticides, biocides, and fungicides spraying. It's a well-known skin allergen that can absolutely cause kidney and liver toxicity to people of all ages as well as respiratory and central nervous systems depression. And this is probably the biggest reason why organic cotton clothing's benefits should be taken advantage of by parents.

And if a certain fiber is good for their health, it's definitely equally harmless for ours.

Is organic cotton softer than regular cotton?

The short answer is YES and there is a pretty easy explanation behind the fact that organic cotton is softer than regular cotton.

In order to understand how pure cotton fibers really are, we need to take a look at the way they were picked. While regular cotton is either hand-picked or, most of the time, machine-picked, organic cotton is completely hand-picked. What does that mean exactly?

By opting for this eco-friendly fiber, you will be sure that the purity of every fiber is up to part since the hand-picking process ensures that no fiber is damaged in the harvest.

Regular cotton on the other hand, like we previously established, is in very high demand. The fiber is usually machine-picked to cope with the needs of every company, hence it interferes with the purity of the fibers, and also damages them during the picking process. So, yes, organic cotton is way softer than regular cotton clothing because of the longer fibers. That's truly the greatest part of the hand-picking process; it ensures these fibers don't get weakened or broken, which furthermore proves organic cotton's softness and durability promises.

Is organic cotton more expensive?

Granted, organic cotton is expensive - at least a bit more expensive than regular cotton. The answer as to why is, again, fairly simple. Even though the farming and production costs are far lower, which greatly helps the local farmers, consumers might come across a bigger price tag.

Most importantly, the price of organic cotton is higher due to the intensive labor. Since no herbicides and pesticides are used, farmers hand hoe every cotton crop to get rid of weed growth during the production process.

It's a well-known fact that organically grown plants typically produce less yield. This greatly affects the supply and demand as there is way less organic cotton available than regular cotton. Contrary to regular cotton, there will also be a lack of organic cotton supply in the market and that is what drives up the price.

On top of everything, there are always the certification costs of organic cotton clothing. Testing for compliance and certification is expensive, especially if you take into consideration that those certifications should be renewed every year. GOTS certified organic cotton, for example, is often 20-30% more expensive than regular cotton. If you truly want your newly-purchased items to be not only safe for your health but also help protect the environment along with the ethical garment products industry, investing in organic cotton clothing might be the best option for you.

Last but not least, even though this natural fiber tooted for its quality and ethical nature, everything, including organic cotton, comes with a few disadvantages.

Disadvantages of organic cotton clothing

Evidently, organic cotton farming requires more land. According to WWF, some of the world's biggest cotton producer countries already use 2.4% of the farmable land in order to grow regular cotton. The lack of chemicals used in organic cotton farming often requires more seeds as they are prone to pest attacks with no way of defending the land without the use of toxins. So, organic cotton farming in the aforementioned countries would require 25% more land. Frankly, sometimes there is simply not enough space for it.

Another disadvantage of organic cotton clothing is arguably the price difference we mentioned earlier. While having strong, durable, and long-lasting staples in your wardrobe arsenal is the easiest way to create an all-year-round capsule wardrobe that is simply timeless, some consumers don't have the means to invest in organic cotton clothing regularly.

One of the main disadvantages of organic cotton clothing is also the high manual labor input required. However, despite the hard work that goes into organic cotton farming, it has tremendously improved the livelihoods of small-scale farmers.

Lastly, organic cotton clothing, due to the non-toxic dyes, doesn't provide multiple shades of colors that can be found in regular cotton. There are many hue options to choose from, however, when it comes to extra bright shades which result from the use of formaldehyde, there is certainly a lack of options.

In conclusion

Admittedly, no fiber is 100% sustainable. Nonetheless, organic cotton clothing is a greater eco-friendly solution than regular cotton and synthetic fabrics. The organic cotton advantages are many, including chemical-free, ethical production environments, and significantly lower energy consumption. Unlike regular cotton, organic fibers are safe for the skin. Even though the price is higher, organic cotton is arguably the best option if you take into consideration the tremendous environmental and humanitarian costs that come with regular cotton farming and manufacturing.

*Written by Konstantina Antoniadou for Thalia Barrera and thetechfashionista.com
Published on: <https://thetechfashionista.com/organic-cotton-clothing-benefits/>*