

How to Start a



101

Renee Tougas

Copyright

How to Start a Food Buying Club 101

Renee Tougas

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Cover artwork by Laurent Tougas.

Dedication

For Adi Fairbanks.

Thank you Adi for creating such a fabulous resource at foodclub.org. You have saved food buying clubs everywhere countless hours on administrative and organizing tasks. *You have saved me countless hours on these tasks.* You rock.



Saving money on good food

The main reason people start and join buying clubs is to save money on their food costs. There are other reasons - building community is a big one - but most of us are concerned with the bottom line. Saving money on our food.

Now that doesn't mean buying club folks are a bunch of cheapies. Many of us prioritize spending more on food because we value local, organic, and sustainably grown foods. We just want to find a deal like everyone else. And those of us who value community in addition to all of that (they really go together - good food and good community) see buying clubs as a win-win.

I'm going to start this little e-book with the premise that good food is not cheap. Nourishing your body with high nutrient foods - whole, unprocessed, and rich in antioxidants, phytochemicals and all that good stuff your cells need - costs more per calorie than filling your belly with nutrient deficient processed foods.

Without going into the politics and economics of our food supply (government regulations and control, subsidies, supply and demand) it's safe to say anyone who has compared the prices of conventional vs. organic, local vs. non-local, whole vs. processed, brown rice vs. white - you get the idea - knows that eating well can be a stretch on the budget.

So what is a health focused, budget conscious cook to do?

There are lots of things you can do to stretch your food dollars: grow more of your own food, connect with local growers, and take advantage of seasonal deals. I've done all of these through the years and they have been written about in many places.

These strategies work especially well for foods grown in your community. But what about the foods you regularly eat that aren't grown locally - beans, grains, coffee, oils, etc?

The best strategy I know to source these staple goods at cheaper prices is to buy in bulk. Now please understand something, by cheap I don't mean taking advantage of growers and producers for my benefit. I simply mean less-than-regular retail cost.

Most stores, however, don't sell bulk quantities to individuals. You need to go to a distributor to access the good deals. But distributors don't usually sell to individuals. **To gain access to a distributor you need to form a buying club.**

A simple definition:

A buying club is a group of people who come together to order goods in bulk. Ordering collectively direct from a distributor or producer, they save money over regular retail prices.

Defining Bulk

Many of us think buying in bulk is scooping dry goods from a bin at the health food store. That is a form of bulk buying and is usually cheaper, not to mention more environmentally friendly, than buying a similar item pre-packaged. For the purposes of this e-book, however, when I refer to bulk I mean buying large quantity packages directly from the distributor or store.

A brief note about warehouse type stores

You know the ones - Costco, BJ's, Sam's Club and the like.

It is true that these stores carry bulk quantities of many goods. Some folks avoid big-box stores for philosophical reasons - the changes they bring to communities, the environmental impact of such large parking lots, etc. Other people, believe it or not, do not have access to such large discount stores. I am one of these people. There are no big-box stores where we live, which is one of the reasons we love our community.

2 Is it really cheaper?

Just because you are buying direct from a distributor does not mean each item sold by that distributor is cheaper than the grocery store counterpart. I am a price checker. I know and compare the price per unit of nearly everything I buy for our home - especially groceries, household, and personal care products.

I have included a master price list template in the *Resources* section of this book for you to do your own price comparisons on the items you usually buy.

When you start to compare prices you will see that ordering from a buying club is cheaper for some foods and household purchases. For other items it might be more expensive. Usually bulk grains and beans, especially organic, are cheaper than the grocery store or health food store options. I have found this to be true also for coffee, tea, pasta, dried fruits, nuts and other pantry staples. Your research may prove different depending on where you live and what distributors deliver in your area.

Sometimes, I will choose to purchase an item through the buying club because it is better quality, even if the price is higher; olive oil for example. Other times I will choose the grocery store for price and availability; toilet paper for example.

My experience comparing buying club prices to big box stores, grocery stores, and health food stores is that **buying clubs can save you money** without compromising quality or taking advantage of someone (cheap food because of cheap labor).

But like all things in life, you either spend time or money. **And in the case of buying clubs the cost savings come with a certain time commitment.**

Building community:

Although I'm writing primarily about buying clubs as a way to save money, just as important in my mind is the community building aspect.

Buying clubs bring together a local group of people for the purpose of helping each other. In this case helping each other with one of our most basic needs - sourcing food.

I LOVE this dynamic of buying clubs. There is security in community and the more we work to build that, wherever we live, the better quality of life we have. It's not just about the food we eat but the relationships we build also.

If big-box stores are in your shopping routine you may not find buying clubs to be that much cheaper but you may find them to be a more pleasant community-building, shopping experience. Minus the free samples.

3 Three different models

Up until quite recently I lived in Maine, a lovely place in the northeastern corner of the United States. We were there for nine years. It was in this beautiful state, living "the way life should be", where I first experienced buying clubs.

In the beginning, I joined an existing group. After a few years of this, I started my own club. And finally, I worked with a small group of people to start a Maine-foods buying club in our community.

I was so sold on the experience of buying clubs that when we left Maine to move back to Canada, finding a buying club was one of the first things I looked for in my new community. When I couldn't find one I helped start one.

Buying clubs have been a big part of how our family buys food.

There are many different ways to run a food buying club. I share my years of experience with buying clubs below and offer three examples of how you might start and operate your own club.

a Small group ownership

I started my journey with buying clubs by joining one. This was achieved through the age old means of "making the right connections". I give tips in the *Getting Started* section following this one for how you might make connections in your own community.

After a couple years participating in this club I started my own, as a kind of offshoot from the one I belonged to. (In the *Resources* section I've included an e-mail template from this experience.) This is a fairly common buying club practice - the group grows too large and smaller cells break off to start another one.

The buying club I operated was not a collective group project. The minimum monthly order was low enough that our family of five could order directly from the distributor, without a group. However, a larger group allowed me to share the ordering fees (many distributors charge fees and delivery surcharges for small orders). Plus, I wanted to do this as a service to my community. **To help other families access bulk buying opportunities.**

In this case, I ran and directed the club, without collective participation. I did ask for help with dividing the order and doing some of the bookkeeping. Even though I did a lot of the work it was still worth it for me because the groceries were delivered right to my door and we could order on a schedule that worked for me.

I didn't charge any fees to the members, except those that were charged to me by the distributor. I kept things very simple, using an [on-line ordering system](#) and my own checking account.

It was a small group that I co-ordinated and directed. This can work well depending on your personal strengths (you need to be organized), your overall goals and time you can commit. **There was definitely a time commitment for me but the pay off - groceries delivered to my door, ordering on my schedule, helping friends and community members, as well as the cost savings - was worth it.**

I really liked operating this little buying club and if you intend to do something similar here are a few lessons I learned and things you might want to consider:

- **Know your skills and strengths.** I'm good at organizing, managing money, and leading a group of people so the small group ownership model worked well for me. It might not for everyone. If you want to start a similar, small club you could do so with a close friend and make it a team effort should you not feel comfortable managing it yourself.
- **Identify your goals.** Mine were to save money and serve my community in a capacity that worked well with being a busy mother and homeschooler. Running this group from home worked really well to achieve those goals.

- **Use technology.** The quaint, old-fashioned method of print catalogs, once a month meetings in a living room, penciling in orders on lined paper may work for some, but not for me. I used an e-mail group for all communications. If someone wanted to divide an order of nuts, beans, or grains they sent an e-mail to the group. We used the free software at foodclub.org to compile our orders.
- **Keep things small.** When I started to stress out about the club it was because it was growing too big. 10 families or household groups was pretty much my limit, considering that not everybody ordered every month. When it got too big I split it, largely along geographical lines since staying connected with people who lived in my actual neighborhood, or close to it, was important to me. When new people would contact me about joining I directed them to the offshoot groups. I split the group twice and had to do some training along with this.
- **Ask for help.** You might ask for help right from the start, setting up a more collective group. I learned to ask for help when I needed it. Members wanted to contribute in some way and appreciated being given specific, discreet tasks.

A buying club business

After we left Maine we lived in Nova Scotia for a time and I ordered some food and household goods through the [buying club my mom belonged to](#).

This was a business-model buying club, operated on a similar premise to the one I ran in Maine, but on a much larger scale and with a price mark up that was collected by the club owner.

I only did this for a few months before we moved again to our current community but I made the following observations:

- **Prices were still competitive**, even with the mark up. Like I've already stated, not everything is cheaper in a buying club. If you're pinching pennies you'll have to check prices and not just assume.
- **It still felt like community building.** Even though the club owner essentially ran a small business, perhaps no different from a little health food store, it felt like I belonged to something. And picking up the order at her home, bumping into other locals with common interests (buying club people are my tribe) just felt good.
- **This is the perfect option for people pressed for time.** A collective buying club requires a time commitment that not everyone can afford. If you join a club like this (if you can find one), you support a small business owner and receive quality groceries (often for a cheaper price) in return.

I've found a few on-line "food club businesses" that are operated in a similar fashion to this, just on a much bigger scale. I've included a Canadian one in the *Resources*. What they lack, however, is the community building aspect which may or may not be important to you.

Buying club collective

After a few years of running my own small buying club (using the *Small group ownership* model described above), I got together with some local, like-minded folks to start a collective, membership-run buying club.

This is the most traditional of the various buying club models (there are definitely more models than the three I discuss in this e-book).

Right from the start our focus was community building, group participation, and food security. This was a group with explicit goals. We wanted to start a club that could accommodate a large number of members (we wanted access for many) while tapping into an amazing and unique [Maine products distributor](#).

This club was formed in the very traditional way of a group of people with a common vision getting together to form a collective. We each took on various membership roles - treasurer, order co-ordinator, membership co-ordinator, community liaison, break down co-ordinator, meeting chairperson, etc.

We held meetings, opened a bank account, fumbled our way through policies and procedures, wrote a mission statement, set membership dues, collected membership dues, refunded membership dues when people left. Not all in that order. Oh, and we actually ordered some amazing Maine grown food too!

This particular model places significant emphasis on community building. It also has the potential to be labor intensive for the founding members, until new members come onboard and start contributing.

The goal, besides accessing good food, is to distribute the work equitably over the long term among the members. People do different jobs at different times but everyone should contribute somehow. There are always people who join groups but don't contribute. That's the reality of it. If you go this route be prepared to overlook that but don't take this on as an unpaid part time job either (unless you want to). That's what "community" is for - to share the load.

Here are a few things I learned from being involved in this type of club:

- **Everyone has something to offer and a different way of doing things.** This is the strength of a group - its diversity. Seek ways to engage members with their given talents, resources, and time. Be willing to overlook their weaknesses. Really, people dynamics are a huge part of this kind of buying club.
- **Don't wait for it to be perfect.** It won't be. People aren't perfect and it might be a bumpy road, especially if you are all new to this. Get the bare minimum done and then start ordering. You'll learn to work out the kinks as you go.
- **Start small.** You might have grand goals and those are awesome but it's easier to work out the kinks if you have a small group to start.

- **Manage the money well.** Maybe this is just my bias as a bean counter, but as soon as you start dealing with other people's money you need to be careful. Have someone trustworthy as the money manager.
- **It takes time.** Over a year passed from our first meeting, one hot summer day in my kitchen, till our first order. Organizing a group of people is not always very efficient (smile). If you are anxious to get ordering from a distributor you could experiment with the first two options (joining a business model group and/or starting a small group yourself) while building a collective model buying club.

Many of the points I made in the first model also apply here, just on the group level. Especially the first three - **know your skills and strengths, identify your goals, and use technology.**

There are, no doubt, other models and variations on those models for starting a buying club. These three are examples I can speak about from experience.

Getting started

So you've got to this point and I haven't scared you yet with the potential pitfalls, time commitment, and relationship dynamics of starting a buying club. You want the goods, you want to save money and maybe you're even excited about building and supporting community.

That's great. Now what?

1. Define your goals

- Are you focused only on cost?
- Do you want to buy from local companies and producers?
- Do you want to provide a service? Build community?
- Do you want to establish a small business?

Answering questions like these will point you in the direction of where to find distributors and where to look for people who might want to join.

2. Find a Distributor

I've included a list of distributors in the *Resources* section coming up. (Thanks Adi at foodclub.org for getting me started on this list.) There are probably more small scale distributors in your local area also.

Dealing with distributors:

Buying food from a distributor is not the same as buying from a grocery store or on-line retailer. Distributors are not marketing to people the way retail stores do. The shelves aren't organized with an eye catching array of goods, it's not clear at first glance what's in stock, and not just anyone can walk in off the street and buy something.

Dealing directly with a distributor is a different experience and it may take some getting used to. And not all distributors will be used to dealing with small buying clubs either. Distributors will charge different fees depending on the size of the club, size of orders, transportation costs, etc. Don't be discouraged just because it doesn't look easy from the start. The best advice I have for you is to simply ask questions. If the distributor you contact doesn't deliver to small buying clubs ask if they know of another distributor that does.

3. Find people

You probably have a small group of people in mind that you might want to ask to join the club. Friends from church or work. Neighbors, co-workers, parents of your children's friends. Start asking around.

Once you've tapped out people you know and if you still need more members, make up a flyer and post it in public places like the community bulletin board at your library or town hall. Send out an e-mail to friends asking them to forward it to their contacts (if they think people might be interested). Try Craigslist or other online meeting places. Need I mention Facebook? Send an e-mail to your homeschool support group.

If you are simply trying to *find a group*, not start one - try the same options I listed above, asking if people know of someone with a buying club. Talk to the people who work at the local health food store. Go to the alternative schools (Montessori, Waldorf, etc) or homeschoolers in your area. Not to stereotype, but from my observations families that choose alternative schooling are often "buying club" type people.



A sample scenario

Let's walk through a sample scenario of what it might look like to start a buying club, step by step. Your situation will be different but this will give you an idea of the procedures you'll follow.

You **decide you'd like to start a *small group ownership* model buying club**. You're correct in thinking that next to joining one, this is the easiest place to start.

You **identify your goals as saving money on the goods you usually buy at your small local health food store and accessing other products that aren't available in your area**. Some day you'd like to expand to sourcing more food and products produced in your state, but for now you're just learning so you decide to keep things simple.

You **enlist the help of a friend, with similar food values, to get the buying club going**. He says he'll take care of advertising and finding members. He'll help you unload and sort the orders when they are delivered. But first you need to find a distributor.

Using the resources in this book, you **search for a distributor in your state**. You are having troubles finding a distributor that delivers to your community so you ask the order manager at the small local health food store what companies they order from.

You **find a distributor that delivers to your area**. They don't carry all the goods you were hoping to buy but you realize this is better than nothing. And also, you hope that once you are in the "buying club" loop you may learn of more distributors. Small steps are better than none at all.

You **follow the distributors requirements for setting up an account**. The distributor requires signatures from other founding members, they want to verify this is a non-profit entity. They also require a group bank account, so you open a low fee checking account for this purpose. (This is a fictional scenario, don't let this step freak you out, just a heads up that you may want to open a separate bank account for your club.)

With the help of your friend, you **find eight households who are interested in joining your buying club**. These families have never been members of a buying club before and you need to explain to them how it will work. You set up a google e-mail group to make it easier to correspond with the whole group.

You **explain to the group how buying clubs work and the distributor you are ordering from**. (You recommend this book for people who want more details.) You explain the types of goods the distributor sells, the ordering procedure, the minimum amount to place a group order, and the financial particulars (distributor fees, when the payment is due, etc.)

Time to get serious about setting up an account on foodclub.org. You take the time to familiarize yourself with the software. You set up an admin account on the site. You contact Adi about **importing the text file of the distributor's catalog into foodclub.org's database**. Since the distributor's prices change each month, this import will have to happen before each new order.

A couple members of your group want to regularly split large bulk bags of the more expensive items - dried fruit, nuts, and seeds. Foodclub.org has a splits feature for placing orders. **Members agree to help on a rotation basis to split up the order when it is delivered**.

You're ready to place your first order. Because you are a brand new buying club your distributor requires you to pay in advance of delivery for the first six orders.

You **test the order procedure at foodclub.org** to thoroughly familiarize yourself with the process.

You **send a notice to the buying club with the deadline for your first order.** (Give people at least three weeks at the start.) You **ask the members to get acquainted with foodclub.org.** You provide them with instructions about how to order based on your experience there.

At the deadline you don't have quite the minimum needed to place an order with your distributor. You send an e-mail to the group asking if anyone wants to split a case of 12 jars of organic coconut oil. You get enough interest, you add the coconut oil, and you meet the minimum order.

You **print the final order and fax it to the distributor.** That same day you mail a check from your club account for the order total.

Twelve days later, on your distributor's weekly route through your area, **the order is delivered** to your friend's house. You choose his house as the delivery address because he works at home so he can meet the delivery driver and also he has a big freezer with room to store frozen deliveries.

You meet your friend at his house the afternoon of the delivery. You print all the member's individual orders and **sort the delivery according to what each person ordered.** Several items were not delivered but the distributor has not charged you for those items. Your account now has a credit.

Later that week, using foodclub.org, **you reconcile the distributor's invoice with order you submitted.** You generate an updated invoice for each member. A couple members have credits towards their next order.

You **send out an e-mail to the group with pick up details.** You let them know about the out of stock items and which members have credits on their account.

The first order is picked up. Your basement shelves hold large bags of oats, beans, and rice. Your kids are munching on the organic dried apricots that were on sale this month from the distributor. **You're a happy buying club member.**

You get an e-mail from a member that an item they got isn't what they ordered...

And so it goes. I can't walk you through every buying club scenario. You will encounter challenges - it may be difficult to find a distributor, items will be out of stock (something always is), members will want to return wrong items (most distributors have procedures for this), and other members won't pay on time. You will find routines and systems to work all these things out.

Remember - work with the strengths of the people in your group.

I invented this scenario from the many years of experience I have with buying clubs. Every club is different, each distributor is different. This scenario is to simply serve as an example of how to get started and to get you going in the right direction.

Summary:

- Talk to people
- Find a distributor
- Get organized - finances, ordering procedures, etc.
- Familiarize yourself with foodclub.org
- Make your first order
- Figure it out as you go

Before you know it you'll be turning people away from your club, or better yet teaching other people how to start their own buying club.



A buying club alternative

When we first moved to our current community I had zero connections. There was a lot I had to figure out, a new language for one, and I just didn't have the energy, resources, or relationships to start a buying club right away.

Since those first few months I'm happy to report I've made friends with like-minded folks and found a group of people who were interested in starting a buying club with me. I am an active buying club member once again.

While I was looking, though, to join or start a club, I found another option - **buying bulk directly from the health food store.**

We live in a fairly rural community but we are blessed with a good health food store. Not cheap mind you, but a good selection. Instead of buying my pantry staples - especially grains, nuts and seeds - in the small packages on the shelves, I asked if I could order bulk quantities at a discounted price.

It turns out my health food store does this for other customers also and it's a fairly common practice. It's something to look into if you don't have a lot of distributor options available to you.

6 Resources

a Links

Based on my own experience, I have tried to write a beginners guide to starting a buying club. But obviously my experience is limited. I did a bit of research and found these other articles and sites to help you.

- [How to Start a Buying Club from Scratch](#) published by Crown of Maine.
- [A Cooperative Food-Buying Club Primer](#) by Lucy Watkins, published at VegFamily.
- [What's a Buying Club?](#) published by Associated Buyers, the distributor I ordered from in Maine.
- [Start a Buying Club](#) - questions and answers.
- [Organic Consumers Association](#) Join or start your own buying club.
- [Eat It.ca](#) - Canada's online organic store.



Distributors

This list is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

Associated Buyers <http://assocbuyers.com/>

All of New England and parts of New York (United States)

Aux Mille et Une Saisons <http://www.auxmilleetunesaisons.ca/>

Québec and Eastern Canada

Azure Standard <http://www.azurestandard.com/>

Truck delivery to Pacific Northwest and Northern Midwest (United States);
UPS shipping worldwide

B & B Organics <http://bborganics.com/>

Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio (United States)

BD-Totaal <http://www.bd-totaal.nl/>

Europe, Netherlands

Black River Produce <http://www.blackriverproduce.com>

Vermont, New England (United States)

Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods <http://www.bobsredmill.com/>

Pacific Northwest (United States); ships products worldwide

Coopérative d'Alentour <http://www.alentour.qc.ca/en-distribution.htm>

Québec (Canada)

Crown of Maine <http://crownofmainecoop.com/>

Maine (United States)

Frankferd Farms<http://www.frankferd.com/>

Mid-atlantic region, centering around western Pennsylvania (United States)

Frontier Natural Products<http://www.frontiercoop.com/>

United States national distribution; ships products worldwide

Garden Spot<http://www.gardenspotdist.com/>

Northeastern United States

Grainworks<http://www.grainworks.com>

Western Canada

Horizon Distributors<http://www.horizondistributors.com>

Western Canada

Hummingbird Wholesale<http://hummingbirdwholesale.com/>

Pacific United States

J & J Distributing<http://www.jjdst.com/produce>

Northern Midwest (United States)

Ontario natural Food Co-op<http://onfc.ca>

Ontario & Central Canada

Organically Grown Company<http://organicallygrown.com/>

Pacific Northwest (United States)

Speerville<http://www.speervilleflourmill.ca/>

Maritimes (Canada)

Tree of Life<http://www.kehe.com/treeoflife/WhoAreWe>

Nationwide (United States)

Tree of Life - Canada

<http://www.treeoflife.ca/>

(Canada)

Tuscarora Organic Growers

<http://tog.coop/>

Mid-atlantic region, centering around D.C.

Metro (United States)

UNFI Natural Foods

<https://www.unfi.com/>

Pacific Northwest (United States)



Food buying club invitation template

Dear friends,

As some of you may know, our family are members of a food buying club. We've been members of this club for the last couple years and as we have told friends and acquaintances about the buying club they have expressed interest in joining. We are starting our own buying club and are inviting you to join.

The distributor we are buying from is (_____). This is their website: (_____). We hope to place an order once every month or every 6 weeks. This will depend on how many products the group as a whole buys. A minimum order is (_____) for the entire group. We will order as often as we can meet the minimum. Members do not need to order each month to belong to the buying club.

These are the basics of how ordering, payment and delivery will work:

Each member (individual, household, family, etc) will place their order using a web based ordering system. This system allows you to search for items, see the price, add to your "cart", etc. A pdf file of the current catalog will be available each month from the distributor. You can use this pdf file to familiarize yourself with what the distributor sells.

The online ordering system will combine our individual orders together to make one big order. This large group order will be managed by (_____). The distributor will deliver to (_____) and (_____) will be responsible for sending in the order, meeting the delivery driver, and helping unload the order.

Payment is due when you place your order. Payable by check, cash or Paypal.

Because we are a new buying club, (the distributor name: _____) charges us a (_____%) service fee. As a group, if we order more than (\$_____) per year that fee will be reduced. This fee will be divided equally and added to each member's order.

Depending on the size of the order we may request help with sorting and set up a sorting rotation - if necessary.

I think this covers the basics. There are a few more specific details about how the on-line ordering works, delivery days and how we can split large orders. We will address those in greater detail with those who are interested in joining.

Please respond to this e-mail if you want more information or want to join.

Also, we are not charging any fees or making any money by doing this. Our family depends on these quality products at bulk prices and the best way for us to continue to buy them is to start a buying club. We hope it will benefit your household as well and help you on the path towards healthier eating.

Sincerely,



Master price list

The master price list has been created to help you compare prices between multiple stores, buying clubs, etc. Sections have been created for each major grocery category. It is up to you to fill in the individual items and their prices. The form is very easy to use, here is an example:

Baking & Extracts	IGA		Buying Club		
	\$	\$/unit	\$	\$/unit	
Organic Cocoa Powder	6.00	8 oz	12.00	3 lbs	10.00

Acknowledgements

As always, I am indebted to friends with sharp eyes and constructive feedback. Thank you Kyce Bello and Krista O'Reilly-Davi-Digui J.

And to all the folks I've shared the buying club experience with over the years, thank you for building community around good food.

About the Author

Renee's personal mission is to nourish, encourage and teach; build relationship and create beauty. Renee nourishes her family and the friends and strangers that gather round her table, by cooking and serving healthy plant-based food from her always bustling kitchen.



She has used buying clubs to source much of this food for nearly a decade.

In addition to being the resident Tougas family chef, Renee is a homeschooling coach and teacher, avid hiker and backpacker, and author of the e-books [Nurturing Creativity: A Guide for Busy Moms](#), and [Eat This: Meal Salads & Whole Food Dressings](#).

Fresh and honest, Renee's blog [FIMBY](#) is a story of intentional family living. With an encouraging voice and beautiful photography, Renee inspires mothers, homemakers, and homeschoolers to live creative, healthy, and joyful lives.

Together with her husband Damien, she founded the blog [Outsideways](#), where the Tougas family chronicles their many outdoor adventures and offers support and encouragement for living outside the box.

Renee is available for freelance writing, coaching and speaking on healthy, adventurous and creative family living. She can be reached at renee@tougas.net.