



BABY GOURMET

Adults everywhere are taking the organic high road. We eschew all things packaged with absurdly long shelf lives and odd colorings that sound much more like top-secret military code than something we'd like to ingest. We've begun poo-pooing the very modern conveniences – like plastics, styrofoams and preservatives – that made our lives easier for so long, in favor of the biodegradable, the organic and the über fresh. You would certainly never eat another irradiated, anemic-looking carrot, but what about your baby?

Of course not. That would be absurd.

That's the idea behind pomme bébé, a hipster baby food bar recently opened in Newport Beach by Svetla Kibota. The Bulgarian countryside where she grew up was a place of seasonal fruits and vegetables grown in actual gardens and where the term "organic" nearly always implied an oxymoron. Kibota's childhood experiences with "real" food saw her grow into an adult who craved the same flavors – and health benefits. Now a mother of a 16-month-old, Kibota believes her daughter deserves the same chemical- and pesticide-free nutrition, and the opportunity to develop a taste for a wide range of flavors. "Studies have shown that eating habits are established during a child's first three years of life," says Kibota. Forming good habits early on can help prevent everything from obesity to cancer, especially if parents can get their kids hooked on puréed berries instead of berry-flavored gummy worms.

Not sure what baby might like? Try pomme bébé's tasting bar, where all varieties of seasonal food are available for sampling. There's even Laurent Brazier, an on-site five-star chef who prepares delicacies like chicken ragout for toddlers, and steams, peels and purées all manner of organic fruits and vegetables by hand every day for babies.

It's a little pricier than your average baby food found gathering dust on the grocery store shelves, but it's worth it, according to Kibota. "It's not more expensive than the cupcake or coffee you would buy yourself," she says. Just one more thing you'll have to give up for the little tyke.

pomme bébé is located at 2043 Westcliff Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 200-7430; www.pommebebe.com

—JESSICA FORSYTH

