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How to save time and money food shopping



80 SHARES

- These days, it's very common to shop for groceries at several different types of food retailers as well as online.
- Here's how to make sure you are not wasting time or money.

Jessica Dickler | @jdickler

22 Hours Ago



With a greater of selection of food markets, specialty stores and bulk discounters comes greater efficiency and cost savings for shoppers.

However, sometimes the reverse is true.

"It's a very competitive environment for groceries, which is great news for shoppers," said Tobie Stanger, a senior editor at Consumer Reports. "That competition drives down prices."

But on the flip side, now it's not unusual to do your shopping at not only the grocery store but the farmers' market, warehouse club and big-box retailer, too — all in a typical week. Each month, 68 percent of Americans shop at least five different types of food retailers, according to the Hartman Group, a consulting firm for the food industry.

"It's a very competitive environment for groceries, which is great news for shoppers"

-Tobie Stanger, a senior editor at Consumer Reports

That has also taken a toll on the one-size-fits all supermarket.

"Remember A&P? It was around for more than 150 years, but closed in 2015," Stanger said.

Now the stores that fare the best are so-called premium stores such as Wegmans, specialty stores like Trader Joe's and discounters such as Idaho-based WinCo, the ratings magazine said.

In fact, [Wegmans](#) has held the top spot among all food retailers since 2006, according to a Consumer Reports subscriber poll, thanks to its competitive prices, prepared foods, healthy options and customer service.

But making one to Wegmans run for ready-to-cook meals, another to Trader Joe's for Two Buck Chuck and a third stop at [Costco](#) for paper

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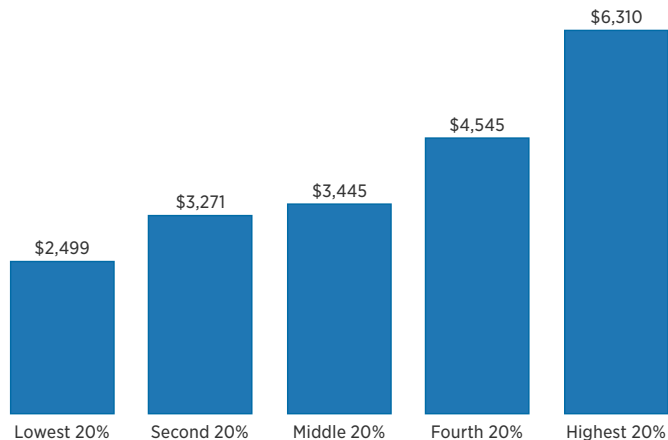
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towels, along with all of the impulse items along the way, can strain any household budget, not to mention the time wasted food shopping.

Average household spending for groceries by household income group, 2015

The average American household spent \$4,015 on groceries in 2015, the most recent data available. Compared to lower-income households, higher-income households spent more money on groceries.



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)



To curb the added costs of this new way of buying food with multiple stops, Stanger recommends sticking strictly to a list, enrolling in store loyalty programs to get the best prices and shopping at quieter times, such as a Monday or Tuesday night, so you can move faster through the stores.

Added bonus: Some items are cheaper mid-week, when stores want to clear their inventories. For example, beer is 9 percent cheaper on Monday than it is on Saturday, according to discount app Ibotta. A win-win.

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Jessica Dickler
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