

Money Matter\$ - 20 March 2025

By Standard Chartered Bank

Title: Saving Money at the Supermarket!

Shopping for groceries is a need as we all have to eat and require essential household items such as soap or shampoo. But when grocery shopping starts to turn into a luxury shopping spree, where do you draw the line in order for you to save money? With a bit of forward planning and discipline, you can make your dollar stretch a little further and save a little money every time you go to the shops.

Write a shopping list of all the items that you need. Always stick to this list. A shopping list is a useful way to remind yourself what you need to purchase. Preparing a shopping list will discourage you from spending on impulse, and buying things that you don't really need. Pre-planned shopping can actually help you a lot in terms of saving money. Studies conducted in supermarkets on shopper behaviour have shown that 60 to 70% of all purchases are usually unplanned. Also, ensure your shopping list is precise and thorough.

Look at your list, and go down the aisles accordingly. If there is an aisle that doesn't contain any item on your shopping list, avoid it! You might end up picking up unnecessary items.

Look for the generic (own supermarket) brands. This is easy. For example: A 500ml bottle of imported water could be \$1.70 versus a local brand at much less. Some local department stores sell bottled drinking water under their own brand name for 1/3 of the price. The label isn't as pretty and as colorful, that's for sure, but most likely it would be cheaper and at good quality.

Buy your groceries in bulk. Every month go on a BIG shop. Each time you enter the grocery store is another opportunity to spend but remember to be selective. Look out for supermarket adverts in the newspaper when they advertise special offers on certain items. For example, a special price offer on milk should be taken advantage of and you can stock up on it if the expiry dates permit. Be careful not to buy more than you think you will use, otherwise the products may expire and you will end up wasting the food.

Compare prices between different brands and different supermarkets. This is crucial. Even though the generic brands are generally cheaper, sometimes the items on special work out cheaper. This is because bigger supermarkets buy their goods in big bulks and receive a special price than your neighbourhood small sundry shop.

Go to the checkout, and don't grab a pack of gum or bar of chocolate, or other items they put near the checkout to tempt you. Stick to your list and only buy what you need!

Take advantage of supermarket co-brand cards that could potentially help you achieve greater savings. For example, the Standard Chartered Hua Ho MasterCard offers year round discounts in selected items at affiliated Hua Ho Department Stores and has regular exclusive sales and promotions that either stretch your dollar or add value to your grocery shopping by letting you earn points for all your transactions.

Use your credit card rewards points to redeem for supermarket vouchers. Depending on the credit card that you use, you can redeem the rewards points that you earn on your credit cards

into shopping vouchers which can help you to save so much more. All Standard Chartered credit cards earn rewards points which can be redeemed for a wide variety of items including shopping vouchers. The rewards points you earn are virtually given free so take advantage of these points and use them to save yourself some money.

Check your receipt. Make sure your prices are scanned correctly. You don't need to hold up the line: simply watch the price of each item as it's scanned. If you suspect an error, step to the side and check the receipt as the salesclerk begins the next order. If there's a problem, politely point it out. It's your money so you should ask for it.

And finally...

Always shop on a full stomach. Studies show that people who shop when they're hungry tend to buy more. Everything looks good on an empty stomach. Experience shows that if you have a full meal before you shop, you will not be tempted to buy the snacks.

Remember, always do your research and investigate which supermarkets sell items for the lowest prices and once you find it, prepare a shopping list, bring along a pen to cross off the items on your list, a good set of eyes, a calculator for comparing and calculating prices and of course, money to pay for the groceries you have bought. Local produce markets are also great places to look for quality fresh local products at affordable prices.

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