



“Saving on Shopping Expenses”

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If you have been shopping at the same grocery store for the last 20 years, you are probably missing out on some tremendous savings. Many people remain loyal to their favorite stores and fail to check out the possibility of lower prices elsewhere. If you are trying to find opportunities in your budget where you can squeeze out a few dollars of savings to help reach your long-term goal of financial freedom, then you should get more creative with your shopping.

First of all, discount stores like Costco, or other similar franchises, offer a huge amount of savings if you are willing to buy larger quantities of products than what you would purchase in your local grocery store. For example, instead of buying a single gallon of milk at the grocery store, at Costco you purchase a box that contains two gallons. On a per-gallon basis, the price is less, but you will have to store that extra gallon at the back of your shelf in the refrigerator while you consume the first one. If you drink soft drinks, or any type of drink that comes in smaller cans or bottles, instead of buying a single six-pack as you would at the local grocery store, you would purchase a case (twenty-four items). Again, you would need to find storage somewhere in your home for these extra items, but the savings is significant.

The same idea goes for almost any item: cans of soup, cheese, and pretty much anything you can purchase at the grocery store is available at Costco, the only difference being that you must purchase more of it. If you want hamburger, instead of a pound, you may need to buy five pounds and store four of them in freezer bags in the freezer until you can use them all.

Note: discount stores usually charge an annual membership fee, but



after a month or so, you can easily save enough to recover it. A drawback to getting a membership is that they do take your photograph and store your personal information—something that most grocery stores do not do—so if you are concerned about your personal information being stored in a database, and people having total access to your buying history, then this may be a negative consideration when you make your decision.

Another drawback of discount stores like Costco is that they do not usually carry the non-mainstream brands. Many of the off-name products you might find on the shelves in your local grocery store (Grandma Pepper's Homemade Salad Dressing for example) are just not available in a discount store. They are able to provide discounts because they deal mostly in mainstream products that are guaranteed to move off the shelves, unlike the off-name brands that may stay for a while. This cuts down on dead inventory expenses, but it also means that you can only buy generic products.