

## 3 Shopping at Costco

14 The first time I went shopping at Costco, I couldn't believe  
30 what I saw. A lot of people say the same thing. Big. The sheer size of  
46 the store is gargantuan. It has to be that big to hold all the items they  
59 have for sale, in the quantities they sell things, and the number of  
70 people who pass through their aisles a couple times a month.

82 You might think that two visits, on average, for a family isn't  
96 much, but it takes a while for a household to consume a package of  
108 over one hundred granola bars, or use a plastic-wrapped bushel of  
120 toilet paper that contains thirty rolls. If a family includes a diaper-  
134 wearing baby, the parents love the prices, but they have to buy a box  
147 of Huggies so big, that if lined with blankets itself, the future empty  
159 cardboard prism could nearly serve as a crib. Costco sells cribs, too.

169 Some people complain that there isn't much choice among the  
181 products Costco sells, and it's true that they only carry about ten  
195 varieties of cereal. But where else can you buy a twelve pack of tube  
210 socks, four tires for your car, a set of patio furniture, a sixty inch flat  
221 screen television, and a bouquet of roses in the same store?

232 Costco has the pulse of the American consumer. Well, most of  
244 them. This company's products, soon to be for sale, keep laden cargo  
254 ships crossing the Pacific Ocean from China, long freight trains  
265 traversing the rails over our states' mountains and deserts, and full  
275 eighteen-wheel tractor trailers daily backing down into their loading  
287 docks. Costco uses their club card technology to keep tabs on what  
301 people want to buy, when, and how much of it to stack on those  
310 towering orange warehouse pallet racks customers see as shelves.

323 Did I say Costco goes big? Think about it: the small package of  
337 eggs contains eighteen, a box of milk has two gallons, and a tub of  
350 margarine weighs five pounds! Have you seen the size of a jar of  
361 mayonnaise? A sandwich shop could easily lather the slices of fifty  
374 loaves of bread with one jar. How about a jug of laundry detergent?  
387 One is enough for one hundred forty-four loads. A bottle of vitamins  
398 from Costco could last one person about two years! The shopping  
415 carts have to be able to carry a lot of stuff, and get pretty hard to push  
430 by the time a shopper gets to the check out line. The family car needs  
443 to have an empty trunk upon arrival, or passengers will need to hold  
457 stuff on their laps on the way home. Like I said.... Costco is big.