

How to Save Money at the Grocery Store

KUSA – When the grocery store cashier is printing out that long, long receipt with details of all the money you just spent, you might have a sinking feeling. You may wonder if you could have saved more money. The truth is, you probably could have saved a lot more money if you knew how to use grocery coupons and deals the right way.

"Each item at the grocery store has a sales cycle with a price high point and a price low point," Jennie Leanne, creator of the website www.BargainBlessings.com, said. "Each week the price fluctuates between that high and low point. Smart shoppers only buy when an item is at its low point."

Leanne has now made a career out of helping people find the best deals, including knowing which items rarely go on sale.

"Trash bags, diapers, seafood and these days – beef," she said.

Smart shoppers take advantage of any sale they can get on these items. And they try match up those sales to coupons.

"Newspapers are still the No. 1 resource for manufacturer coupons with printable coupons close behind," Leanne said.

Leanne said she also gets high-value coupons by emailing positive comments to manufacturers.

"[I] am sometimes surprised with very high value or even free item coupons just for taking the time to share my love for their product," she said.

With technology in the picture, Leanne recommends turning to apps to saving money.

"I love the free app called Favado which provides free coupon match-ups right on your phone," she said.

The popularity of club cards has grown. And Leanne suggests downloading coupons offered with those cards by local grocery stores.

"In order to use an eCoupon, you will need to have your shopper's card registered with the store or other eCoupon source like Cellfire and then load the coupons to your card through their website," said Leanne. "Then when you purchase an item for which you have an eCoupon loaded on your card, that amount will deduct automatically at checkout."

But Leanne warns, those eCoupons aren't eligible to be doubled, like paper coupons are. So you may want to get to clipping, if you'd like to make your coupons worth twice as much. Most stores will double coupons for a total value of up to \$1.

If shoppers can coordinate their coupons with store sales, they can get some items either deeply discounted or for free. Matching up coupons can be a time-consuming task, though.

"With that said, if someone wanted to do their own match-ups they would need access to a coupon database," said Leanne. The link to her website's database is here: <http://www.bargainblessings.com/coupon-database-search-and-find-coupons/>. However Leanne's website also matches up coupons for customers and puts the deals on the homepage.

"My website, BargainBlessings.com, provides free weekly coupon match-ups for all of our local Colorado stores," she said. "We even post the deals a day or two early so that you can get a preview of what is going to be on sale in the upcoming week."

And when you find a good deal, stock up. Leanne says that, typically, stores operate their major sales of certain items in six-week cycles. So try to match up your coupons to those sales and try to buy enough to last you until the next time the item goes on a major sale likely six weeks later.

Leanne coordinates sales and coupons for everyone to see on her website. She also does a free online coupon class via the platform Spreecast. Her last class was viewed more than 6,500 times in 48 hours. That lets her know that a lot of people are trying to win the grocery game.

Leanne recommends that, if shoppers have the time, they should go to several stores to bargain hunt.

"Shopping at multiple stores will allow you to get in on more sales each week, but I recommend keeping it simple by sticking to just one store at first, especially when you're just getting started," she said.

And, when you do go to those stores, don't automatically grab the biggest item thinking it's a big bargain.

"Bigger is not always better," said Leanne. "It is important to always compare per unit prices. This also is important when trying to compare multiple brands with different packaging. If you run in to products that are measured in different units (for example pounds vs ounces), use the mobile app Apples to Oranges for a quick and accurate comparison."

By using these techniques, Leanne says she's saved an untold amount of money. She says any smart shopper can do the same thing.

"I'm able to get freebies at the grocery store pretty much every week," she said.