

Raclette ♦ Treating sleep apnea ♦ Travel: Cultural destinations

COSTCO Connection

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS

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Getting excess goods
to communities in
need, not landfills 26



OCT / NOV 2022

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Tech Connection:
Smartwatches

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COSTCO **Connection** *October/November*

October/November 2022 | Volume 35 | Number 8



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There's still time to enjoy being outside this year—including outdoor movie nights.

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PUBLISHER Sandy Torrey storrey@costco.com

EDITORIAL DIRECTORS

Canada / U.K. Stephanie E. Ponder sponder@costco.com

U.S. T. Foster Jones tofjones@costco.com

INTERNATIONAL TEAM

Christina Guerrero cguerrero2@costco.com

Dan Jones daniel.jones@costco.com

U.S. TEAM

Katie Coleman katie.coleman@costco.com

Will Fifield wffifield@costco.com

FRENCH LANGUAGE EDITION

William Giroux, Céleste Savoie

COPY EDITORS Miriam Bulmer, Jodie Warren

CONTRIBUTORS

Jane Doucet, Naomi Hansen, Wendy Helffenbaum, Scott Jones, Laura Langston, Yvonne Maffei, Andrea Downing Peck, Owen Roberts, Marc Saltzman, Lana Sanichar, Tim Talevich, Andrea Tomkins, Lawrence Varga, Kira Vermond, Michele Wojciechowski

ART DIRECTOR Lory Williams williams@costco.com

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTORS

David Schneider dschneider@costco.com

Brenda Shecter bshecter@costco.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS Ken Broman, Grant Collier,

Isabelle LaFrance, Steven Lait, Megan Lees,

Chris Rusnak, Jacob Walker

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER

Antolin Matsuda amatsuda@costco.com

PRINT, PAPER AND PREPRESS MANAGER

MaryAnne Robbers mrobbers@costco.com

PRINT PRODUCTION SPECIALIST

Grace Clark graceclark@costco.com

PUBLISHING PRODUCTION SPECIALIST

Jodie Moy jodie.moy@costco.com

PUBLISHING PROJECT DIRECTOR

Shannon Ambrose shannon.ambrose@costco.com

PUBLISHING PROJECT MANAGER

Karine Lapointe-Moses karine.moses@costco.com

PUBLISHING PROJECT SUPERVISOR

Sophia Burgin sophia.burgin@costco.com

ADVERTISING AND EDITORIAL COORDINATORS

Sonia Girard, Christin Hudon, Clara Lacroix

cdnconnection@costco.com

ADVERTISING COPYWRITER

Bill Urlevich

BUSINESS MANAGER

Jane Johnson

ONLINE PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Dorothy Strakele

COSTCO CANADA HEADQUARTERS

(Faisant affaire au Québec sous le nom Les Entrepôts Costco)

415 West Hunt Club Road, Ottawa, ON K2E 1C5

1-800-463-3783; service@contactcostco.ca, Costco.ca

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Turn over a new leaf this season

Hello, October! It's the month when Canadians' minds start to wander toward preparing for holidays, entertaining family and friends and nestling in for the cold ahead.

After spending the summer barbecuing, we look forward to bringing the cooking back indoors with all the Canadian comfort foods we love. Check out some of the incredible food appliances we offer from SharkNinja. Or invite friends over for a raclette party. With the holidays around the corner, now is the perfect time to plan your family feasts. In this issue, you will find many ideas to make great food to share with family and friends.

If you are like me, you will have some people on your gift list for whom you just don't know what to buy. In our Holiday Gift Guide, we deliver a range of suggestions to help you check items off your list. Take a look at our Home Electronics Special Section for the latest trends for the techies in your life.

As we wake to our first frost, we cannot help but look forward to visiting a sunny destination. One of my favourite memories is a trip my husband and I took with my parents to Key West, Florida. I can taste the Key lime pie now!

Perhaps a destination closer to home is on your bucket list. Regardless, Costco Travel offers a variety of memorable destinations for sun worshippers, snow bunnies and culture seekers.

So, grab your Canadian tuxedo (aka denim jacket and jeans) and get out and enjoy the beauty of fall. ■



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Sue Pudrycki
is Assistant
Vice President
of Marketing.

Coming next issue
We profile a handful
of regional Costco
suppliers who help
create a local feel at
warehouses across
the country.

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- ◆ Costco news
- ◆ Member stories
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Trick or treat

Whether you celebrate Halloween with a costume party or by taking the kids trick-or-treating, Costco warehouses and Costco.ca have you covered with a variety of candy, food, soft drinks, and more.



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Back story

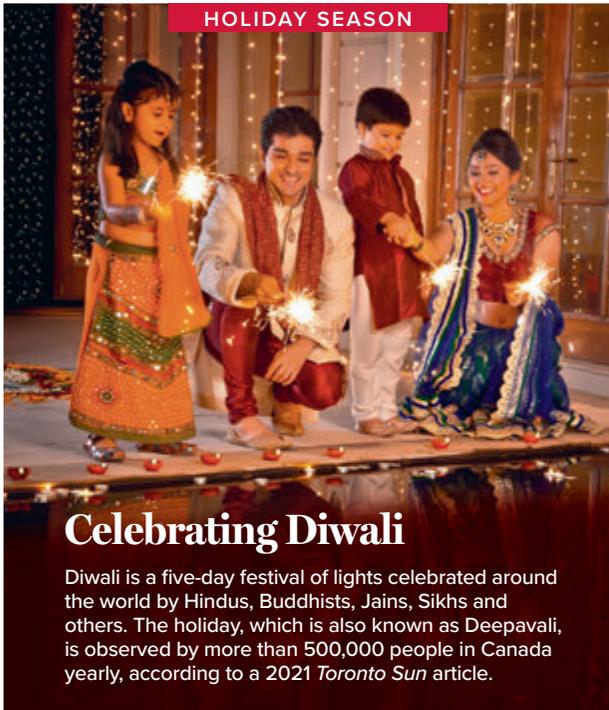
HALLOWEEN IS a complicated mix of traditions.

According to history.com, its traditions reach back to Samhain, an ancient Celtic festival during which people lit bonfires and wore costumes to ward off ghosts.

Another big influence is All Hallows' Eve, the

evening before All Saints Day (a day to honour all saints, set as November 1 in the eighth century by Pope Gregory II), which was later called Halloween.

Over time the evening became a day filled with trick-or-treating, carving jack-o'-lanterns, eating treats and wearing costumes.



HOLIDAY SEASON

Celebrating Diwali

Diwali is a five-day festival of lights celebrated around the world by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and others. The holiday, which is also known as Deepavali, is observed by more than 500,000 people in Canada yearly, according to a 2021 *Toronto Sun* article.

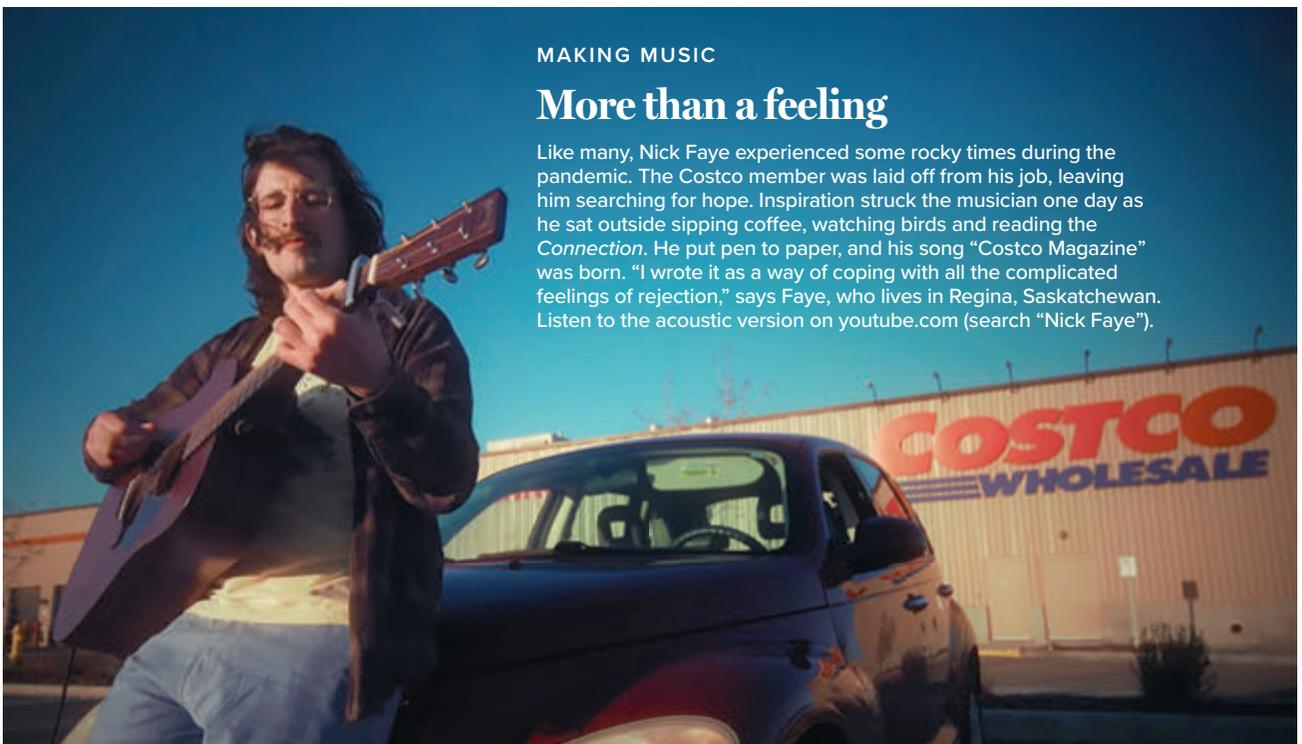
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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Papyrus Holiday Collection

Make the season shine with the Papyrus Handcrafted Holiday Card Collection. This 24-card collection features thoughtful messages and embellished holiday designs with matching lined envelopes. Housed in a keepsake box, the set offers cards in three sizes. Item 1598436. Warehouses/Costco.ca.



MAKING MUSIC

More than a feeling

Like many, Nick Faye experienced some rocky times during the pandemic. The Costco member was laid off from his job, leaving him searching for hope. Inspiration struck the musician one day as he sat outside sipping coffee, watching birds and reading the *Connection*. He put pen to paper, and his song "Costco Magazine" was born. "I wrote it as a way of coping with all the complicated feelings of rejection," says Faye, who lives in Regina, Saskatchewan. Listen to the acoustic version on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) (search "Nick Faye").

ROB WHITE

◆ IN THE BEGINNING

Costco opened its first Canadian warehouse on October 30, 1985, in Burnaby, British Columbia. Canada now has 101 warehouses and six Business Centres.



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Members can now order customized sheet cakes for pickup at their local Costco bakery. Use the kiosk near the bakery to place your order, choosing from nine different designs. Please allow 24 hours for pickup. (Note: Sheet cakes are no longer available for immediate purchase in coolers.)



VEG OUT

Asparagus, Brussels Sprouts and French Green Beans with Citrus Butter Sauce

- 30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil
- 750 mL (3 cups) asparagus, ends trimmed and stalks cut into 5-cm (2-inch) pieces
- 750 mL (3 cups) Brussels sprouts, bottoms trimmed and quartered
- 750 mL (3 cups) French green beans
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 125 mL (½ cup) chicken stock
- 60 mL (¼ cup) salted butter
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2 mL (½ tsp) sea salt
- 1 mL (¼ tsp) fresh ground black pepper
- 125 mL (½ cup) Italian parsley, chopped

Heat olive oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add asparagus, Brussels sprouts and French green beans. Sauté vegetables for 3 to 5 minutes, tossing frequently.

Add garlic; continue to toss vegetables while still crisp, about 2 minutes. Add chicken stock, butter and lemon juice, and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, until vegetables are just tender.

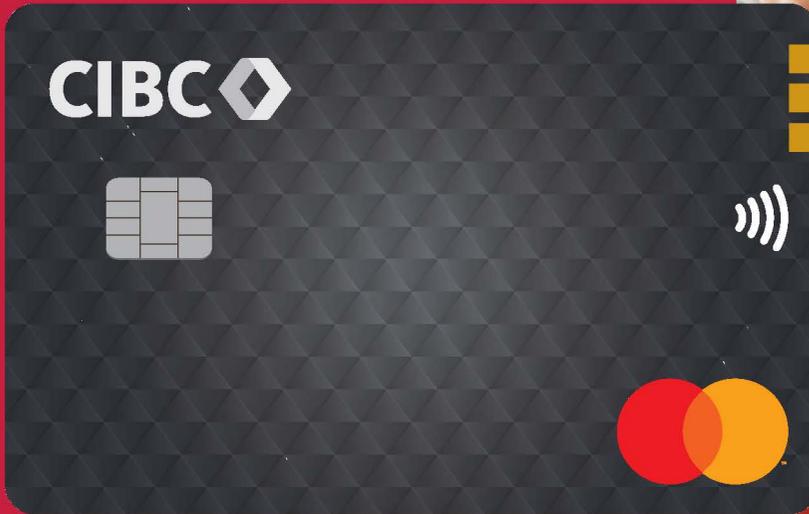
Remove pan from heat. Fold in lemon zest, salt, pepper and parsley. Serve hot. Makes 6 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Elaine Goldstein



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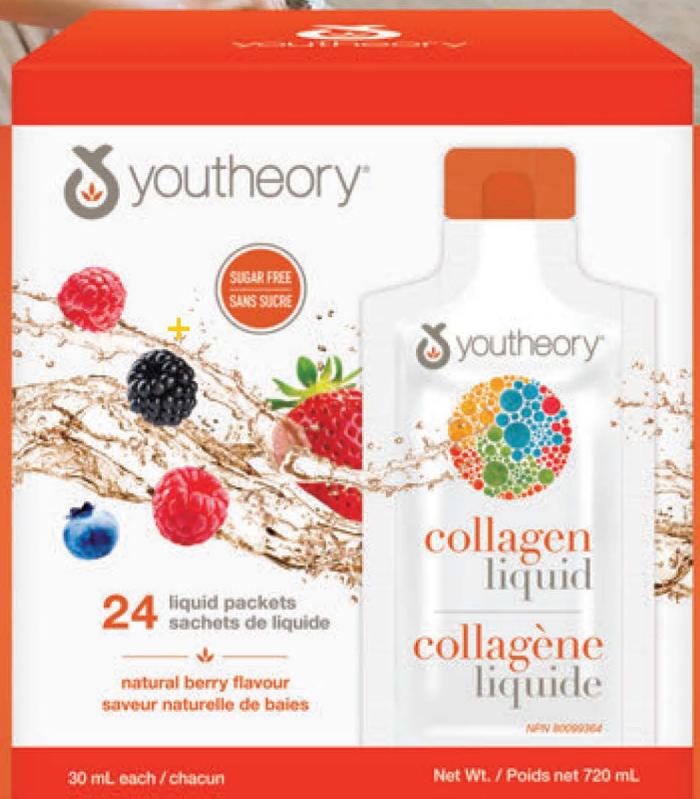
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"You will never feel truly satisfied by work until you are satisfied by life."
—Heather Schuck,
entrepreneur and author

by LANA SANICHAR

A friend of mine recently contacted me with an interesting question about her future. Her conundrum? Whether to take a promotion that offered a significant jump in salary. But along with the jump in salary, she would be required to take on more responsibility, more hours and, of course, more stress.

I instantly thought, "Congratulations! Everyone wants more money!" She wasn't on the same page. Throughout the last five years, this column has largely been focused on money: how to make it, how to keep it and how to grow it. My friend's question threw me for a loop. I decided to reach out to Erica Alini, personal finance reporter at *The Globe and Mail*. Here's what she had to say:

Is it better to make more money at a more stressful job or put up with lower earnings in a less demanding position? At first blush, this seems like an entirely personal choice: Say yes to the bigger job if you value the extra money more than the extra time you'll have to sacrifice for it.

But not so fast. While the choice will eventually boil down to your individual preferences and circumstances, there are a number of factors to consider.

First, more money could actually help improve your work-life balance, even if you spend more hours on the job. Higher earners have the luxury of delegating some of their unpaid household labour to others whom they can



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pay to do the work instead. So does a bigger paycheck mean that, for example, you can now hire someone to clean the house? More free time over the weekend may well be worth longer hours on the job between Monday and Friday.

Also, would you have support at home if you said yes to the promotion? Could your spouse or partner take on a bit more of the household and child-rearing duties?

Bottom line: If you feel like you're already operating at 100%, a promotion only makes sense if you can dial back some of the tasks that take up your energy and time outside of work. A supportive employer and partner can make all the difference in this regard. But if that support isn't there, don't feel guilty about sticking to the boundaries that you know will help you preserve your happiness and mental health. ■

Congrats?

Weighing the rewards and responsibilities of accepting a promotion

COURTESY OF LANA SANICHAR



Lana Sanichar is president and editor-in-chief of *Canadian Money-Saver* magazine.

Through an exclusive arrangement, *Canadian Money-Saver's* experts partner with the *Costco Connection* to share advice about relevant financial topics.

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Time vs. money

Personal finance reporter Erica Alini has this to say about weighing time against money: "Different people have different preferences

when it comes to how much they value money vs. time. But the reality is women—and especially mothers—often decline promotions because they're already operating at maximum capacity balancing

work and family. Any uptick in the time they spend at [work] would result in a serious deterioration of their quality of life because they already do so much unpaid work outside their job."—LS



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What's your favourite Halloween treat?

Costco members respond to our poll, posted to Costco's Facebook page

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Lisa MacPherson

Jolly Ranchers.

Léo Branch

What I hated to get as a child [I] now love as an adult—Kerr's molasses candy.

Denise Kozak

Pringles chips.

Gerry Trepanier

Doritos and KitKats

Simon Bélanger-Lamarche

Candy corn ... yummy.

Crystal Nichols-Sims

Mini chocolate bars, chocolate bars, the key word is chocolate!

Joleen DeGrace

Jujubes.

Marie-France Fortier



Costco and candy

For Halloween in 2021, Costco sold enough candy to equal the weight of more than 50 jumbo jets.



Canada's favourite Halloween candy

According to foodnetwork.ca, the following is a list of the most popular Halloween candy in the country. Want to make sure you aren't the target of tricks? Try handing out the following to the goblins and ghouls visiting your doorstep October 31:

- 1 Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
- 2 Skittles
- 3 KitKat
- 4 Snickers
- 5 M&M's

◆ Watch for the next poll question on Facebook.com/costcocanada.

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Do not discard

From peaches that are slightly bruised to school supplies returned by members, Costco takes steps to keep perfectly usable products out of local landfills. Through partnerships with local organizations, these goods end up in communities in need where they're put to good use.

by **Tim Talevich**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Costco produce supervisor Alex Rohrer prepares a pallet for donation.



Throughout a busy day at the Costco warehouse in Burnaby, British Columbia, produce manager Kyle Benn and his team are restocking the large selection of fruit and produce in the warehouse's fresh foods area. As they do, they're closely examining all the foods. The target: any item that doesn't quite meet Costco's standards, yet is still perfectly good. In a box of peaches, Benn spots some slightly bruised fruit and pulls the box.

But instead of being discarded for compost—or worse, sent to a landfill—the peaches are set aside for another destination. A truck from the Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) will soon arrive at the Costco loading dock to pick up this kind of food. And within a day or so, that food will be on the tables of some of the 10,000 people GVFB serves monthly in the Vancouver area.

It's a scene that takes place daily in the 100-plus Costco warehouses across Canada. Working with 420 local organizations, Costco is able to donate still-good fresh foods and other products to needy people, instead of discarding them in local landfills. In doing so, Costco avoids costly disposal costs, reduces its carbon footprint and helps the communities where Costco is located.

"We want to maintain our standards for our members," says Benn. "And if we can help some people while doing that, it's even better."

Feeding communities

The partnership between GVFB and Costco in the Vancouver area serves as a perfect example of how the program



Clockwise from top: Volunteers from La Maison de la Famille de la Vallée de la Gatineau unload donated food; a Vancouver food bank volunteer prepares a donation; food put to good use in Vancouver.





IMAGE COURTESY LUC LORTIE



IMAGES COURTESY OF GREATER VANCOUVER FOOD BANK

works. GVFB's refrigerated trucks go each weekday to the local Costcos for a food pickup. From there, they return to GVFB's distribution facility in Burnaby, which has large refrigerator and freezer space to keep food cold.

GVFB staff and volunteers sort the food; it's then ready for the 119 community agency partners the GVFB supports, explains David Long, the organization's CEO. Those agencies range from halfway houses to women's shelters. Families can also pick up food from four GVFB locations. The fresh food is usually distributed within 24 to 48 hours.

Last year, GVFB distributed more than 3.6 million kilograms (8 million pounds) of food to families in need, all supplied by Costco, local farms, corporations and individuals. Working with Costco has played a big role in the increase of community partner agencies it serves, says Long. "We have been able to expand our partnerships from 75 agencies four years ago to 119 today," he says. "Through Costco, our relationship has enabled a massive growth in the number of agencies we work with. We're able to help more people."

Making it work

Donating not only benefits people in need and the environment, but also dramatically reduces expensive trash disposal fees. "These donations allow us to increase the rate of goods diverted from landfills, and we're constantly working to improve our procedures," says Luc Lortie, Costco's sustainability and environmental director. "We save on hauling and disposal costs, but most importantly, this allows us to take care of our community."

The process is integrated into the efficient daily operations in the warehouses. When stockers rotate produce in the coolers each morning, they handle each box and can spot brown lettuce or mouldy fruit. Similar checks happen as stock is refreshed throughout the day.

These foods are scanned for inventory tracking, stacked on pallets and, if necessary, stored in roll-in coolers to await pickup. The next step varies, depending on location. In some warehouses, donated food can be distributed to an agency's clients the same day.

What makes food safe but unsellable? It could be that there's one fuzzy strawberry in a 1-kilogram (2-pound) container. Perhaps a box of cereal has been mangled. Maybe a bag of bagels has reached its sell-by date. If it's safe to eat, it's fair game—even if it no longer meets Costco's high standards for the products it sells.

It all adds up. Last year, Costco donated 7,400 metric tonnes of food to local agencies.

Meals with dignity

In Ontario's Durham region, much of Costco's food ends up directly in meals prepared for the community's needy.

Durham Outlook for the Needy (DOFN) gathers food from Costco and other businesses and divides it up for its own programs and for other food banks, charities and schools. Its core program is St. Vincent Pallotti's Kitchen, which offers nutritious hot meals 365 days a year in a dignified restaurant setting. Meal tickets are free to individuals and families experiencing poverty, or \$1.50 if a resident can afford it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

MIKE SIEGEL



A food bank employee prepares a load. **Below:** A volunteer from the food bank Moisson Laurentides picks up bread donations from a Montreal- area Costco.



“We pick up food in our refrigerated truck, take what we can use and share with the other organizations in need within the Durham community,” explains Valerie Moreton, DOFN’s director of operations and fundraising. “Our relationship with Costco speaks directly to our mission, which is to provide accessible food in a dignified manner to the needy in Durham. We pick up vegetables, fruits, bread, desserts. It helps us provide meals to roughly 150 to 250 people per day.”

Recycling electronics and other goods

A similar process takes place for non-food items in the warehouses. Costco

and suppliers work together on the best low-cost options for member returns. Some items are sent back to the supplier; others can be designated for donation.

Costco has introduced a new donation policy that allows products such as unused or unopened soap, school supplies, pet food and paper products to be collected with food donations in cities that have large distribution donation centres. For example, if a pack of three items is returned to Costco, Costco recycles or disposes of the opened container through a program for environmentally sensitive items to ensure it is diverted from the local landfill, and donates the other two items to a family in need. The larger



IMAGE COURTESY/LUC LORTIE

charitable organizations keep an updated list of what sister organizations require, and track the items to ensure they reach families in need.

For electronics that can't be returned to the supplier, Costco works with a national electronics recycler, eCycle Solutions (ecyclesolutions.com). These products are shipped to eCycle, where they are recycled at one of five centres across Canada (they are not shipped overseas or outside Canada). Then eCycle breaks down the electronic waste to its base components and sells the raw materials to become new products. This program prevents valuable returned or recalled products from leaching toxic chemicals into landfills.

Electronic recycling has increased by 37% over the last three years, says Lortie.

Partnerships are key

The success of these programs comes from the commitment and professionalism of the charitable organizations that partner with Costco, Lortie notes. "And it is often the result of several employees who are very passionate about ensuring donations are maintained and increased and [who] ensure all departments contribute. Costco employees are often multi-year employees who take this to heart and want to give back to their community. As we provide top-quality food and non-food items, there is a strong bond between our warehouses and local organizations, all done at the local level." ■



Fresh foods like apples and tomatoes are greatly appreciated by Costco's food bank partners.

© ANNA MANKA / SHUTTERSTOCK



OTHER PROGRAMS

Depending on their location, Costco warehouses can divert inedible food for different uses. For example, nearly 5.4 million kilograms (12 million pounds) of food went to feed cattle and hogs last year. In Japan, a program sends coffee grounds to be repurposed as cattle feed.

Other foods are used for organic fertilizer, biofuels and electricity. For example, millions of kilograms of meat and bone scraps from meat departments in the warehouses are processed through rendering programs.

In some locations, inedible goods are placed in separate containers for organic recycling, to be transformed into compost. Some of it is top-quality organic compost used to grow organic feed for the production of organic milk and beer.

Details on many of these programs can be found in Costco's Sustainability Commitment: [Costco.ca/sustainability.html](https://www.costco.ca/sustainability.html).—TT

IMAGES COURTESY OF GREATER VANCOUVER FOOD BANK

Reducing waste

One effective step in reducing food waste is to find creative uses for certain products. Many of Costco's food items in the deli section come from other products sold in the warehouses.

For example:

- Ground beef from the meat department is further harvested into stuffed bell peppers and shepherd's pie. —TT



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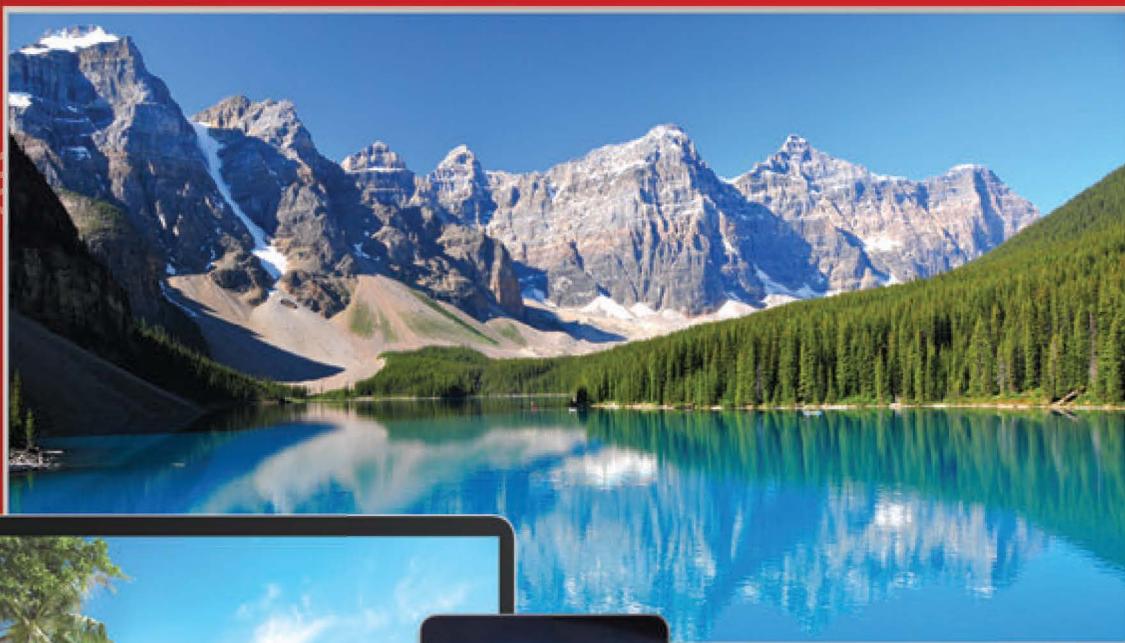
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A night at the movies

Tech for good

Technology is making an increasingly bigger impact on our daily lives. The right products can drastically enhance the quality of our work and play.

Costco supplier Sonos creates multi-room audio solutions that turn ordinary listening experiences into something extraordinary. From flexible software to portable speakers, the company aims to improve the way we interact with audio. Meanwhile, smartwatches inspire us to live more efficiently, get in more steps and get to bed earlier. Also thanks to tech, some activities, such as outdoor movie nights, look a whole lot different now than in the days of the old-fashioned film projector.

A sampling of buyers' picks will help you find the perfect home electronics for your needs.

-
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Hearing is believing

Sonos makes enjoying quality audio anywhere you go a reality

by WILL FIFIELD



Listening to music while doing the dishes after dinner, or enjoying a podcast while mowing the lawn, transforms household chores into a richer, more enjoyable time. Home audio company Sonos makes setting up a quality sound system throughout your home easy by combining resonant, clear speakers and sound-system components, such as amplifiers and turntables, with exceptionally flexible software. With Sonos portable speakers, you can extend the experience to beach outings, camping trips, outdoor chores and more.

Setting up a whole-home sound system that can play audio throughout your home may not sound like an ambitious mission today, but when Sonos launched in 2002,

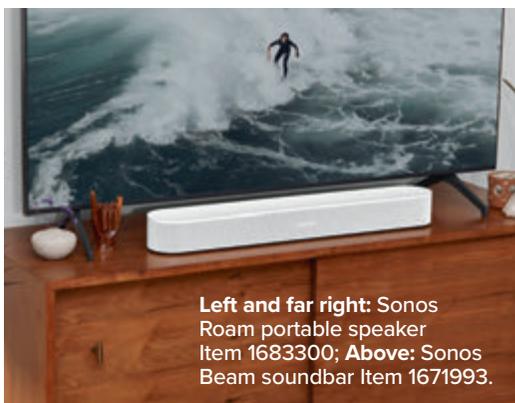
it was a very expensive proposition that delivered hit-or-miss results.

Sonos founders John MacFarlane, Tom Cullen, Trung Mai and Craig Shelburne, a group of entrepreneurs who had worked together in a successful internet-based business before starting Sonos, foresaw that the internet was going to be the predominant source of music. They believed this presented an opportunity to revolutionize the whole-home audio concept.

“The mission from the very onset was making whole-home sound, which didn’t work very well at the time, something that is easy to enjoy,” says Nick Millington, Sonos’ chief product officer.

“Every part of your life at home can be better if it’s accompanied by great sound and great music ...”

— NICK MILLINGTON ◆
Sonos Chief Product Officer



Left and far right: Sonos Roam portable speaker Item 1683300; Above: Sonos Beam soundbar Item 1671993.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SONOS

He says they also wanted to make it easier to set up and more affordable, so anyone could enjoy quality audio throughout their home. And, rather than analog and device-dependent, they wanted their system to be digital and smart so it could have access to all the music people were beginning to enjoy through the internet.

The sound of music

“From the beginning, Sonos’ audio philosophy has been to reproduce the artist’s intent,” says Millington. “But making good-sounding speakers is kind of an art in and of itself.”

To get the quality of sound they were after, the company worked with accomplished recording engineers, including Giles Martin of Abbey Roads Studios. “His job is

to essentially listen to records that he’s made, play them on Sonos systems, and then sit down with our engineers and tune the hardware and software so that it sounds exactly like what he heard in the studio,” Millington explains. He says that in a world in which so many speakers are trying to get your attention with lots of bass or shrill treble, it is purity that makes Sonos stand out.

Many sources, one system

To provide a consistently rich experience, the speakers and software work together to transmit quality audio, whether you stream a podcast, play your favourite music from a smart device or spin tunes from your vinyl collection. You can set a Sonos system up to play the same audio, synchronized throughout your home, or to play different music in different rooms.

“The power of the Sonos products,” Millington says, “is really that it’s a software platform that integrates all of these different services. You might buy Sonos for the sound of the speakers, but what keeps it relevant, as the world of technology moves forward, is that it’s a platform for nearly any service.” He says he’s not aware of any other platform through which you can enjoy Spotify, Apple Music, Apple AirPlay, Bluetooth, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa.

“Every part of your life at home can be better if it’s accompanied by great sound and great music, whether cooking in the kitchen, playing with the kids or doing your taxes,” Millington says. “Making this easier is what Sonos is laser focused on.” ■



COMPANY INFO

- Name** Sonos
- CEO** Patrick Spence
- Employees** About 1,700
- Headquarters** Santa Barbara, California
- Items carried at Costco** You’ll find selected Sonos speakers and soundbars in Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca. Search “Sonos” at Costco.ca.

Quote about Costco
“Working with Costco has felt like a natural fit from the beginning. Costco and Sonos share a mutual core value of delivering the best possible experience for our customers. It’s at the centre of each and every decision we make.”

—Rick Hulford,
vice president,
Sonos Americas

Mixed signals

Nick Millington, Sonos’ chief product officer, says Sonos has found that connecting music to speakers via Wi-Fi is the best solution for the

home but that Bluetooth is better at connecting when you’re away from your home system. “Connecting an audio source in the home where you typically have broadband connection to

the internet provides a much higher bandwidth connection, so it lets you enjoy more rooms of synchronized music and better audio quality, and it has a larger range,” Millington says.—WF

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All in the wrist

Smartwatches have advanced, but which watch is for you?

by MARC SALTZMAN



SEVAG SAGHERIAN

Marc Saltzman is a tech journalist and host of the *Tech It Out* podcast. He answers selected questions in this column and regrets that all questions can't be answered individually.

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Please include "Tech Connection" in the subject line.

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find a selection of smartwatches in Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca.



What's the only thing more convenient than carrying around your sleek, lightweight tech? How about wearing it on your wrist? That's the premise and popularity behind smartwatches. From monitoring your heart rate, sleep habits and physical activity, to glancing at digital messages and social media updates, to simply waving your watch to buy something, smartwatches have evolved into invaluable always-on companions. And you can get them with several customizable watch faces to match your style or outfit.

Whether you're leaning toward an Apple Watch, a Samsung Galaxy model, Fitbit, Garmin or something else, there are lots of advanced features to look for if it's time for your first smartwatch or to upgrade. Not all watches offer the same features, so be sure to research what's important to you. Here are several options to consider.

Activity, health

Virtually all smartwatches have basic pedometer-like features, which can count your steps and distances travelled on foot (and stairs climbed), show estimated calories burned and synchronize with a smartphone app to display colourful charts and graphs of your health data.

Some smartwatches can detect what workout you're doing—from swimming to cycling—and accurately capture your exercise data. Many have GPS for precise location details.

On the health data front, products like Apple Watch Series 7 and Samsung Galaxy Watch4 include an embedded electrocardiogram that can detect unusually high or low heart rates or irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias), as well as monitor blood oxygen (via a pulse oximeter).

The Apple Watch has a fall detection feature, which can call emergency services and select phone numbers from your contacts if it senses a sudden tumble and you don't confirm you're OK.



FROM LEFT: © ROCKETCLIPS; © NEW AFRICA / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Smartwatches are also great for analyzing sleep data, including if you woke up during the night, when and for how long, which can be shared with a health care provider.

Communication, information

It's super convenient to receive a slight vibration on your wrist to notify you of a calendar appointment or a reminder you've set for yourself, or to receive a nudge to stand up and stretch your legs. Similarly, you can set alerts for incoming texts and emails, so you can glance down at your wrist to see the message or if someone tagged you in a photo on social media.

Walking or cycling around town? Some smartwatches have integrated maps to help you navigate. With an Apple Watch, for example, you need not even look at the screen for turn-by-turn instructions; it uses taps and sounds to let you know when to turn (and go left or right). Or raise your wrist and use your voice to ask Siri, your virtual

Smartwatches, such as the Fitbit Sense, right (Item 1481976, black; 1481978, white), enable you to track your health data; stay connected with friends, family and work; remind yourself to relax; and so much more.



assistant, something like, "Directions to the nearest gas station" or "Get directions home."

When you get home, your smartwatch may even unlock your front door, if you have a smart lock.

Entertainment and more

Your smartwatch can be used for fun too, whether it's tapping through games, listening to music on wireless earbuds (with songs stored in the watch or streamed) or flipping through photos.

App stores support many of the devices to customize the experience. Some smartwatches remind you to focus, breathe and meditate throughout the day, and can monitor stress levels and encourage you to take a mental health break.

Need help calculating a tip at a restaurant? Many smartwatches have a calculator or you can summon your virtual assistant to ask, "What's an 18% tip on \$200?" (The answer is \$36.)

Your smartwatch can also be your wallet if you forget your credit card. Just tap your smartwatch after adding a credit card to your pay app.

If you want to track your physical activity and health data or need to see emails, phone calls and social media updates as they come in, as well as have a handy way to tackle myriad other tasks, a smartwatch may be just what you need. ■

Anywhere, anytime

Most smartwatches wirelessly tether to a nearby smartphone, via Bluetooth, to show you incoming calls, texts, pushed notifications and so on. Many join your home's Wi-Fi too, to access online information.

Depending on the model, there may be an option for cellular connectivity, which means you can take calls, read texts and access the internet—even when you're not near your smartphone or using Wi-Fi.

Typically \$10 a month through your mobile phone provider, a cellular option may be important to walkers and joggers who want to be reached in case of emergency but don't want to bring their phone with them.—MS

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Cinema under the stars

Now is a perfect time to get cozy and catch a flick outdoors with friends and family

by KIRA VERMOND



COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco warehouses and Costco.ca carry outdoor TVs, projectors, snacks, beverages, camp chairs, outdoor furniture, blankets and almost anything else you'll need to host an outdoor movie night.

Costco member Dave Durbin set up a digital movie projector in autumn 2021. He borrowed a neighbour's screen, lit two propane heaters to ward off the night's chill and welcomed his teenage daughter's friends into their Guelph, Ontario, backyard. The girls, with sleeping bags and mugs of hot chocolate, settled in to watch the original *Ghostbusters* outside. "It was almost like a drive-in in our backyard," Durbin says. "And the nice thing about when it's freezing cold: no bugs."

A lack of pesky mosquitoes isn't the only upside to hosting a backyard movie this time of year. Outdoor get-togethers are a safer way to connect with others during pandemic uncertainty. Besides, it gets dark early, so the party can wrap up before your booming movie soundtrack drives neighbours bonkers.

"It's important to have events where people can just engage again, have a good time and create memories," says Cristie Rosling, owner of Umbrella Events, a Vancouver-based event plan-

ning company. "You just have to go heavy on the blankets!"

From movie projectors and outdoor televisions to external speakers, blankets, mood lighting and snacks (lots of snacks), here's what will make your backyard movie bash a night to remember, no matter the budget.

Set the stage

When it comes to throwing a memorable, starry cinema night, ambience is everything. Hang twinkly lights or vintage string lights to give the night some glamour while providing enough illumination to avoid tripping on the way to the snack table. Or light the way with LED flameless candles that can be controlled remotely.

You'll want your guests to be warm and comfortable. Providing cozy plush blankets is a good start. Have stacks of hand warmers at the ready, extra toques and mittens, and propane heaters for extra comfort. On the west coast, an event canopy to keep guests dry is a good idea.



On the technical side

If you think hosting movie nights will be an ongoing affair, consider a new outdoor television built to withstand the elements. Each TV comes wrapped in extra weatherproofing to repel rain, dust, dirt, snow, insects, ice and UV rays.

If you don't want to commit to a permanent system, today's outdoor projectors offer picture quality only dreamed of a few years ago, with ultra-high resolution and lumens, or brightness. Many allow you to stream content wirelessly using your smartphone, laptop or tablet; some have Netflix and other apps preloaded to stream directly from the projector. If

you have a smaller yard, look for equipment that uses a short-throw lens so you can place the projector closer to your screen while still creating a 100-inch-plus picture.

Speaking of the screen, there are options. To get started, it's perfectly acceptable to go the DIY route and hang a crisp white sheet, but a high-quality screen offers consistently good, wrinkle-free viewing. New screens are lightweight and fold up so they can be easily stored and brought out later. Or go big with a massive inflatable screen—an option if you want a big picture and don't mind a little fan noise.

Listen up

Although projectors have built-in speakers, the sound often needs a boost, especially if people are not close to the source. A pair of wireless outdoor speakers will solve the problem, or have the moviegoers use Bluetooth headphones or earbuds.

Ultimately, autumn movie night is about sitting back, watching the show and enjoying time outdoors together before the deep freeze sets in. "After a couple of years having to stay inside so much and being isolated, it's nice to have the option to be outside and see friends," Rosling says. "That's the ingredient for the perfect movie night." ■

Kira Vermond is an Ontario-based freelancer.



Don't forget the snacks!

Complete your movie-watching experience with the right goodies.

- Pop cinema-worthy popcorn at home using a commercial popcorn machine and fill up replica vintage popcorn boxes or bags.
- Set up a candy buffet and watch eyes widen. Load the table with creamy caramels, hard and chewy candies, full- or snack-size chocolate bars and more.
- Hot chocolate is a given as nights cool, but why not offer a variety of teas, coffee and soda too? For hot drinks, plug in a K-Cup machine. A steaming mug is just a button-press away.—KV

FROM LEFT: SHAIITH; YETI STUDIO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Raising the bar

When planning an outdoor movie night, go all out! Send printed invitations to guests and tuck pretend movie tickets inside. "Guests can

show them when they arrive," says Cristie Rosling of Umbrella Events in Vancouver. The invitation becomes a cute memento for the evening. Choose a colour palette to match the movie. (Think black

and white if you're showing *The Artist*, for example, or gold for 007 flicks.)

And don't forget a red carpet on the driveway or deck. Snap some pictures of your guests as they arrive.—KV

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Buyers' picks

Product selections from Costco's Home Electronics buying team



Charles Chum

Sean Oliver

Christos Zourdos

LG OLED C2 televisions

LG's OLED pixel technology offers beautiful picture quality with infinite contrast, perfect black and more than a billion colours. The latest 4K processor automatically adjusts your settings to improve picture and sound quality based on what you're watching. Take in a movie just as the director intended with LG's Filmmaker Mode, and enhance every moment with Dolby Vision IQ and Dolby Atmos. Various item numbers. Warehouses/Costco.ca.

—Sean Oliver



Acer Predator Orion 3000 Gaming Desktop

This powerful, compact PC features a 12th Gen Intel Core i5 processor and 12-gigabyte GeForce 3060 graphics card. Top that off with 16 gigabytes of memory and a 1-terabyte solid-state drive, and you have yourself a gaming goliath. Each fan has four RGB LEDs for ambient lighting. Item 3647933. Select warehouses/Costco.ca.—Charles Chum



Anker eufy Security Bundle

Record home or office activity in high resolution with this three-camera system, which holds 16 gigabytes of storage. The system works with Apple HomeKit, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa for seamless hands-free operation. All features are included, with no monthly fee. Plus, you can save on contractor costs because the wireless set-up is easy, the cameras are battery operated and all installation materials are in the box. Item 2507450. Warehouses/Costco.ca.—Christos Zourdos

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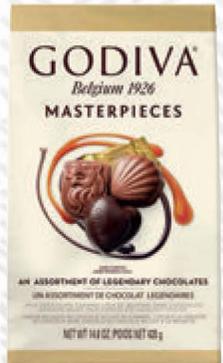


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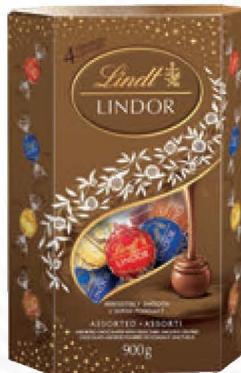
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SharkNinja focuses on innovation

by DAN JONES



COURTESY SHARKNINJA

“Before the product launches in the market, about 1,000 consumers have interacted with it.”

— **MARK BARROCAS** ◆
President, SharkNinja

A search on the social media platform TikTok should tell you all you need to know about the Ninja Creami ice cream maker, SharkNinja president Mark Barrocas says. “Type in ‘Ninja Creami,’” Barrocas adds. “There are 35 million views of people making all kinds of amazing stuff.”

SharkNinja’s impact on the housewares industry can be seen through viral videos and five-star reviews, something the company takes seriously.

“Twenty years ago, if you [liked or] didn’t like something, you maybe told your mom or dad or husband or wife,” Barrocas says. “Today the consumer has so much power.”

The company, which was started in Montreal in 1994 under the name Euro-Pro, offers more than 150 products to consumers worldwide. The name has evolved into SharkNinja, with cleaning solutions, such as vacuum cleaners, falling under the Shark brand, and kitchen products under Ninja.

Collectively, SharkNinja has become a staple at Costco. “You can go to a warehouse and see multiple SharkNinja products,” Barrocas says. “The consumer is going to get the same value and affordable innovation, the same attention to detail and hopefully the same delight out of the products they buy.”

Breathing new life into old ideas is a SharkNinja tradition. Mark Rosenzweig, who founded the company, focused on research and development early on. What resulted were improved takes on vacuum cleaners, traditional food processors and coffee machines, with products like steam cleaners, upright vacuum cleaners, multi-functional food processors and craft coffee makers.

Creating devices that people love is the goal, says Barrocas, who adds, “The validation of what we do comes from the consumer. Engineering is one part of that. As an organization we have over 750 engineers globally. The testing of the products is the other. Before the product launches in the market, about 1,000 consumers have interacted with it. We’re not launching with our fingers crossed, saying, ‘I hope people like it.’” ■

COMPANY INFO

Name

SharkNinja

President

Mark Barrocas

Employees

2,800

Headquarters

Needham,
Massachusetts

Items carried at Costco

Ninja Professional Plus Kitchen System with Auto-iQ (Item 1605291); Ninja Professional Plus Blender (Item 1502667); Ninja Creami (Item 2603480). Warehouses/ Costco.ca.

Quote about Costco

“One of the reasons I think there’s such a good alliance with our businesses is because Costco is also bringing extraordinary value.”

—Mark Barrocas,
president

IMPRESS YOUR GUESTS

These easy appetizer ideas are ready for your next party and can be found at your Costco warehouse.



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To start off, pick up a Kirkland Signature™ baguette at the Costco Bakery (you'll want the 2-pack!)

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

1. Slice the baguette in small rounds or lengthwise.
2. Grill some pre-sliced back bacon and add a slice of bacon to each baguette round.
3. Add a few apple slices and top with a slice of cheese.
4. Place in the oven at 180 C (350 C) for 8-10 minutes or until the cheese melts.
5. Drizzle with honey and top with pistachios.

This easy appetizer is also very versatile. Switch up the ingredients based on dietary needs. For example, for someone sensitive to gluten, use a whole apple slice instead of the baguette and add bacon and cheese on top of the apple. Or if your guests don't like apples, pears make a great substitute!

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Warm and wonderful

Raclette is the perfect cold-weather dish to share with guests

by WENDY HELFENBAUM



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COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of cheeses can be found in Costco warehouses. The 3-in-1 Fondue, Grill & Raclette (Item 1654224), which includes 12 metal pans, eight fondue forks and 12 wood spatulas, is available in select warehouses and at Costco.ca.

Originating in the European Alps, raclette is both a mild, semi-soft Swiss cheese and the name of a popular dish. The word “raclette” stems from the French verb *racler*—meaning “to scrape,” which refers to how the melted cheese is scraped from its wheel.

“French people would say it’s French and Swiss people would probably say otherwise—it started somewhere in those mountainous regions,” explains Costco member Martin Adam, owner of Restaurant La Raclette, which opened in Montreal 35 years ago.

Cheese, already a staple in the region, would be paired with dried meats, potatoes, bread, pickled onions and cornichons.

“The wheel of cheese would often freeze in those harsh conditions, and putting it by

the fireplace to thaw turned it into the best melted cheese dish,” says Adam.

Raclette cheese is usually made of cow’s milk and tastes like hazelnuts with notes of milk and butter, notes Adam. Aged for at least eight weeks, it has a creamy texture and melts easily. Other semi-soft cheeses that can be used for raclette include Gouda and goat cheese. “Some will split if overheated, so pay attention to the fat separating from the cheese while cooking and reduce the melting time,” Adam adds.

The basics

While you can melt the cheese using any technique, tabletop raclette grills make this delicious meal simple to prepare and enjoy.

Cheese please

Follow these tips for a raclette feast at home:

- Plan on 200 grams (7 ounces) of raclette cheese per person.

- Slice cheese to size so it fits in the small metal trays.
- Have a platter of thinly sliced meat to grill.
- Dry white wine is a nice accompaniment.
- Chop vegetables into

chunks to grill, and boil potatoes in advance.

- Store raclette cheese for six weeks in the fridge or up to three months in the freezer.—*WH*

Sliced cheese is melted on the bottom shelf of the grill under the heating element in small pans called *coupelles*, while the top plate grills fresh meat and vegetables. Models with an integrated fondue pot can be used to heat broth to cook chunks of fish or meat.

Look for a versatile grill with dual temperature controls so you can make fondue, raclette or both at once, suggests Costco member Julie Letarte, president of Importations C.J.S. Inc. in Bois-des-Filion, Quebec, which imports raclette products. “You can also remove the fondue pot and insert a round stone, which is great for healthy grilling,” she adds.

Turn on your stove’s fan while using the raclette machine, suggests Letarte, and keep unsupervised children away from the grill. After the meal, just unplug the unit, wait for it to cool and then wash everything by hand with mild dish soap.

Your choice of menus

Adam suggests serving a variety of cured meats on the side, including thinly sliced ham. Serve good-quality mustard and sauces such as pesto or aioli, along with a baguette, crusty bread or garlic croutons. Or choose a theme for your meal.

“Do ‘The Hunter’s Dream’: Serve game meats for grilling, along with mushrooms and truffle cheese, with a rosemary-flavoured broth in the fondue pot,” says Adam. “Or try a ‘Coastal Harvest’ with a bouillabaisse-style broth to cook shellfish, [and] mild cheese and seafood for grilling. The ‘Mountain Chalet’ features classic cheese fondue in the pot with raclette cheese to melt under the grill along with sliced beef, lamb and poultry for grilling.”

Letarte says raclette grills can also be used to prepare breakfast or brunch. “It’s easy to make bacon or crepes with mascarpone cheese, or an omelette—it’s fun to get creative,” she says. “Raclette really brings people together, and even people who aren’t experienced cooks can successfully make raclette, plus it’s great for potlucks.” ■

Costco member Wendy Helfenbaum is a Montreal-based writer and TV producer.

Raclette Cheese Tartiflette with Maple Lardoons and Walnuts

250 g (9 oz) walnuts
350 g (12 oz) lardoons (bacon strips)
2 large onions, sliced
5 large boiled potatoes, peeled and sliced
160 mL (⅔ cup) maple syrup
800 g (28 oz) raclette cheese, sliced
Chopped flat-leaf parsley, for garnish

In a non-stick pan, toast the walnuts over low heat until fragrant; set aside. Add the lardoons to the same pan and cook over medium heat until half cooked. Remove the lardoons, keeping some fat (30 to 45 mL/ 2 to 3 Tbsp) in the pan. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned; set aside.

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Cover bottom of a large, greased baking dish with the potatoes. Add the onions, lardoons and walnuts. Pour maple syrup over all. Cover with cheese. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley; serve with a salad. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Martin Adam and Selven Nellatamby



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Beef up your bacon

Pig out on pork belly with these tasty cooking suggestions

by SCOTT JONES



Oven Roasted Crispy Pork Belly

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LIESA COLE

Scott Jones
(@JonesIsThirsty)
is a food and wine
writer living in
Alabama.

Canada has a long-standing love affair with bacon. Unfortunately, bacon's equally delicious "parent" cut, pork belly, remains largely overlooked by home cooks. But here's a tasty news flash: It's easy to bring pork belly's versatility, value and flavour superpowers to your kitchen.

Hailing from the underside of the hog, this princely piece of porcine perfection consists mainly of silky fat wrapped around luscious streaks of meat. "The natural richness of pork belly allows you to eat high on the hog at a relatively low cost," says Costco member and cookbook author Andrea Nguyen.

For centuries, pork belly has been an essential staple in many global cuisines. While specific seasonings vary, cooking methods transcend borders: grilling, roasting, braising and deep-frying.

One of the easiest ways to prepare pork belly is to score the fat side and slow-roast it in the oven (see recipes). Scoring allows some of the fat to render while keeping the meat tender and juicy. It can also be cooked on a charcoal or gas grill using indirect heat. Nguyen air-dries the scored and seasoned pork belly in the refrigerator for a day or two to unlock even more flavour and texture.

Need more inspiration? Add cooked slices of pork belly to a charcuterie board or to top burgers or sandwiches; stir diced pieces into mac 'n' cheese or pasta. "There are so many simple ways to use pork belly," explains Nguyen. "My only problem is overindulging!" ■

Oven Roasted Crispy Pork Belly

1 (4.4 kg/9.6 lb) Kirkland Signature pork belly, cut into a 454 g (1 lb) section; reserve the rest
10 mL (2 tsp) fine salt or 20 mL (4 tsp) kosher salt
10 mL (2 tsp) sugar
A few grinds of black pepper

Season pork belly with salt, sugar and pepper. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 232 C (450 F).

Roast pork belly for 30 minutes on the middle rack in a heavy, oven-safe pan or skillet, fat side up. Reduce heat to 135 C (275 F) and roast for an hour or more, until tender but not mushy. (Internal temperature will be beyond 71 C/160 F.) Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until chilled through—at least a few hours or up to 2 days.

Once chilled, slice into thick pieces, then brown in a skillet on the stove-top until crisp. Enjoy on its own or in soups, salads, pasta sauces, ramen and more.

Recipe courtesy of Marissa Stevens (pinchandswirl.com)

Pork Belly Cubano

30 mL (2 Tbsp) kosher salt
30 mL (2 Tbsp) light brown sugar
10 mL (2 tsp) freshly ground black pepper
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 (4.4 kg/9.6 lb) Kirkland Signature pork belly, cut in half lengthwise; use one half, reserve the rest
8 long, flat rolls, split horizontally
125 mL (½ cup) Dijon mustard
16 slices Swiss cheese
16 slices deli ham, thinly sliced
4 dill pickles, thinly sliced
125 mL (½ cup) butter, softened

In a small mixing bowl, blend salt, sugar, pepper and garlic. Rub mixture on pork. Crosshatch the fat side of the pork with 0.63- to 1.3-cm (¼- to ½-inch) deep knife cuts, spaced about 2.5 cm (1 inch) apart. Wrap pork with plastic wrap. Refrigerate 8 to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 163 C (325 F). Place unwrapped pork, fat side up, on a large foil-lined baking sheet. Cook on top rack for 2 to 3 hours until fork tender, or until internal temperature is 93 C (200 F). Let rest 5 to 10 minutes before thinly slicing; set aside. Spread the cut side of the rolls' tops with mustard. Layer rolls' top and bottom cut sides with cheese. Layer the rolls' bottoms with sliced pork, ham and pickles. Cover with roll tops.

Preheat a panini press, large cast-iron pan or griddle to medium. Spread sandwich tops and bottoms with butter; place in heated pan. If using a pan or griddle, weight the sandwiches down with another pan. Cook until golden on both sides. Halve sandwiches; serve. Makes 8 servings.

Recipe courtesy of JBS

COSTCO CONNECTION

Whole or sliced pork belly is available in the Costco meat department. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.



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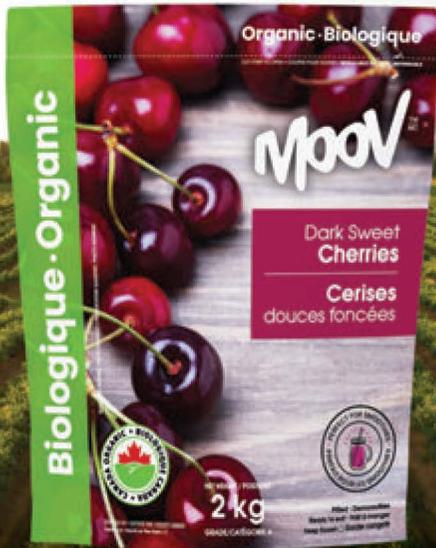


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The big date

Medjool dates are naturally sweet and nutritious

by YVONNE MAFFEI



STUDIO MIYA PHOTOGRAPHY

Yvonne Maffei is a Costco member, food writer, recipe developer and the publisher of myhalalkitchen.com.

COSTCO CONNECTION

Fresh organic medjool dates can be found in the produce section of your local Costco warehouse. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.

Date palms are one of the oldest cultivated fruit trees known to humankind, going back around 6,000 years. Native to the Middle East and North Africa, date palms can also be found in similar hot and arid environments in North America.

Medjool dates are soft, cylindrical and about 5 to 7.6 centimetres (2 to 3 inches) long, which is larger than most other varieties. They pack about 66 calories per date, but they are nutritious because they are low in fat and rich in potassium and fibre. Medjools contain a high level of carbohydrates, vitamins B₅ and B₆, and iron, which makes them a perfect all-natural energy booster before a workout or a great part of post-workout recovery.

About 70% of medjool dates' weight comes from sugar, found in natural sugar crystals, which makes dates a suitable substitute for sugar in many recipes, especially in baking. You can remove the pits and boil the dates down to a paste or syrup, which can be used as a substitute for molasses in pancake syrup or for making savoury sauces, such as barbecue, since it adds a dark, rich flavour when cooked.

Medjools can be added to smoothies instead of sugar or honey; they can also be chopped or diced and added to salads with a little olive oil as a dressing. They are plump and caramel-like in flavour, which makes them perfect for stuffing with nuts or thick cheeses. Fresh medjools all by themselves can combat sweet-tooth cravings, and serve as a simple, healthy snack for kids and adults alike.

Both fresh and dried medjools store well. Refrigerate fresh dates and store dried ones in airtight containers in your pantry. Dates can work well as a new ingredient in your weekly eating plan. ■

Nut-Filled Chocolate-Covered Dates

16 medjool dates
45 g (1½ oz) large walnut pieces, whole almonds or small, whole hazelnuts
170 g (6 oz) semisweet chocolate chips
1 vanilla bean
80 mL (⅓ cup) whole milk
Coconut flakes, caramel, lemon zest, sea salt or chopped nuts for topping

Remove the pit from each date and stuff the centre of each with 1 or 2 walnut pieces, a few hazelnuts or 1 almond. Set aside.

Using a double boiler or small saucepan, gently melt and stir the chocolate over low heat, using a wire whisk. Meanwhile, cut the vanilla bean in half lengthwise. Scrape out the inside of the bean, and add it to the chocolate. Add the milk and whisk mixture until smooth. Remove from heat.

Dip each stuffed date fully into the chocolate mixture, then move it to a plate. Work quickly to coat all of the dates with chocolate. Immediately sprinkle each date with your choice of topping. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, uncovered, or until the chocolate has set. Keep cool until serving. Makes 16 dates.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Yvonne Maffei



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Love layers

Onions are a pantry staple that can make a meal

by LAURA LANGSTON



French Onion Soup



COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find yellow onions, Mayan sweet onions, red onions and shallots in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.

Onions are one of the oldest cultivated vegetables in history, dating back at least 5,000 years. Low in calories but packed with vitamins and important nutrients, onions were used by the ancient Greeks to fortify athletes before the Olympic games. In Egypt, onions were worshipped as a symbol of eternity and were buried with pharaohs.

These days, our onion worship is rooted in the kitchen. In fact, onions play such a pivotal role in cooking that a pantry without them is considered incomplete.

Members of the genus *Allium* and related to shallots, leeks and garlic, onions are a key flavouring in many dishes. Different varieties work best for different applications.

The all-purpose yellow onion is also the most sulphurous, causing many people to tear up when the onion is cut. Boldly assertive when raw, yellow onions sweeten as they cook. Use them in soups and stews, or for sautéing, grilling or roasting. They are also delicious caramelized or poached.

Red onions have a bold, peppery flavour. They are great pickled or grilled or used where you want a hint of colour, such as in sandwiches, burgers, wraps or salads.

Long simmering can render their colour dull and unappealing, so is best avoided.

White onions have a fresh mild taste that increases in pungency as they age. Use them for stuffing and baking, or in raw dishes like potato salad, as well as ceviche and salsas.

Less common are Mayan onions, Walla Walla onions and Vidalia onions. They are less astringent and significantly sweeter than other varieties. Delicious raw in relishes or salads or as garnishes, they also make fabulous onion rings and onion jam.

To reduce tearing up, chill onions 30 minutes before cutting and always use a sharp knife. To minimize the pungency of raw onions, cut them and soak them in ice water, refrigerated, for at least 90 minutes.

Unpeeled onions should be kept in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place and never stored in plastic. Cut onions should be refrigerated and will keep for up to 10 days in a well-sealed container.

Whole or sliced, onions are indispensable to have on hand! ■

West Coast author Laura Langston has a weakness for onion rings and onion jam.

French Onion Soup

6 large yellow onions
30 mL (2 Tbsp) butter
(or olive oil)
30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil,
plus more for brushing
7 mL (1½ tsp) salt, plus
more to taste
1 baguette, cut into 1-cm
(¾-inch) slices
15 mL (1 Tbsp) fresh thyme
(or 5 mL/1 tsp dried), plus
sprigs for garnish

10 mL (2 tsp) flour
1.5 L (6 cups) beef stock
or vegetable broth
2 bay leaves
2 mL (½ tsp) pepper,
plus more to taste
1 mL (¼ tsp) sherry vinegar
or red wine vinegar
170 g (6 oz) Gruyère,
Comté or Emmenthal
cheese, sliced

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F).

Slice the ends off the onions, cut in half lengthwise and peel. Cut into lengthwise slices about 0.6 cm (¼ inch) thick. Heat the butter and olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onions, toss with the salt, then cover for 3 to 4 minutes. Uncover, stir and cook for 45 minutes, stirring completely every 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low halfway through cooking.

Meanwhile, brush the bread (2 slices per person) with olive oil. Place on a sheet pan and bake slices 10 minutes per side, until crisp; set aside.

When onions look caramel in colour, add the thyme. Increase heat to medium and stir fairly constantly for 5 or more minutes, until deeply golden. Sprinkle the flour over the caramelized onions, stirring and toasting it for 1 minute. Add the stock, bay leaves and pepper. Stir, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes.

Add the vinegar. Taste. Adjust salt and pepper; if too salty, add a splash of water. Remove the bay leaves.

For serving in an oven-safe ramekin, set oven to broil (or increase heat to 246 C/475 F). Ladle the soup into a ramekin, up to 1.3 cm (½ inch) from the rim. Top the warm soup with 2 baguette slices slightly layered, keeping them afloat; cover with sliced cheese and place on a sheet pan. Repeat with the other ramekins, then place sheet pan in the hot oven, baking just until the cheese is golden and bubbling. If broiling, watch carefully. Garnish with a sprig of thyme; serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Sylvia Fontaine (feastingathome.com)

Grilled Onion and Swiss Flatbread

2 sweet onions, peeled and
sliced into rounds
45 mL (3 Tbsp) extra-virgin
olive oil, divided
Kosher salt and pepper, to taste
2 flatbread rounds, such as naan
200 g (7 oz/10 slices) Swiss cheese
30 mL (2 Tbsp) honey
15 mL (1 Tbsp) fresh thyme, minced
15 mL (1 Tbsp) chives, minced

Heat a grill to medium-high. Brush the onion slices with 15 mL (1 Tbsp) olive oil. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Grill the onions until softened and browned on both sides, flipping once. Remove to a plate.

Brush both sides of each flatbread with 15 mL (1 Tbsp) olive oil; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Lay the flatbreads on the grill and grill for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the flatbreads from the grill and top (on the grilled side) with cheese, onions (breaking up the rounds), honey and thyme. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

Turn off one side of the grill, keeping the other side on medium-high. Place the topped flatbreads on the cool side of the grill; close the top. Grill until each flatbread is golden and toasted around the edges and the cheese is melty, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Drizzle with remaining olive oil, and sprinkle with chives and a pinch of salt. Slice and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Cathy Roma (whatshouldimakefordinner.com)



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A firm foundation

Costco purchases support Guatemalan communities' prosperity drive

by OWEN ROBERTS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF © JUAN FRANCISCO GARCIA COMPARINI FOUNDATION



JASON JONES

Owen Roberts is an agricultural journalist and a communications professor at the University of Illinois.

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco warehouses sell a variety of vegetables, the sale of which benefits the Juan Francisco García Comparini Foundation.

No matter how or where family farmers grow food, pride is the main ingredient. You see it everywhere in Costco warehouses, which feature the best from family farmers around the world.

One such place is Guatemala, where family farmers supply Costco with a wide array of produce year-round: sweet baby carrots, organic zucchini, conventional and organic French green beans, English shelled peas, sugar snap peas, Brussels sprouts, broccoli tender stems, cauliflower and baby corn.

Costco buyers recognize the care the farmers take in their crops, produced in some of the richest soil anywhere and harvested by hand.

Behind the scenes, an impressive education, training and development network has been built for Guatemalan farmers and their communities, thanks to a benevolent organization called the Juan Francisco García Comparini Foundation.

The beginning

The foundation was started in 2007 by Guatemalan agribusinessman Tulio García Sr., in the name of his late son, Juan Francisco García Comparini (see “Reaching for the top”), who passed away in a car accident three years earlier. Costco had developed an interest in Guatemalan produce and recognized the challenges facing the country’s farmers and citizens overall.

Guatemala is one of Central America’s poorest countries. Infrastructure is lacking. Rural areas receive little government support for education and schools. Income is limited. Highly skewed land distribution means many family vegetable farms are tiny, not much more than a few thousand square feet. Job opportunities are few, and education is often sacrificed. All this creates a stubborn poverty cycle.

So with Costco’s support, Tulio and the three companies that coordinate the pro-

Opposite: Scholarship students give back by planting trees; Tulio García, president of the Juan Francisco García Comparini Foundation (second from right) visiting farmers.



Left: Family-farm produce grown in Guatemala.
Below: Vanessa García (right), executive director, at the Child Care Centre.

duction and export of Guatemalan produce established the Juan Francisco García Comparini Foundation. The organization is based in San Juan Sacatepéquez, about 32 kilometres from Guatemala City.

A portion of the proceeds from each case of produce the companies sell to Costco goes to the foundation to help farmers and assist communities with social responsibility initiatives. The projects include creating jobs, building housing, providing food and supporting scholarships that help people finish school.

Strong roots

Vanessa García, a cousin of Juan Francisco, was the foundation's first employee in 2007. Today, as executive director, she has overseen its growth to 15 employees and an annual budget of US\$210,000.

"A steady farm income really helps farmers," she says, "but we knew more still had to be done to enrich the lives of them and their families."

With support from Costco, the foundation takes a holistic look at rural Guatemalans' needs.

First, the foundation knows farming sustainability improves with technology, so it provides credit to farmers to buy and install improved irrigation systems and greenhouses. It invests in entrepreneurship, so farmers can open small businesses—most recently, a hatchery, a bakery and a restaurant. García, a trained industrial psychologist, helps the businesses with their planning.

The foundation also supports tree nursery production for reforestation on environmentally sensitive land. Last year its funding went toward 120,000 cypress, pine and cedar trees for this purpose.

As well, the foundation invests in preventing malnutrition, which García calls the country's main health problem. It supports child care centres in rural areas where mothers working in the fields can take their children and make sure they are properly nourished.

The foundation also provides one-year scholarships to train mostly Indigenous people to learn English, computer skills and job training, and places up to 60 participants every year in call centres, hotels and nongovernment organizations, in jobs where knowing English is important.

And finally, the foundation supports Guatemalan agricultural workers with temporary jobs on farms in California and New York. The workers return to Guatemala and invest their income back in their communities. They might build houses, buy land and expand their farms; open small businesses; and provide better education and living conditions for their families.

As well, in the U.S. they learn new growing techniques they can take back home.

"Good agricultural practices and training help growers regardless of their size or what country they're located in," says García. "We are seeing improvement." ■



Reaching for the top

Just 23 when he died, Juan Francisco García Comparini already had big dreams—like becoming president of Guatemala.

"Those close to him believed he would do it," says his cousin Vanessa García, who heads the Juan Francisco García Comparini Foundation. "He had all the traits of a leader—compassion, generosity, intelligence and vision."

Juan Francisco saw jobs and education as keys to people's prosperity.

"He wanted to change Guatemala's history," says García. "We're proud that the foundation bears his name."—OR

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Snooze alarm

More than just a noisy nighttime annoyance, sleep apnea can cause a variety of serious health issues

by ANDREA DOWNING PECK



COSTCO CONNECTION

If you have questions about sleep apnea, you can consult with your local warehouse pharmacist.

Snooring that is loud enough to wake your bed partner and punctuated with gasping sounds could be a warning sign of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). OSA occurs when muscles in your throat relax during sleep and your airway is narrowed or closed, momentarily cutting off breathing and lowering the blood oxygen level.

According to the 2018 Canadian Health Measures Survey, 6.4% of Canadians ages 18 to 79 said they had been diagnosed with sleep apnea (up from a 2009 survey, when 3% reported they had the condition).

“Daytime tiredness can be caused by sleep apnea, leading to reduced quality of life,” says Dr. Najib Ayas, medical manager of the University of British Columbia Hospital Sleep Laboratory in Vancouver. “But in individuals with more substantial disease, you are wor-

ried about long-term risks in terms of cardiovascular disease and dementia as well.”

In addition to the most serious cardiovascular complications such as heart attack, stroke and hypertension, sleep apnea also has been linked to increased risk for diabetes and glaucoma.

Symptoms beyond snoring

Ayas lists the cardinal signs of sleep apnea as disruptive snoring, witnessed apneas—when breathing temporarily stops during sleep—and daytime tiredness. Less obvious signs and symptoms include dry mouth, night sweats, nighttime urination, morning headaches, nighttime reflux and teeth grinding.

Ayas also notes that men are more likely to be diagnosed with sleep apnea than women. Other risk factors include older age, obesity and a family history of the condition. People with hypothyroidism, cardiac disease and diabetes also tend to have higher rates of sleep apnea, he says.



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Treatment options

Dr. Charles Samuels, medical director of the Centre for Sleep & Human Performance in Calgary, Alberta, says a sleep study is required for individuals whose daytime functioning or nighttime sleep is impaired. Samuels explains that continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, which delivers steady air pressure through a hose and mask or nosepiece, remains the gold standard for people with moderate to severe sleep apnea.

The challenge is that even though CPAP machines have become quieter and mask options greater, roughly 25%

of individuals quit using the device or remove their masks during the night because of anxiety, claustrophobia or other reasons.

Surgical options for people with severe OSA who cannot tolerate CPAP include tonsil removal, soft palate reduction or tongue suspension techniques. Not every person is a candidate for these procedures. Sleep endoscopy, a diagnostic procedure done under anesthesia, can help identify whether surgery, and what kind, would be appropriate.

For milder and some moderate cases of sleep apnea, dentist-supplied custom oral appliances that hold the lower jaw forward and prevent the tongue from falling back and blocking the airway can be an alternative first-line therapy, as are weight loss and increased exercise.

While severe sleep apnea is linked to serious health conditions, Samuels says clinical treatment decisions are based on improving quality of life by eliminating excessive daytime sleepiness and other symptoms. "That plays a huge role in the decisions to treat, not treat, what to use for treatment, etc." ■

Andrea Downing Peck is a freelance writer and CPAP user from Bainbridge Island, Washington.



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Sleep apnea in children

A child who chronically snores is sounding a wake-up call.

"A child who sounds like an adult when snoring would raise a red flag and should prompt evaluation or at least a discussion with their pediatrician," says Dr. Michael Cohen, assistant professor of otolaryngology, head and neck surgery, at Boston University School of Medicine.

Pediatric sleep apnea has been linked to ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), bedwetting, sleepwalking, obesity and developmental issues. Because enlarged tonsils or adenoids are typically the cause of pediatric sleep apnea, surgically removing those tissues cures the sleep disorder in most children, Cohen says.—ADP

Getting sleep tested

A sleep test is a necessary step to determine if you have sleep apnea.

A home test uses a nasal cannula to detect breathing

patterns and monitor nasal airflow, while an elastic belt measures respiration and a fingertip sensor records oxygen levels and pulse rates.

During an in-lab sleep study, sensors measure brain

waves, eye movements and muscle tone during sleep stages. This monitored study can diagnose mild sleep apnea and other sleep disorders. Children must have an in-lab study.—ADP

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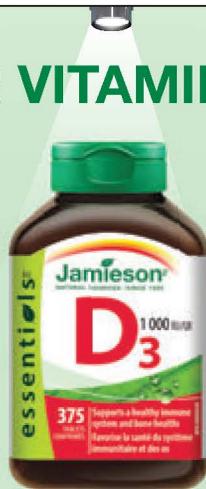
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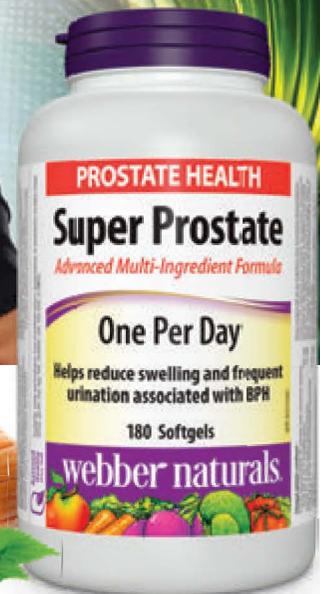
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Living well

Understanding the causes and treatments of diabetes

by JANE DOUCET



COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of healthful food is available in Costco warehouses. Exercise equipment is available in most Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, a disease that, including prediabetes, affects one in three Canadians. While the cause of diabetes varies by type, all forms lead to excess sugar (glucose) in the blood, which can cause health problems, including blindness, heart disease and kidney disease.

Research shows that non-First Nations Canadians 20 years of age today face a 50% chance of developing diabetes in their lifetime, with a higher rate (80%) for First Nations Canadians. The best-known types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2, but there are others.

“Most Canadians should be tested for diabetes starting at age 40, or earlier if there are risk factors such as a family history of diabetes or your body shape and size,” says Diabetes Canada (diabetes.ca) spokesperson and Costco member Dr. Harpreet Bajaj, an endocrinologist who treats adult diabetes patients in Brampton, Ontario.

Costco member Lori Robinson was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 11 in 1980. She learned early on how to manage her diabetes with daily insulin injections, blood sugar monitoring, healthy eating and exercise. “I’ve learned moderation and balance,” she tells the *Connection*.

Diabetes types

Type 2. The most common diagnosis accounts for 90% to 95% of cases. People with type 2 can’t properly use the insulin made by their bodies, or their bodies aren’t able to produce enough insulin. Mostly developed in adulthood due to increasing insulin resistance related to being overweight and inactive, type 2 diabetes can sometimes be managed with healthy eating and regular exercise but may also require medication or insulin therapy.

Type 1. The second most common diagnosis is an autoimmune disease also known as insulin-dependent diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes aren’t able to produce their own insulin



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(and therefore can't regulate their blood sugar) because their immune system is attacking their pancreas. Roughly 10% of people living with diabetes have type 1, and they are usually diagnosed as children or young adults. They will need to inject insulin or use an insulin pump daily for the rest of their lives.

Prediabetes. Prediabetes is a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as type 2. "There are no symptoms initially, which is why screening is important," says Bajaj. If prediabetes is left unmanaged, the risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases. The good news?

With healthy lifestyle changes, prediabetes is reversible.

Gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes is a temporary form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy; between 3% and 20% of pregnant women develop it. This diagnosis may increase the risk of developing diabetes later in life for both mother and child.

Treatment options

Lifestyle changes and diabetes drugs or insulin are the first steps in regulating blood sugar levels. If medication is required, Diabetes Canada recommends metformin. It is used to treat type 2 diabetes—along with lifestyle changes—and prediabetes, as it reduces the amount of sugar produced in the liver and helps with weight loss. For those with type 2 diabetes who have obesity issues, weightloss surgery, such as gastric bypass, may be an option.

Advances in treatment have made managing diabetes easier. In 2018, Robinson began using a continuous glucose monitor, a wearable device that tracks blood glucose, allowing her to check her readings by waving her iPhone over the monitor's sensor. "It has been transformative," she says.

"We've come a long way since insulin was discovered in Canada in 1921," says Bajaj. "Over the past 50 years, there has been a lot of progress with new medications. And technology is also playing a big part in improving diabetes management." ■

Jane Doucet is a Halifax-based journalist and author.



© MEGAN LEES

Diabetes and the holidays

It's possible to enjoy holiday fare. "I'll have a great meal and a tiny taste of everything, and one glass of wine," says Lori Robinson, who offers these tips:

Drizzle, don't drown.

"Dips, sauces and condiments are loaded in sugar, so I just drizzle them," she tells the *Connection*.

Leftovers are great.

Don't be afraid to leave something on your plate—and make sure what's on it is balanced with protein, carbohydrates and vegetables.

Test your sugars. Yes, even on Christmas Day!

Get moving. "Diabetes management is my responsibility, and [it's] about balancing daily food, insulin and activity," Robinson says.—*JD*

Check your risk

The Public Health Agency of Canada's CANRISK questionnaire for adults between the ages of 40 and 74 will help you learn

if you're at higher risk of having prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, which often have no obvious warning signs or symptoms. Knowing your risk can help you make healthy choices now

that will reduce your risk or even prevent you from developing diabetes.

To do the five-minute questionnaire, visit healthy.canadians.gc.ca/en/canrisk.—*JD*

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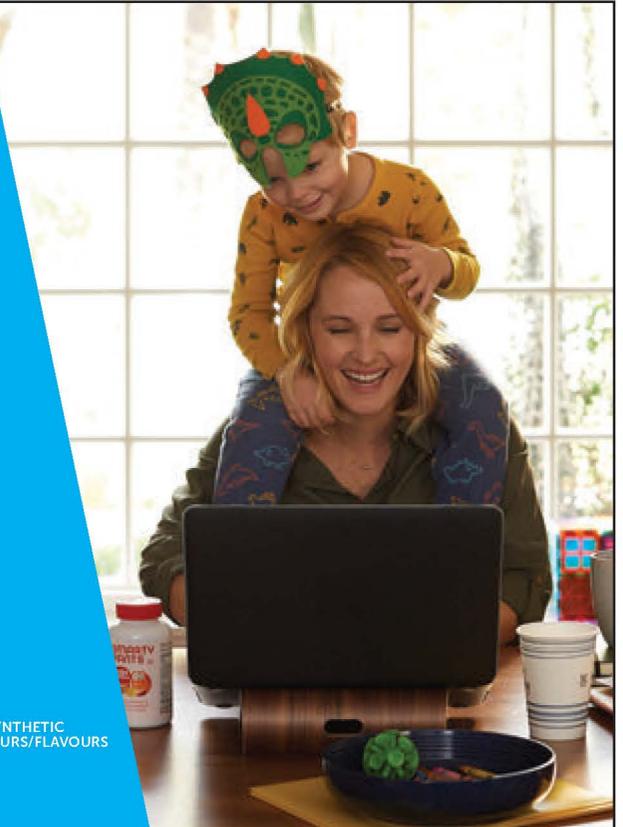
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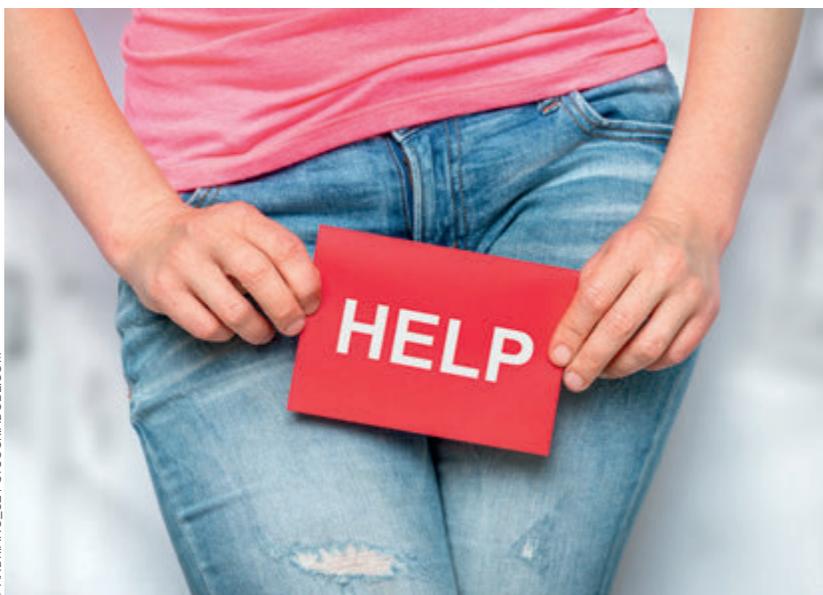
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Leak prevention

Understanding urinary incontinence

by LAWRENCE VARGA



© COSTCO CANADA

Lawrence Varga, B.Sc.Pharm., is assistant vice president of Costco Pharmacy.

Pharmacies in Costco's Quebec locations are independently owned and operated by pharmacists.

Raise your hand if you are one of the roughly 3.5 million Canadians over 40 who experience urinary incontinence, defined as accidental leakage of urine. If you didn't raise your hand, that's part of the problem, because only about a quarter of those with the condition have discussed it with their doctor. Although not life-threatening, incontinence can affect a person's physical, social and emotional health and cause stress, embarrassment and loneliness.

The condition is divided into four general categories: stress incontinence, when urine leaks because of pressure on the bladder such as when coughing or sneezing; urge incontinence, when the bladder contracts (overactive bladder) and causes the need to urinate to come on too fast; overflow incontinence, when an overfilled bladder causes a constant dribbling; and functional incontinence, when urine control is normal but mobility issues make it difficult to get to the bathroom in time.

Childbirth, menopause and obesity are factors in stress incontinence, which affects twice as many women as men. In men, an enlarged prostate, a gland that's situated under the bladder, can cause overflow incontinence.

The type of incontinence influences the choice of treatment. Non-drug treatments can involve Kegel exercises to strengthen the pelvic muscles; bladder training to gradually lengthen the time between going to the bathroom; weight loss; and surgery.

Some medications work by preventing the bladder from contracting. Estrogen for women can help thicken the tissues involved. Medications for men can improve urine flow, such as by reducing the size of an enlarged prostate.

Having learned all this, the most important thing to do is seek help, because it is available. ■

Buyer's pick

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Alexandre Champagne
OTC Pharmacy

Brighten your day

Looking for a sleek light therapy lamp to incorporate into your daily routine? Then the new HappyLight® Luxe by Verilux® is for you. The 10,000-lux, full-spectrum light features four brightness levels, three colour temperature options and a convenient countdown timer.

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Warehouses and Costco.ca. ■





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StriVectin outsmart aging

*Top-selling StriVectin facial moisturizer based on internal sales data. **Based on expert grading, when used as directed. ***Source: The NPD Group/ U.S. Prestige Beauty Total Department/Specialty, Skincare Product Sales, Body Part: Neck/ Décolleté, Jan. 2019 – March 2022 Combined.

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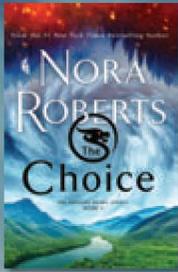
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ltm. 1469833 (eye drops), 425871 (lid wipes)

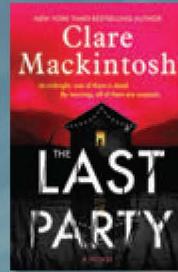
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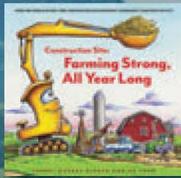
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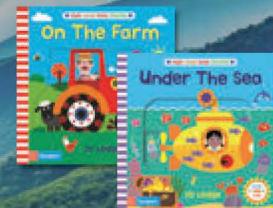
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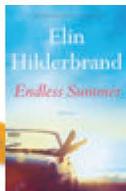
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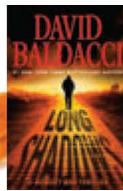
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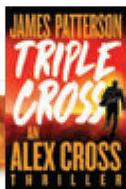
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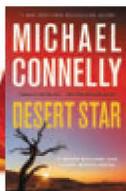
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Detective Alex Cross hunts down a diabolical killer, but that killer soon comes for Cross and his family.



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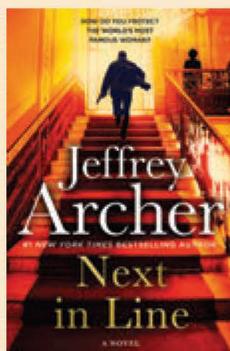
LAPD detective Renée Ballard and Harry Bosch must put aside old resentments to work together again in this propulsive novel.



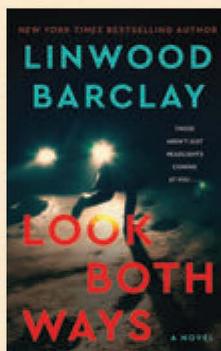
FALL'S HOTTEST NEW RELEASES



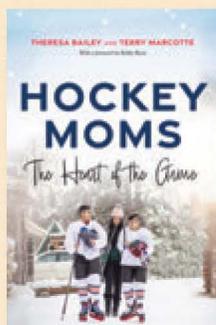
The First to Die at the End
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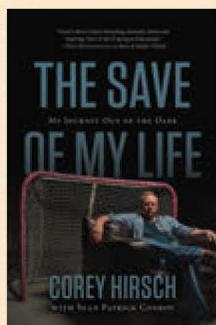
Next in Line
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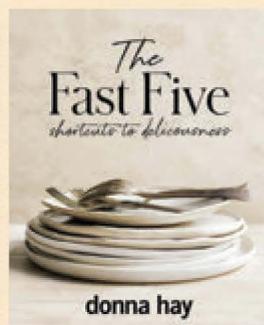
Look Both Ways
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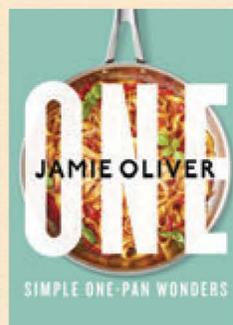
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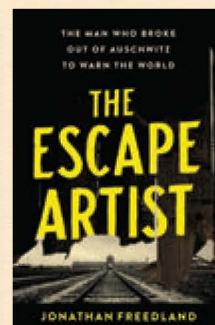
The Save of My Life
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The Fast Five
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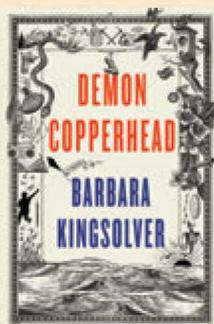
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Itn. 1667464



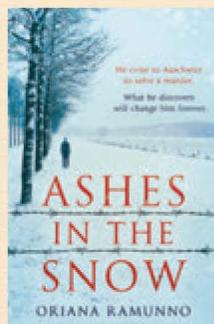
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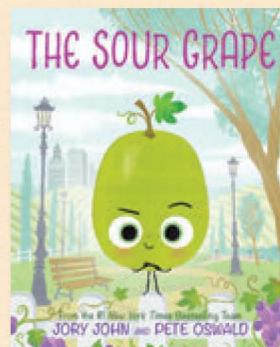
Jacqueline
in Paris
Itn. 1682545



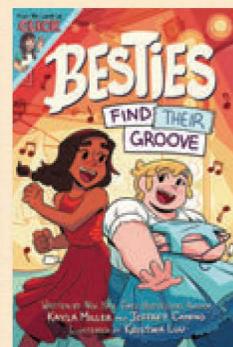
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Simon Gravel
Buyer, Books

In the 2016 novel *It Ends with Us*, Colleen Hoover introduced readers to Atlas Corrigan. When readers meet him, he is an 18-year-old homeless neighbour of the story's narrator, Lily Bloom. She gives him food, access to a shower and a warm place to sleep on cold nights. Atlas and Lily end up separated by time and distance only to reconnect several years later.

The sequel, *It Starts with Us*, gives readers Atlas' story, from his late teen years on.

It Starts with Us (Item 1671022) will be available in October in most Costco warehouses.



Colleen Hoover

CHAD GRIFFITH

The rest of the story

Colleen Hoover writes outside of the box

by MICHELE WOJCIECHOWSKI

Costco member and bestselling author Colleen Hoover never planned for there to be a sequel to her hit novel, *It Ends with Us*. But because of fan requests—a tremendous amount of them, with some readers begging her for years—she wrote one.

“This book [*It Starts with Us*] picks right up where the first book left off—on the same day of the epilogue,” Hoover says. “It focuses on Lily and Atlas. I wanted to give readers some of the background from Atlas’ point of view that we had gotten from Lily’s letters as a kid. It’s also from Lily’s point of view, so we see her interactions with Ryle and how she handles it. Most of the book is in present day—Atlas and Lily’s life today.”

Her fans might be surprised to know that Hoover nearly didn’t become an author at all.

Small-town girl

In addition to being born and raised with her two sisters in Saltillo, Texas, about 128 kilometres east of Dallas, Hoover and her family still live there. “My graduating class in high school was 13 people,” Hoover says, laughing. She met her husband, Heath, when she was 16. “He is from the next town over.” They’ve been married 22 years and have three sons: Levi, 21, Cale, 18, and Beckham, 17.

Hoover always wanted to be a writer. “I didn’t know how to write yet. I was 4 years old. I remember my older sister coming home from school and knowing the alphabet and how to write her name and address. I was so jealous of her that she knew how to write, because I had

“I had always dreamt of writing a No. 1 bestseller.”

—ADAM SILVERA

all these stories I wanted to tell,” she recalls. She began writing stories as soon as she got into kindergarten—and even majored in writing for one semester in college—but didn’t think it could pay the bills.

So she switched her major to social work and worked in that field for a decade. At age 31, Hoover began her first novel just for fun; she didn’t try to get a publisher or an agent. In fact, the only reason she put the book, a young adult novel titled *Slammed*, on Amazon was because the family had bought her grandmother a Kindle for Christmas, and this was a way for her to read it.

“I literally put a Word document up on Amazon and used one of their cover-creator tools,” Hoover says. Readers began finding it.

“We lived in a single-wide trailer with three kids and were struggling. My husband was a truck driver. I couldn’t afford marketing or anything,” Hoover says. Luckily, her sisters spread the word to their friends, and eventually the book got the attention of bloggers. It hit the *New York Times* bestseller list as an independent book.

By the time her first novel took off, she had written a second one, which also became a best-seller. She got an agent and publishers came calling. “It just happened really quickly and unexpectedly, so to this day, I have a really bad case of impostor syndrome,” admits Hoover.

No worries there, as her books keep attracting more readers. “I don’t want to be put in a box. I just write what I’m in the mood to write,” Hoover says. She’s also written paranormal, thriller and romance books. “My readers have come to know not what to expect next; that’s kind of become my brand.” ■

Michele Wojciechowski is an award-winning writer and humourist.

Life as an adventure



The First to Die at the End (Item 1671145) will be available in October in most Costco warehouses.

In *They Both Die at the End*, Adam Silvera introduced readers to Death-Cast, a company that has been predicting people’s deaths for seven years. In *The First to Die at the End*, Silvera tells the story of two strangers who feel an immediate connection—and then one of them gets one of the first calls from Death-Cast.

Costco Connection What is your biggest hope in regards to what readers take away from this story?

Adam Silvera I’ve always been intrigued by the concept of not knowing when I’m going to die, and it’s inspired me to use each day as an opportunity to resolve any problems I might be experiencing. I hope that stories like *The First to Die at the End* will encourage readers to live just as adventurously as the characters within them.

CC What inspired you to write a prequel to *They Both Die in the End*?

AS I was blown away by the support *The First to Die at the End* found on BookTok! I had always dreamt of writing a No. 1 bestseller and I never imagined my book starring queer Latinos would reach such massive success in so many countries.

CC What else would you like readers to know?

AS I feel the love from all my readers, and I’m looking forward to returning it with *The First to Die at the End*.

Also in the warehouse

Your besties will always be there for you, and the cast of TV show *Friends* is here to impart that lesson in two books for children ages 5 to 7.

Chandler, Joey, Monica, Phoebe, Rachel and Ross are shown in some of the most heartwarming moments from the series. Be on the lookout for the Geller Cup, Marcel the monkey, Central Perk and more.

Life Is Better with Friends and Holidays Are Better with Friends, by Micol Ostow and illustrations by Keiron Ward (Item 1670108), will be available in October in most Costco warehouses.—AL



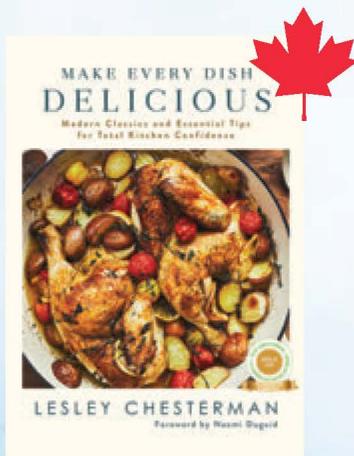
Books for Everyone on Your List

from Simon & Schuster



The book fans have been asking for. Get ready for Colleen Hoover's hotly anticipated sequel to *It Ends with Us*.

Itn. 1671022



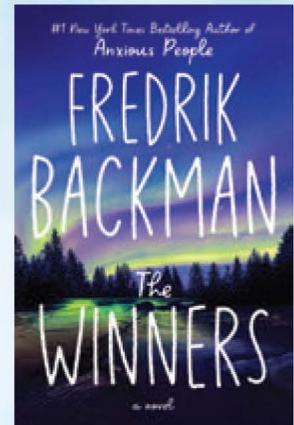
Your new go-to cookbook! Fool-proof comforting modern classics that deliver gorgeous results every time.

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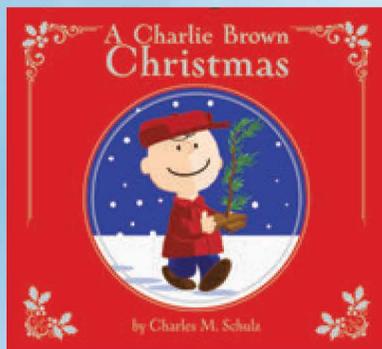
The dazzling first book in a brand new duology from YA sensation Chloe Gong, best-selling author of *These Violent Delights* and *Our Violent Ends*.

Itn. 1670986



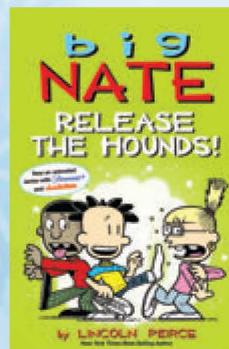
The long-awaited conclusion to the beloved *Beartown* series which inspired an HBO series of the same name, by the bestselling author of *Anxious People*.

Itn. 1671016



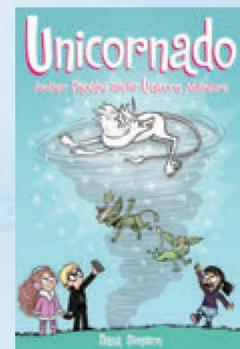
Celebrate with Charlie Brown and the Peanuts gang in this deluxe storybook retelling of the beloved Christmas special.

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The newest collection of comics featuring middle grade favourites *Big Nate* and *Phoebe and Her Unicorn*.

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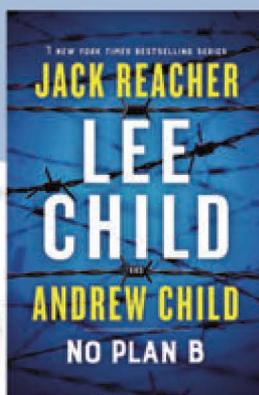
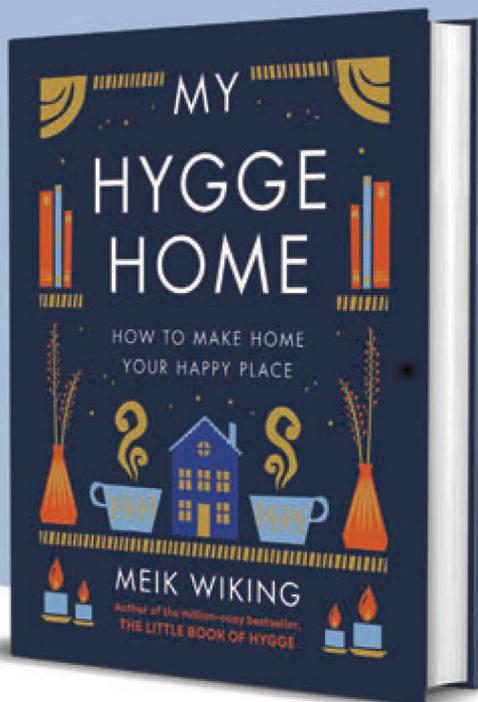
NEW RELEASES

from Penguin Random House Canada

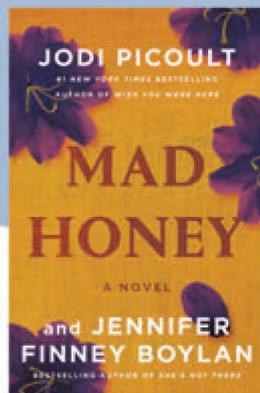
New York Times bestselling author of *The Little Book of Hygge*

My Hygge Home will teach you how to turn your home into your happy, cozy, safe space to retreat from the outside world.

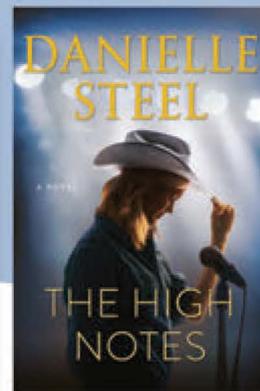
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The gripping new Jack Reacher thriller.
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An unforgettable love story.
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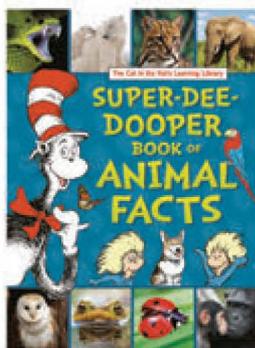
A heartfelt story about chasing dreams.
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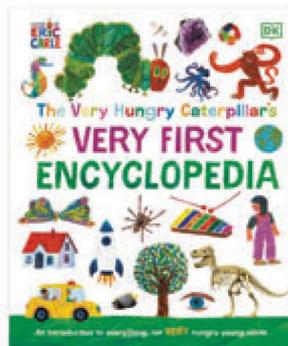
Delightful graphic novels from the bestselling series. Narwhal & Jelly books are full of positivity and playfulness.

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Explore the animal kingdom with Dr. Seuss!



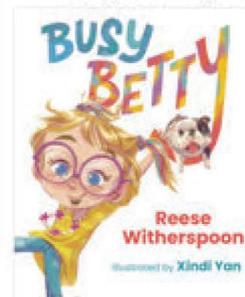
ITM. 1671315



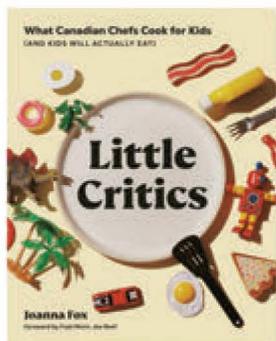
A first encyclopedia for curious kids.

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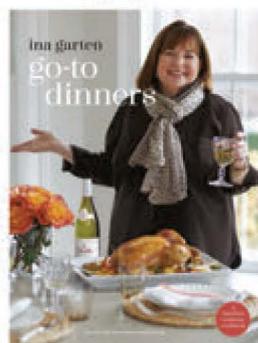
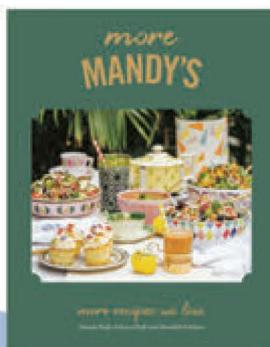


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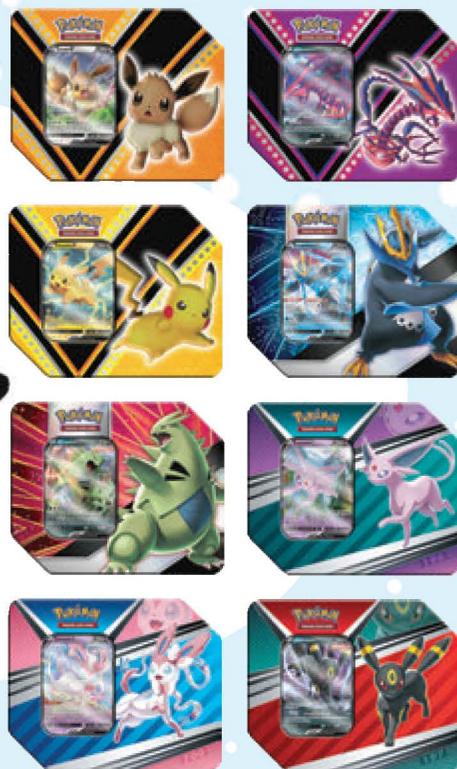
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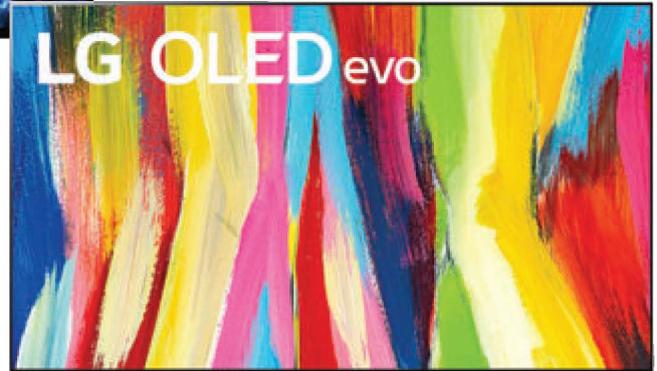
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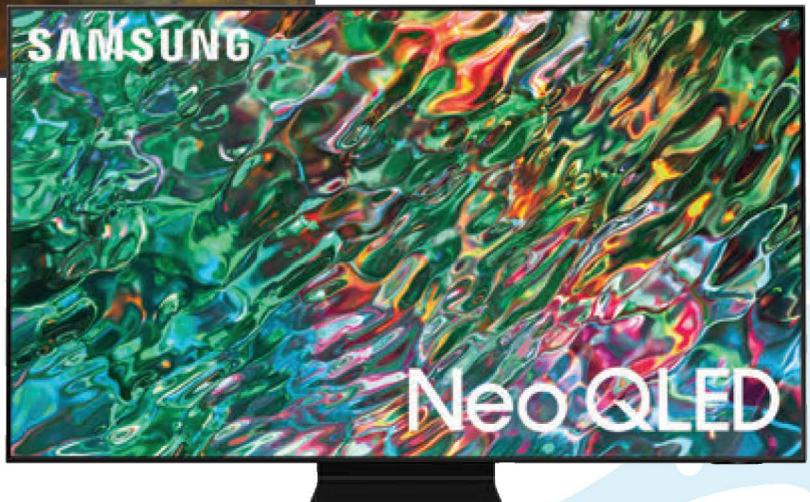
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Growing success

Top-tasting tomatoes from Costco's suppliers to your table

by ANDREA TOMKINS



TED SIMPSON

Andrea Tomkins fills this issue's consumer reporter slot with this behind-the-scenes look at a Costco program. Email questions about this article to connection@costco.com.

There's a story behind the multi-coloured tomatoes at Costco, and it's a good one.

An amazing amount of time, energy and teamwork goes into these packages of sweet and juicy little treats. The container you just popped into your cart simply because you know they are healthy and delicious (and the kids love them in their lunch boxes) is the result of a real passion for the product and years of development.

"It's a very successful product—a real success story," says Stéphane Desrochers, a buyer on Costco Canada's produce team.

Tasting, testing and time

Costco's goal is a simple one: to find the best grape and cherry tomato varieties to bring to Costco members for the best possible price.

How does the team find the top tomatoes—that perfect balance of sweetness, acidity and flavour that we all crave? It involves a lot of tasting, a lot of testing and a lot of time.

Selecting and breeding for the desired taste, colour and quality involves cross-breeding different varieties of tomato plants to create new cultivars. It's a process that can take a surprisingly long time. In fact, the team samples tomatoes years before they're even available to be grown in a commercial setting.

“The process of bringing a new tomato variety to the Costco member can take over seven years,” says Desrochers. “The selective breeding of generations of plants—it takes time!”

It’s also a journey that takes the produce team to cities across Canada and around the globe, to meet with seed development companies in Spain, Italy, Holland, Japan, the United States and Mexico.

Consistency is crucial

There are many aspects to this process that members may not be aware of. For example, if the team is pitched a great-tasting tomato that’s grown in Spain, the next step is to see how well it yields and tastes when grown in Canada. “That same seed, grown here, could bear fruit that has a completely different flavour. If successful, it’s packaged and launched in select warehouses for member feedback,” says Desrochers.

Another crucial part of the job is ensuring each variety tastes consistently the same—no matter where it’s grown, no matter the season—so members can always bring home a taste of summer.

In the summertime, Costco tomatoes hail from Ontario and British Columbia. In the winter, they’re grown in Mexico. Before that transition happens, however, the Costco buying team conducts thorough taste tests to make sure the flavour and quality remain top-notch.

“We want Costco members to be able to buy tomatoes during the peak of a beautiful Canadian summer and have it taste the same in the winter when we’re pulling product from Mexico,” explains Desrochers. Every year, the winter batch from Mexico is tasted side by side with the Canadian batch. Palmer says, “They need to meet our expectations so that it’s consistent and members don’t feel that they’re losing out on that great Canadian flavour.”

Costco’s packages of multicoloured tomatoes contain six varieties in shades of red, orange, yellow and green, and those varieties remain fairly consistent. The team chooses these varieties, and the suppliers are allowed to deliver only those six—no substitutions. Again, it’s about consistency.

Desrochers adds that the buying team tastes approximately 400 different tomato varieties during the selection process. Buyers are also looking for a tomato with the same high flavour as, but hopefully a higher yield than, the red grape tomato.

“We are ‘flavour first,’” says Desrochers. “And I hope that members see how much time, energy and thought go into this process. We are very conscious about the products we offer to our members... it’s a selection that we really care about, and it’s a selection we truly believe in.” ■



FROM LEFT: © COSTCO CANADA; © SALNIKOVA WATERCOLOR / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH GRAPE TOMATOES?

Grape tomatoes can be a part of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Toss them in salads, add them to tacos and rice bowls, roast them and add to pasta or crusty French bread, serve them on a skewer with cubes of cheese, slice them and drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar (and a bit of freshly ground pepper) or add them to omelettes. And, of course, they’re very good eaten on their own. For the best possible flavour, do not keep your tomatoes in the refrigerator.—AT

A burst of flavour

Even though the package includes green grape tomatoes, it’s important to know that they’re ripe.

In 2020, the tomato varieties in the multicoloured package were updated and a green variety was added. “Even though it’s green and looks underripe, it has a very

high flavour that is really sweet,” says Stéphane Desrochers, Costco produce buyer. “It’s really surprising the first time you bite into it.”—AT

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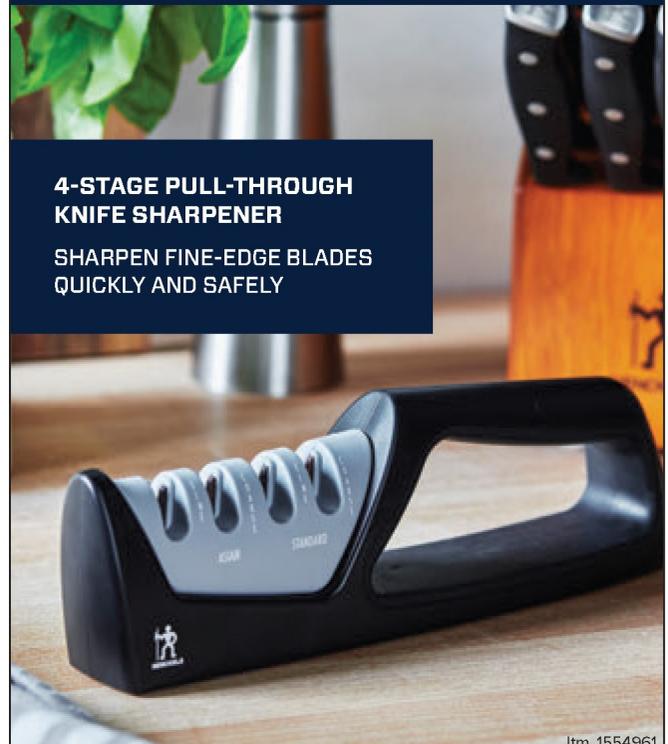
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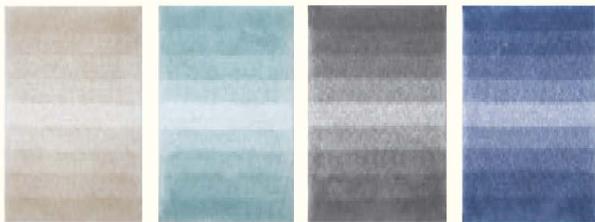
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Cultural classics

Exploring the many travel options that Costco Travel provides

by T. FOSTER JONES

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Travel offers cruises, vacation packages and car rental options for destinations in Canada, the United States and around the world. To learn more, visit CostcoTravel.ca or call 1-855-863-0357. As COVID continues to affect travel, members can check for updates at CostcoTravel.ca/Info/Travel-Updates.



Oia, Santorini

© DAVID SCHNEIDER

For every type of vacation, there are great “traditional” destination choices, those popular go-to spots that are a bit more mainstream. But there are also many destinations—a little off the beaten path—that offer all the same great amenities of those popular traditional choices, and more.

These “different path” destinations may not have come to mind because they offer a level of luxury and pampering in such exotic settings that simply felt out of reach. With Costco Travel, however, that’s no longer the case.

Whatever level of travel you are seeking, the possibilities are endless and the value is very real.

Beginning with the September *Connection* and continuing into the December issue, we’ve divided vacations into three broad categories—beaches/tropical, culture and cruises—and found examples that might be considered traditional and others that could represent a slightly different path.

When you are ready, Costco Travel is there to guide you on whichever path you choose. ■

Culture



Traditional: Italy

The Best of Italy: Your Way
Rome, Florence and Venice

The centre of the Roman Empire that ruled the European continent for several centuries, Rome is known for its stunning architecture—including the Colosseum, Pantheon and Trevi Fountain—and the smallest country in the world: Vatican City, home to the *Pieta* and the Sistine Chapel.

Considered by many to be the birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence is filled with masterpieces of Renaissance art and architecture, including the artwork of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Michelangelo's *David* and Brunelleschi's Duomo.

Built on more than 100 small islands in a lagoon in the Adriatic Sea, Venice has streets but no vehicles, relying on canals lined with Renaissance and Gothic palaces. The central square, Piazza San Marco, contains St. Mark's Basilica, which is tiled with Byzantine mosaics, and St. Mark's Campanile (bell tower), which offers views of the city's red roofs.

"I love Italy," says Leslie Hmila, Costco Travel buyer for this region. "It is a place where traditions you've only read about come alive."

Traditional: Paris, France

Paris: Your Way

A global centre for art, fashion, gastronomy and culture, Paris' 19th-century cityscape is criss-crossed by wide boulevards and the Seine River. Paris is known for its café culture and boutiques along the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. "Strolling the avenues, sitting in a café or just watching the Seine flow by—it can be absolutely magical," says Hmila.

"Costco Travel's Paris: Your Way package includes four nights at a choice of four-star hotels," she adds, "including Castille Paris, located in central Paris; Hotel Molitor, restored to preserve the original 1929 art deco ambience; the centrally located Westin Paris -Vendôme; and many others."

A different path: Scottish countryside

Rolling Hills and Mountain Peaks

No trip to Scotland would be complete without experiencing the countryside. It has so much to offer, with distilleries, historic castles, scenic lakes (lochs) and breathtaking scenery with a multitude of walking paths that help connect you to nature. Sights not to miss include Loch Ness; Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park; the Isle of Skye; and Stirling Castle.

A different path: Greece

Athens, Santorini and Mykonos: Your Way

Athens, the capital of Greece, was at the heart of ancient Greek civilization and the Greek empire. The city is dominated by landmarks built in the fifth century B.C., including the Acropolis, a hilltop citadel topped with buildings, such as the Parthenon temple.

Santorini, one of the Cyclades islands in the Aegean Sea, has stunning black and red sand beaches, and the archaeological ruins of three empires.

Mykonos is known for its traditional whitewashed houses and blue-domed churches, the beautiful windmills overlooking Little Venice, popular water sports such as windsurfing, and its cosmopolitan atmosphere and vivid nightlife.

"The Athens, Santorini and Mykonos: Your Way package is one of our most popular packages," says Hmila. "You can adjust your package to decide how many nights you want in each destination and find time to visit the areas that interest you most."



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Top: Gondolas, a symbol of Venice, are a classic way to tour the city's waterways; **Bottom:** A stunning view of Paris' Eiffel Tower from the Seine.

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Safe as houses

Mike Holmes Inspections is a new home service for Costco members



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Those who know Mike Holmes from the world of home building and renovation are probably familiar with his slogan: “Make It Right.” As a television host and professional contractor, Holmes has a no-nonsense approach to ensuring a job is well done that has earned him the trust of homeowners across Canada.

What you may not know, however, is that Costco members can now experience Holmes’ commitment to quality right in their own homes. To provide top-notch home inspection services, Costco works with Mike Holmes Inspections, so that members can “Buy It Right, Sell It Right or Own It Right.” To get the inside scoop, the *Costco Connection* recently spoke with Scott Piccolo, president and CEO of Mike Holmes Inspections.

Costco Connection What should members know about this service?

Scott Piccolo Mike Holmes Inspections has been operating for 15 years already—so we have plenty of experience behind us. Recently, we started working with Costco to offer inspection services to members in select markets across Canada.

CC Why should someone get a home inspection?

SP There are three reasons: buying, selling or maintenance. If you’re

buying a house, this is called a pre-purchase inspection. Before you sign off on the house, you need to understand the condition. The other side of the real estate transaction is, if you’re selling a house, you can get a pre-approved inspection. That way, when potential buyers come to look at the house, the inspection has already been completed.

CC What is a maintenance inspection?

SP Maintenance inspections should be done every three to five years to ensure there are no issues happening. Finding out about problems sooner rather than later usually means they’re easier to fix and cost less. If you’re renovating, a maintenance inspection can reveal any issues you need to address too.

CC What qualifications do inspectors have?

SP In most provinces, home inspection is an unregulated industry, so anybody can be an inspector. At Mike Holmes Inspections, all of our inspectors are trained and certified by an accredited school. I’ve heard stories where people either didn’t get an inspection or their home wasn’t inspected properly, and they found out later there were major problems. Buying a house is the biggest purchase of your life, so having a certified inspector is really important. ■

MIKE HOLMES INSPECTIONS PACKAGES FOR COSTCO MEMBERS

Mike Holmes Inspections offers two inspection packages: Extended and Premium. Both provide a detailed assessment report that includes visual roof inspection, electrical and heating inspection, mould testing and more.

To learn more about the services offered by Mike Holmes Inspections, which are available in select markets, visit mikeholmesinspections.com/costco or call 1-888-752-2238.

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FOR SCHEDULES AND DESCRIPTIONS

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Atelier Noir Coats

Atelier Noir combines premium materials and craftsmanship to create warm, durable winter coats with smart design details. Their signature structured silhouettes are ethically produced with responsibly sourced down. Each style is unique and sophisticated, bringing together modern and classic looks while offering a great value.



A limited-time showcase of exciting products



Pro-Tec Boots

Get a grip on winter with these Pro-Tec Ice Grip boots. The Italian On/Off ice grip system is easy to use and specially designed to provide extra traction in slippery winter weather conditions. These boots are equipped with 3M insulation for added warmth, and they offer water-resistant protection. Pro-Tec boots also have a removable cushioned insole for enhanced comfort and a pocket with a handy grip tool to easily flip your grip system on and off. Check out the complete collection of men’s and women’s models and be winter ready.



Vitamix Blenders

Discover how easy it is to make healthy, whole-food meals and snacks at home. The 1.8-litre (64-ounce) container is ideal for medium to large batches for family meals or entertaining, and wireless SELF-DETECT technology instantly pairs with Vitamix containers and attachments, making it easy to create your own personalized blending system.

 **Health and Wellness Promotion**

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MEMBER INFO

Who
Leslie Bangamba

Hometown
Red Deer, Alberta

Occupation
Child safety advocate and digital family and lifestyle content creator

Website
lesliebangamba.com

Most rewarding part of job
“I know I’m making a difference in the lives of other families. By sharing my story, I’ve been able to connect with people from so many walks of life—and if you care about children, this story applies to you.”
—Leslie Bangamba



© LESLIE BANGAMBA



LEFT + ABOVE: © MADISON JAMIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Safety first

In April 2020, Leslie Bangamba was unloading the dishwasher when her 18-month-old daughter, Amélie, collapsed. “Her eyes rolled into the back of her head and blood started coming out her nose. I called 911,” she says.

What followed were the most heart-wrenching days of Bangamba’s life. Doctors discovered Amélie had accidentally ingested a lithium battery, which caused a stroke and ruptured her esophagus, trachea, aorta and left carotid artery. She needed open-

heart surgery and over 4 litres’ worth of blood transfusions. “One battery caused this—and batteries operate so many devices in our lives,” Bangamba says.

Thankfully, Amélie recovered. Bangamba has since become a child safety advocate and wants parents (of children and/or pets!) to know the potential dangers of household items. Her recommendation? “Do a sweep of your home and pay close attention to the everyday gadgets you use.”—*Naomi Hansen*

Clockwise from top: Leslie Bangamba with her husband and children; a fully recovered Amélie; Amélie in the hospital after swallowing a lithium battery.

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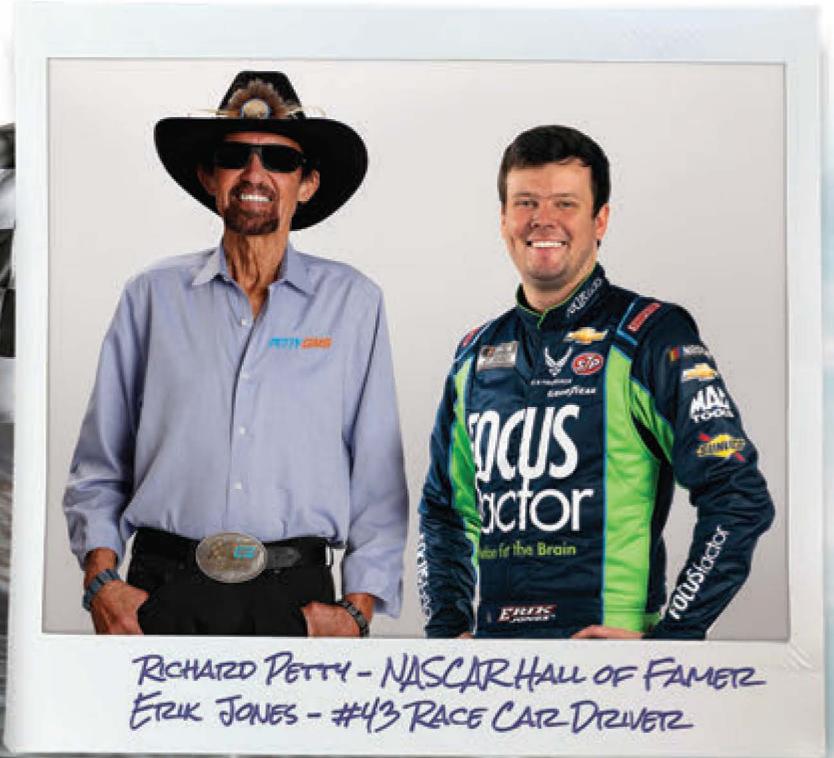
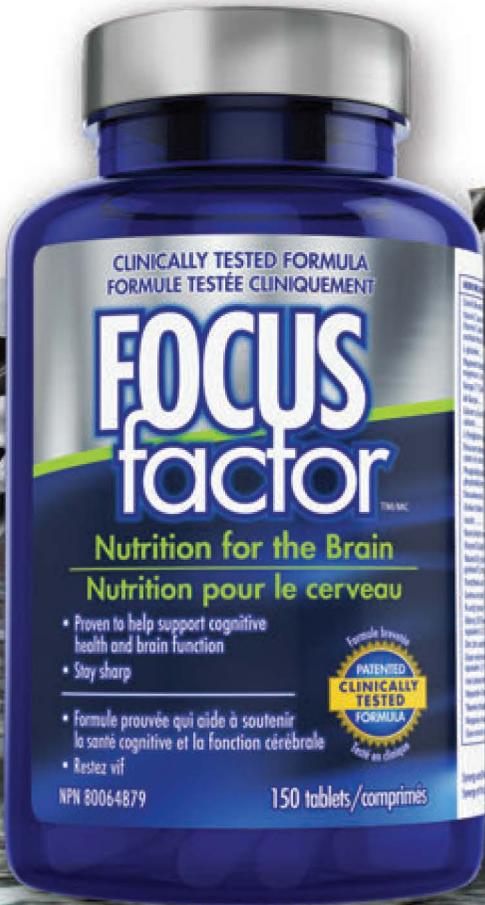


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[§]A clinical study showed that adults who took FOCUSfactor as directed for six weeks improved their memory, concentration and focus. The study was conducted by Cognitive Research Corporation, a leading research organization that specializes in the effects of nutritional supplements on human cognition.

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