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Affordable appliances ★ *The Block Party* ★ Salads for meat lovers

COSTCO Connection[®]

JULY 2023

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS



Creating your
best summertime
get-togethers 26

Garden parties

COSTCO Connection *July*

July 2023 | Volume 38 | Number 7

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Great outdoors

A backyard party, properly pulled off, is a thing of beauty. All the elements—food, music, activities and ambience—fall into place. Conversation flows. Children are playing games. Everyone seems to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

I have some friends who are just naturals at hosting. Their ability to put together the perfect get-together always seems effortless. For most of us, however? Not so much. This is why, as we enter the summer season of outdoor entertaining—with July Fourth as the traditional kickoff for many—the *Connection* turned to some experts to provide advice. Whether you are hosting a small party or a larger event, you'll find tips for everything from planning to games and activities to food and more. And the recipes featured in our For Your Table and Farm to Table sections will provide additional ideas for a wide variety of salads, including some for people who like to mix a little meat protein in with their greens.

Costco, of course, is right there to help supply you with just about everything you need.

Then we need to take it indoors for a moment because, unless you're one of those lucky kids running around at the party, summer still means job-related issues. This month's For Your Home section looks at the ongoing evolution of the work-from-home hybrid, with information that can help make remote work from a home office as efficient and organized as possible. Suggestions from Costco's buying teams also address home-office needs, as well as other rooms in your home, such as dining and living rooms, and we provide tips on creating a mudroom (all of which will come in handy in the fall, when you host an indoor party!)

However you celebrate it, we wish you a happy and safe Fourth of July! ■



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Sandy Torrey is Senior Vice President, Corporate Membership, Marketing and Publisher, *Costco Connection*.

Coming next month Costco members who have found passion, inspiration and new fulfillment in a "second chapter" career.

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MEMBER
COMMENTS



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Bone health

Thank you so much for the “Bad breaks” article [June 2023]. There is a bone health crisis in the United States and it does not generate nearly as much awareness or attention as chronic conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, despite being just as prevalent in our populations and osteoporotic fractures being just as debilitating and even deadly.

It’s so important that your members know how to improve and maintain their bone health and to build healthy dietary and exercise habits into their lives.

Claire Gill, Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation, Arlington, Virginia

In praise of Noosa

Thanks for telling the Noosa yogurt story [“Hometown flavor,” June 2023]. As an Aussie expat living in California, I was super excited when Noosa appeared on Costco shelves. The mention of the city Noosa, redolent of Queensland’s dreamy Sunshine Coast, strikes instant appeal to those familiar with it. And the crisp outstanding flavor of Noosa yogurt must be the reason for its success.

*Ian Hand
Signal Hill, California*

Flower power

As a businesswoman who owned a small flower business for over 35 years, I enjoyed your June 2023 cover story [“Weddings by Costco”].

One Saturday several years ago, I got a frantic call from a woman asking

me to do a bouquet for her daughter’s wedding, which was to take place within two hours. I told her I would do my best to help her. Then I dashed to my local Costco warehouse, and bought a bunch of white roses, and gathered some fern and stephanotis from my backyard.

I delivered a lovely bridal bouquet and a boutonniere to the groom to the wedding site minutes before the big event—thanks to Costco.

The bride’s mother said the flowers made the wedding even more beautiful.

*Patricia Elliott
Orange, California*

Assent for Ascent

Thank you for the story about Ascent native whey [“All the whey,” June 2023]. It is about the cleanest protein I’ve been able to find. I like it. I hope it will constantly be in stock at my local warehouse!

*Daniel Maddox
Rochester, Minnesota*

Wheel healthy

[“When strokes strike,” May 2023] is a good general overview of causes that may cause a stroke. In my case I ignored random Afib occurrences. Don’t, no matter how healthy you think you are! See your doctor or cardiologist ASAP.

Following two strokes, a caring cardiologist has allowed me to continue my passion for mountain biking at age 78. Below is me after placing third in the National Mountain Bike Championships.

*Ken Marshall
South Pasadena, California*



DEBORAH KOSTICH



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All advertisements will indicate whether a product is available in a Costco warehouse, at Costco.com or both. Products are scheduled to be available at the time of publication unless otherwise noted. Items may not be available in all locations and selection can vary. Costco.com carries many of the products available at the warehouses and much more. Prices may vary in AK, HI, PR and at Costco.com. Applicable tax laws may require sales tax on pre-discounted prices. These taxes are in addition to product price.

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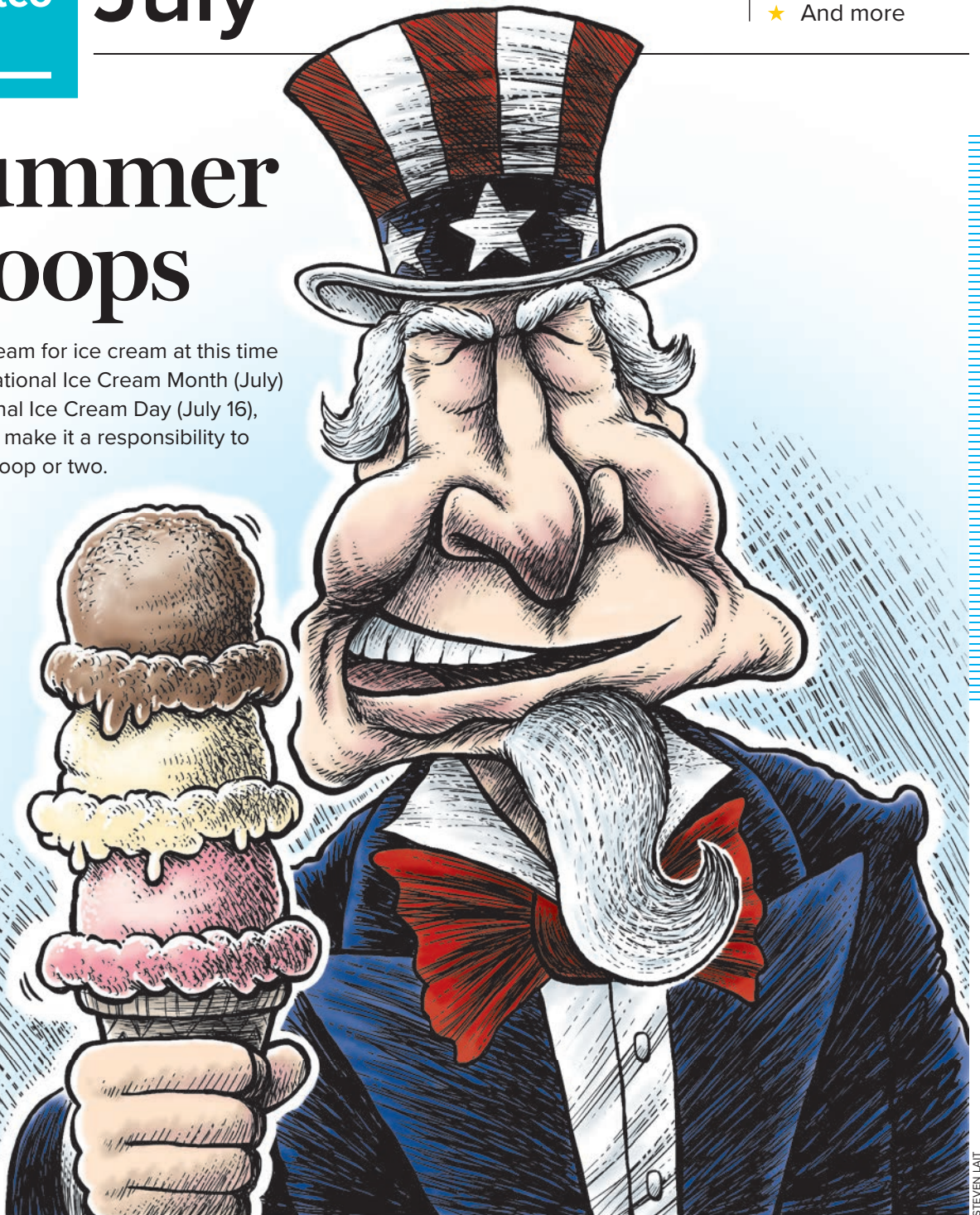
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Summer scoops

We all scream for ice cream at this time of year. National Ice Cream Month (July) and National Ice Cream Day (July 16), practically make it a responsibility to enjoy a scoop or two.



Brain freeze

EVER WONDER WHY it sometimes hurts your head when you eat ice cream a little too quickly? According to Johns Hopkins University, one theory is that when the roof of your mouth interacts with something cold—like ice cream—the blood vessels between your mouth and

brain constrict and then rapidly open. The pressure from this causes cold neuralgia, or ice cream headache. One way to combat this freeze is to push your tongue to the roof of your mouth to help warm the area. Now pass the ice cream!

WHERE'S MEMORY LANE?

I Forgot Day

If memory serves, I Forgot Day is celebrated each year on July 2. The absent-minded day recognizes the trait of forgetfulness. If you've lost track of an important date, task or occasion, fret not. There's a day honoring that—just make sure to jot it down, so you don't forget it next time.



LEFT: © MIX AND MATCH STUDIO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM; RIGHT: CYNTHIA KUTCHHEY



SPECIAL DELIVERY

Brand-new Costco member

Racing to the hospital, Costco members Sara and Tom were forced to make an emergency delivery in the parking lot of the Green Oak Township Costco in Brighton, Michigan, when it became clear that baby Dominic (above) wasn't going to wait. The Costco staff later presented a care basket to the family with Dominic's own Costco name badge.

SUMMERTIME PET SAFETY

Protecting your pets

During the hot months of summer, remember to provide plenty of water and shade, protect sensitive paws from hot asphalt and never leave your pet in the car. For year-round protection, Figo provides customizable accident and illness pet insurance plans, with exclusive rates for most Costco members. At Costco.com, click "Services," then "Pet Insurance."



LEFT: © KIRA_YAN; RIGHT: BERNARDBODO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS

Growing a community

Every July is National Park and Recreation Month. This year's theme is "Where Community Grows," which aims to celebrate the way that parks and recreation areas help bring communities together. Learn more at Npaa.org.

Americans consume approximately 150 million hot dogs every Fourth of July, according to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council.



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ICE HACK

Cold coffee cubes

Keep your iced coffee cold without watering down the flavor with this chill hack: Brew a batch of coffee, let it cool, then pour into an ice cube tray and place the tray in the freezer. Once frozen, use the java cubes instead of regular ice with chilled coffee. Enjoy! Coffee and ingredients are available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.



© FAHRWASSER / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

YOU SAY TOMATO

Cherry Tomato Bruschetta

- 1 pt cherry tomatoes, halved**
- ¼ cup basil leaves, cut into chiffonade**
- 4 cloves garlic, minced**
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil,**
plus more for brushing or drizzling
- Salt, to taste**
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- 1 baguette, cut into 20 slices**
about ½ inch thick
- Balsamic reduction (optional)**

Preheat broiler.

In a bowl, combine tomatoes and basil. In a separate small bowl, whisk together garlic and olive oil. Pour mixture over the tomatoes and basil then stir until coated. Season with salt and pepper.

Place baguette slices on a baking sheet. Brush tops lightly with olive oil. Toast under the broiler until lightly browned and crunchy, about 2 to 3 minutes, being careful not to burn them.

Remove toasts from the oven. Top each with a spoonful of bruschetta. If desired, drizzle with a little olive oil or balsamic reduction before serving. Makes 20 toasts.

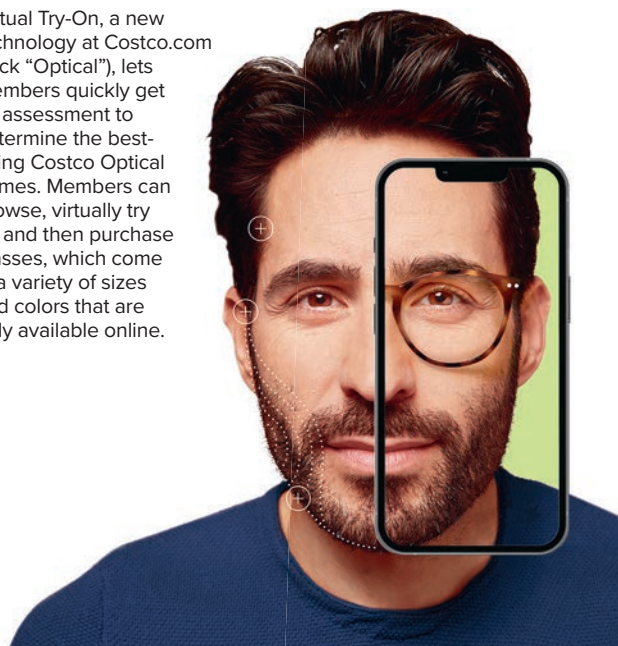
Recipe and photo courtesy of Lizzie Streit, registered dietitian and nutritionist, (itsavegworldafterall.com)



COSTCO OPTICAL ONLINE

Try and buy glasses virtually

Virtual Try-On, a new technology at Costco.com (click “Optical”), lets members quickly get an assessment to determine the best-fitting Costco Optical frames. Members can browse, virtually try on and then purchase glasses, which come in a variety of sizes and colors that are only available online.



According to tech firm Percepto, the first attempt at a self-propelled drone as an aerial target was completed in 1916.



by MARC SALTZMAN

Need some adrenaline in your life? Drones are surprisingly fast and responsive, and most have advanced cameras that allow you to capture stunning aerial footage you can watch later on a TV or computer. Some drones work with special glasses that let you see what the camera sees, in real time. You control the drone's flight via a dedicated radio controller on the ground, or, depending on the model, you can also use a smartphone app.

Drones are not only fun, but they're being embraced by several industries for commercial applications, such as real estate (to see the entire property), movies (for bird's-eye footage), search and rescue (to find lost people) and even delivering items to shoppers (though this service is still in the early stages).

Here are a few things to consider if you're thinking of buying a drone.

For visuals

If you'll use a drone primarily to shoot video or snap pics, make sure it has a good onboard camera (or at least allows you to mount one, such as a GoPro). Look for a wide-angle 4K camera. Some drones house a three-axis mechanical gimbal for more stable video recording, and an auto-tracking feature that can lock onto a still or moving target. The larger the camera sensor, the better (at least 1 inch), and an RYYB (red, yellow, yellow, blue) filter array is also key. Both can help capture clear images in low light.

Eye in the sky

Points to ponder before buying your first drone

Practical considerations

Battery life (flight time) is important, as you don't want the thrill to be over too soon. Some drones can last 40 minutes between charges, but be sure to keep a spare battery with you to keep the fun going. Other features to look for include advanced obstacle avoidance, far video transmission, the ability to land automatically or return to its flier, and alerts for low battery power and no-fly zones (such as near an airport).

If you're thinking of buying a drone for someone special, note that flyers need to be at least 13 years of age and must register first with the Federal Aviation Administration. Certifications may be required for commercial use. Have fun flying. ■

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.

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Remote control

How you want to control your drone boils down to personal preference. Each option has its advantages, and some models offer support for

both controllers and apps.

A dedicated remote controller (which may be sold separately) offers more precision for flying and lets you keep your eyes locked on your drone.

A smartphone or tablet is ideal for tapping waypoints, drawing a flight pattern with your fingertip and seeing what the drone camera sees. Some apps let you perform tricks with onscreen (virtual) buttons.—MS

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You'll find a selection of drones at Costco.com.

The Gulf Coast

Beyond the fine white sandy beaches, this area offers an amazing array of food, fun and culture

by PETER GREENBERG



HANDE BAYAR

Peter Greenberg is the multiple–Emmy Award–winning travel editor for CBS News and host of *The Travel Detective* on public television (petergreenberg.com).



The opening draw to the triumvirate of Tampa, St. Petersburg and Clearwater is straightforward: sunny days, fine white sand beaches and fresh seafood. Add a vibrant arts scene and the opportunity to sample Greek, Cuban and Thai culture and food—spread along 40 miles of seashore—and the Gulf Coast area makes a great year-round destination.

Tampa

In Tampa, a great food stop is the Columbia Restaurant, decorated with thousands of hand-painted terra cotta tiles and known as Florida’s oldest restaurant. Founded in 1905, the restaurant has been family-owned and -operated for five generations. The “1905” Salad is mixed at your table; the Paella “a la Valenciana” is a family recipe and the restaurant’s signature dish. My favorite is the Ybor City Devil Crab Croquettes.

To experience a bit of Asia, plan your trip to include a Sunday visit to Wat Mongkolratanaram, or Wat Tampa for short. Enjoy an open-air riverfront

brunch that you build yourself with items from the dozens of Thai food vendors at this Buddhist temple’s 30-year-old weekly market. Arrive early to grab a picnic table and to avoid the lines for pad thai, fried bananas and mango sticky rice.

St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg is home to collections of the works of two famous artists, Salvador Dalí and Dale Chihuly.

The Dalí Museum contains the largest collection of the Spanish surrealist’s work outside of Europe, and includes the melting clocks of his masterpiece, *The Persistence of Memory*. Be sure to go in the morning to catch the light coming off the water through the Enigma, a geodesic bubble made up of 1,062 triangular pieces of glass.

Also check out the the nearby collection of Chihuly glass art, including colorful, unusually shaped sculptures—abstract interpretations of sea creatures, submerged landscapes and floating



Pier 60, Clearwater, Florida



The Dalí Museum



Hope at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium

LEFT TO RIGHT: © EMOTIONPICTURE; SEANPAVONEPHOTO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

ABOVE: © CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

tumbleweeds. Your ticket to the Chihuly Collection includes admission to the Morean Glass Studio and Hot Shop for a glass-blowing demonstration. And you don't have to be limited to watching. If Chihuly's work inspires you, you can sign up for a glass-blowing class.

Clearwater

A must stop in Clearwater is the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. What distinguishes this aquarium is that it's also a working marine life hospital best known for its two rescued dolphins Winter and Hope, whose stories were told in the movies *Dolphin Tale* and *Dolphin Tale 2*.

The aquarium is also home to otters, turtles, pelicans and, most recently, two very rare orange lobsters.

If craft beer is your thing, check out some of the breweries that have led the area to be labeled the "Gulp Coast." Down a beer at Grindhaus Brew Lab and its pub, where you can take in not just beer, but also, on occasion, classic and quirky movies.

End your day by celebrating the sunset either on Pier 60—complete with artisans and street performers—or with a cocktail and the signature grouper sandwich at the seaside Frenchy's Rockaway Grill. ■

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Travel offers Florida vacation packages, as well as cruises, vacation packages, rental cars and hotel-only options for destinations in the United States and around the world. To learn more, visit CostcoTravel.com or call 1-877-849-2730.

Bonus: Tarpon Springs

I'm reminded of the Aegean Sea whenever I head to Tarpon Springs, about 15 miles north of Clearwater. Sponge divers brought their Greek heritage to the area

in the early 1900s. You'll find belly-dancing, bouzoukis, baklava and a Greek Orthodox cathedral, St. Nicholas.

For dining, try Mykonos, a third-generation family restaurant, and their signature dish:

sautéed octopus. For dessert, stop in at Hellas Bakery, which has been making Greek pastries since 1970. Try the *flogeres*, phyllo flutes with an almond and honey filling.—PG

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MEMBER
POLL



FROM LEFT: © SIDEKICK; FAROSOFIA / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

What's your best July Fourth memory?

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

The cookouts at my grandparents. We weren't just celebrating Independence Day, but also the day my grandfather landed on Ellis Island in 1920.

Jeff Schaefer

Watching the fireworks right after my husband returned home from his Kuwait deployment.

Dorena Ross

Winning Fourth of July Queen in Hebron, Indiana, when I was 15 years old.

Tina Kearney

Bringing my new baby home from the hospital.

Linda Wagner McDaniel

Cheering my dad on as he ran alongside the Olympic Torch, and later watching the torch start the fireworks show.

Wendy York

Seeing fireworks at Mount Rushmore.

David Voelkers

The 1975 July Fourth Celebration at the National Mall. To see the enthusiasm, appreciation and acknowledgment from well over 100,000 people for the freedoms and opportunities of this nation, and to be surrounded by the historical monuments of the patriots that have served this nation, was a life-changing experience.

James Keffer



Did you know?

When America turns 250-years-young in 2026, the celebration is called a semiquincentennial.

Fun Fourth facts

WeAreTeachers.com cites these fun facts about July Fourth.

- The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia is tapped 13 times every July Fourth in honor of the original 13 colonies.
- Americans spend more than \$1 billion on fireworks annually.
- "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the United States' national anthem in 1931.
- Bristol, Rhode Island, was home to the first Fourth of July parade in 1785.
- Guidelines for flag etiquette, including rules for the Fourth of July, can be found in the U.S. Flag Code (military.com/flag-day/us-flag-code.html).



Watch for the poll at [Facebook.com/Costco](https://www.facebook.com/Costco). Or weigh in at [connection@costco.com](https://www.connection@costco.com), with subject line "Poll."



COVER
STORY

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Summer soirée

Get ready to celebrate! Whether it's at a backyard barbecue, graduation celebration or swishy cocktail party under the stars, people are so ready to mingle. Feeling a little rusty as a host? Relax. These tips will help you turn out your best summer-time party ever.

Stories by **LAURA LANGSTON, SARAH MADEWELL, CHRISTINE PERSAUD** and **KIRA VERMOND** CONTINUED ON PAGE 28





here's just something about an outdoor party. From the food to the activities and more, there's nothing like enjoying beautiful summer weather with family and friends. No matter how big or small the gathering, here are some pointers for a successful event.

Start planning

"Backyard parties are such a lovely way to bring everybody together, reestablish our friendships and communities—and celebrate togetherness," says Costco member Amanda Douglas, an event planner in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

But don't think that easy-breezy get-together will be a cinch to pull off at the last moment. At the heart of any fabulous party is a well-constructed plan.

"Give yourself a month to chip away at all the major things on your list: decor, backyard prep, and food and drink prep," says Douglas, who recommends filling the pantry well in advance.

Pick a theme. Themes take a party from so-so to sensational. They don't have to be complicated, either; in fact, simple is better. Try a Hawaiian luau and break out the tiki lanterns. Host a beer-tasting party and sample some local brews. Dreaming of an Italian garden party theme? Grab a gingham tablecloth and twinkling bistro lights, and you're good to go.

Have ample seating. Ever been to a backyard party without enough seating? Not fun. Give your guests comfortable places where they can sit and eat, rather than perching at the edge of a tippy lawn chair. Outdoor plastic or folding chairs are



easy to stack and store when not in use. The same goes for folding tables. Or you can rent them.

"We have a couple of [large] tables we use all the time. I even invested in [tall tables] this year because of the cocktail parties we've thrown at home," says Costco member Renee Patrone Rhinehart, founder and CEO of Party Host Helpers, a party staffing company in Philadelphia.

Make it comfortable. For afternoon parties, have sunscreen and ice water on hand. Kids can even make folded paper fans for guests at a craft table. If the yard is in full sun, install umbrellas or shade sails.

Evening get-togethers require plenty of bug spray or a handful of cordless mosquito repellents dotting the property. They last for hours. And don't forget baskets of blankets for chilly nights.

Set the mood. Lighting can be as simple or as extravagant as you want. Bistro and twinkle lights are easy to find

COSTCO CONNECTION

Nearly everything you need to host an outdoor party, including food, games, utensils, patio furniture, electronics and other supplies, are available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.



Clockwise from top: Bring people together at your outdoor party with a well-planned menu, music and dancing, and barbecue.



and hang—perfect for a late-night dinner party—while tea lights are inexpensive and pretty.

Have backup supplies. If there's one mistake hosts make, it's not being prepared for surprises, says Douglas. Buy extra napkins and compostable plates and cutlery just in case you run out. Have backups for your backups.

And ice. Plenty of ice. "Three bags minimum," Douglas says with conviction. "You don't want anyone to have to go out on an ice run. As a host, you want to be engaged and have fun too."—*Kira Vermond*

Let's eat

When it comes to menu planning, the occasion or theme may suggest a menu: pizza and cake for a young person's birthday party or sparkling wine and fancy finger food at a bridal shower.

Or consider destination-specific foods: hummus and pita paired with souvlaki and salad for a Greek meal; queso, chips

and salsa with prawn tacos for a fiesta; or kalua pork, macaroni salad and grilled pineapple for a luau.

Jordan Hansen, owner and creator of the blog *Jordan's Easy Entertaining* (jordanseasyentertaining.com), suggests planning a menu around a signature dish or what's popular with guests, especially if there are dietary restrictions. Still stumped? "In that case, choose a main dish first," Hansen says, "and pick side dishes to complement it."

Barbecuing is a natural choice for a summer party. If you go that route, Hansen says, the more you can prepare ahead, the better. "It saves time, and not everything needs to be homemade," she says, adding that she often buys Costco side dishes and desserts to serve. Her tip: Shop with a checklist for mains, sides, drinks and desserts, so nothing is missed.

Food safety

Warmer temperatures can cause foodborne germs to flourish. Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include:

- Keep meat, poultry and seafood refrigerated until you're ready to grill.
- Keep raw meat, seafood and poultry away from ready-to-eat foods.
- Throw out marinades and sauces that have touched raw meat juices.
- Use clean utensils and a clean plate to remove cooked meat from the grill.
- Keep hot foods at 140 F or warmer (use slow cookers or chafing dishes) and cold foods at 40 F or below (place dishes in bowls of ice to stay chilled).
- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours to minimize the chance of bacteria growth.

And to keep pesky bugs away from food, party blogger Jordan Hansen relies on pop-up food tents with mesh sides. Or try a pot or two of lavender or mint on your dinner table; they're natural mosquito repellents.—*LL*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: © MB; GORODENKOFF; RAWPIXEL.COM / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



With barbecues, you'll be cooking while your guests are there, so timing is important. First, barbecue things that require more time, like ribs or potatoes in foil, and set them aside. Next, grill steaks or burgers and let them rest a few minutes while you quickly grill fish or veggies last.

Don't rule out the ever-popular potluck. In that case, give guests guidelines or assign dishes. Hansen says most people are relieved to have the guesswork removed. "You can ask someone to bring a side salad or fruit tray," she says. "It gives them room to be creative, but it takes away their stress and yours too, because you won't end up serving repeat dishes."

Keep beverages simple. Ask guests to bring their own and provide mixers and bottled water, or mix up a single-batch drink like sangria or pink lemonade and serve it in a big pitcher with lots of ice.

Regardless of what you serve, remember to relax and have fun. —*Laura Langston*

Sound and vision

Summer and backyard parties go together like PB&J. Make yours memorable with delicious food, flowing drinks and, of course, exciting entertainment.

Outdoor speakers set the mood, from loud and lively party tunes to quiet back-

ground jazz. Bluetooth speakers are a simple solution, particularly rugged, waterproof ones, especially if you have a pool. Ideally, use multiple portable Bluetooth speakers that wirelessly link to one another (called daisy chaining). More speakers, after all, equal more enveloping sound. Because you'll be outdoors and might not want to disturb the neighbors with loud, bass-heavy tunes, a pair of 60-watt speakers should be sufficient for background music. (Don't forget to charge them!) An indoor speaker on a shaded, covered deck that's promptly brought inside after the event will suffice in a pinch.

If you prefer wired gear, a pair of large party speakers positioned left and right can pump tunes; one might do for a small backyard. Make sure to use a long, outdoor-rated extension cord and safely secure it.

Music playlist pro tip: When you send invitations, ask guests to contribute five to 10 songs and add them to a streaming playlist. Leading up to the party, whenever you think of a good tune or hear a great song on the radio, add it too.

Liven up the event further with karaoke. YouTube is a good source of free content with scrolling lyrics (search the



Clockwise from left: Entertain guests with a variety of activities, such as Fourth of July celebrations, ax throwing or an outdoor movie.



song title “+ karaoke”) so guests can let loose, channeling their inner Mariah and Elvis. Add a wireless mic and a tablet (or outdoor TV) and, with reliable Wi-Fi, everyone can belt out hits. Some party speakers even have a mic input and built-in karaoke features, complete with strobe lighting.

To top off the evening, mount a white sheet to the side of the house, deck or fence and, when the sun sets, use a portable projector and speaker for a movie night under the stars. Some smart portable projectors have streaming service access built in, or plug in a streaming stick or a USB flash drive with a movie. Add chairs and popcorn and enjoy.—*Christine Persaud*

Backyard games

Outdoor activities are in full swing when families throw backyard barbecues, parties and other fun gatherings under the sun—or starry skies. Playing games in the backyard can be a blast, but with thousands of outdoor games out there, planning these activities can be challenging.

Think about the ages of your guests to help narrow your choices. Create your game plan with these ideas:

Families with kids. Young children have tons of energy to spend. These classics will keep everyone moving:

- Playing catch with a sticky mitt set or baseball mitts
- Kickball, soccer, dodgeball
- Red light, green light
- Capture the flag, freeze tag
- Water balloon toss
- Super-sized classics like tic-tac-toe

Teens and adults. Games like these can engage active, competitive, critical-thinking teenagers and adults:

- Egg toss
- Ladder ball
- Dizzy bat race
- Egg-spoon race
- Pass the bucket
- Friendly water fight
- Sports games like flag football
- Badminton
- Cornhole toss
- Board or card games

Come one, come all

Backyard get-togethers with all ages can be a smorgasbord of fun activities. Pick a few games for each age group. For additional ideas, do a quick internet search for backyard games for children, teens or adults.—*Sarah Madewell*

Tips for success

Know who is coming. Are your guests small children or co-workers? The answer will direct what kind of games to play and what games may not be appropriate.

Plan ahead. Stick to a budget and have game supplies on hand.

Delegate. Avoid getting overwhelmed. Reach out to others and ask for help.

Listen to your guests. If they don't seem to be interested in an activity, move on to the next game.

Be prepared for bad weather. Consider a backup plan if the party needs to move inside.

Have fun. The planning is done, the party is underway and you have helpers. Relax and let the games begin.—*SM*

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: KAWEE; COURTESY OF EAST POINT SPORTS; SHAIITH / STOCK.ADOBE.COM





Mudrooms

© EZGI / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



Flexsteel

© KREBER



Home office organization

© URSULA PAGE / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

A place for all things

When it comes to your home, making the most of your space makes a world of difference. With proper planning, you can maximize what you have to work with. The right products can help, too.

In this month's For Your Home Special Section, learn about American furniture company Flexsteel, which creates hand-crafted modular pieces. Keep your entryway clean and presentable with tips on making a mudroom, and read up on organizational strategies to make your home office a place where you'll want to spend time. Finally, check out offerings from Costco buyers that are sure to enhance your space.

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A heritage of comfort

Flexsteel builds on a history of innovation and adaptability

by MARK RAY



COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of Flexsteel furniture, including sofas, loveseats, modular sets, recliners, a dining set and more, are available at Costco.com (search “Flexsteel”).

Flexsteel Industries traces its history to 1893, when the Rolph & Ball Furniture Company opened its doors in Minneapolis. In 1901, four tradesmen—including a German immigrant who had arrived in the United States with just 50 cents in his pocket—bought the business, which eventually became Northome Industries.

But 1927 might be a more important date. That’s when the company added flexible steel springs to its products.

Swiss inventor E. Werner Schlapritzi modeled the springs after those he’d seen in bell tower clocks. “He noticed there was one piece in those clocks that never wore out: the spring,” says David Crimmins, vice president of sales and product management for Flexsteel. “It had to do with how the steel was poured, the chemistry of the steel and the ultimate tensile strength.”

Schlapritzi first sold his springs for use in European railroad car seats, where

durability was as important as comfort. After emigrating to the United States, he began making springs for residential furniture manufacturers. One of those manufacturers was Northome Industries.

Besides being durable, Schlapritzi’s springs offered a balance of softness and support. In fact, the patented Blue Steel Spring—the metal has a natural blue so important that Northome renamed itself Flexsteel Industries in 1958, a nod to the springs’ strength and flexibility.

Furniture that fits your home

That idea of flexibility also lies at the heart of the company’s new Flex line of modular sofas, so named for their adaptability to make the best use of one’s room space.

Each Flex seating component includes a suspension box that simply drops into the assembled base. (There’s even a “front” tag



LEFT: TRENT HANSELMANN/GIGANTIC DESIGN CO.; RIGHT: COURTESY OF FLEXSTEEL



Left: Flexsteel's 7-piece modular couch (Item 1734803) has enough room for the entire family. **Above:** The Blue Steel Spring at the heart of Flex technology.

to make sure you put it in the right way.) “It ends up having the same comfort, quality and durability as a normal, fully built piece of Flexsteel furniture,” Crimmins says. The seat bases, which you can lay out in nearly any configuration, connect with hand-tightened C-clips, while J-brackets secure the backs and arms in place. Crimmins says each component takes only a few minutes to put together, and customers can easily reconfigure the components later if their needs change.

Staying relevant

Over the decades Flexsteel has manufactured everything from hotel furniture to RV seating. Today, however, the focus is strictly on the home and creating furniture for consumers who need furnishings that look great and fit today's active lifestyles, offering products for the living room, bedroom and dining room.

Based in Dubuque, Iowa, Flexsteel builds its products in Juarez, Mexico (where Flex is built); Dublin, Georgia; and Asia. And it strives to give back to each community in which it operates. For example, every employee gets three days of paid time off annually for volunteer work. “Employee community engagement will sustain a strong community, foster long-term business relationships and maximize the opportunity for corporate visibility, helping Flexsteel stand out in the communities where we operate,” Crimmins says.

Given the company's long and flexible history, that's likely to remain true. ■

Costco member Mark Ray is a freelance writer based in Louisville, Kentucky.

SUSTAINABLE SOFA

Flex modular sectionals don't come with green upholstery, but perhaps they should. They feature LiveSmart Evolve fabric made by Culp, which uses a high-quality polyester yarn made from recycled plastic. In fact, more than 400 recycled plastic water bottles go into every 7-piece Flex sectional.

Flexsteel has also partnered with the National Arbor Day Foundation to plant a tree for every Flex sectional sold at Costco.com.—MR





Neat and tidy

Adding a mudroom can help keep your family organized

by MERLISA LAWRENCE CORBETT



ILLUSTRATION: © DARIUAUSTIUGOVA, NANYASEM; LEFT: SAMIAM2007 / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco warehouses and Costco.com carry benches and other organizational and decorative items throughout the year.

Rain, snow, fall leaves and everyday debris can get dragged into your home. If you've dreamed of having a dedicated place to store muddy or wet footwear, outerwear and sports gear, the good news is that if you have an entrance, you can have a mudroom.

First, consider the needs of those in the household, says Tamara Liebmann, a Montreal-based professional organizer and a member of Professional Organizers in Canada. Count everybody, including pets.

Then, ask yourself: What things do you all need when you walk out of your home? What items, such as mail, work boots, keys, purse, backpack, caps, etc., do you bring home daily? Also, what gets tracked in, like mud, gravel, leaves or dirt?

Liebmann recommends setting up an "insta mudroom" near the entrance you use most, which may not be the front door. Sometimes a side door or garage entrance makes a better spot for a mudroom.

Go vertical

Once you've designated an area, install hooks, shelves or knobs on a wall. "Vertical is your best option if you have limited space," Liebmann says.

Her favorite "insta mudroom" hack is a shelf with coat hooks attached, which is ideal for keys, sunglasses, ID badges, purses and knapsacks. "These are super helpful," she notes, "because you're increasing the amount of space you have without using valuable floor space."

Chairs, benches and bins

"A bench will always be a bonus if you have the space, as it will be easier to put on and take off your shoes," says Isabelle Lamy, a professional organizer and declutterer based in London.

Select a bench with storage underneath—open, or with drawers or shelves—or an upholstered flip-top bench or storage cube. If you live in a location that gets plenty of rain, sleet and snow, Liebmann recommends a boot tray as well; get one that can fit by the door, beneath a bench or in a small closet.

Bins can be used individually or with cube storage shelves and are a great way to conceal clutter. Use them to organize winter gloves, hats and scarves. In spring and summer, use them for outdoor toys, flip-flops, bug spray and sunblock.

Finishing touches

Add a mirror to the wall over the bench or shelves to make the space look larger and as a place to check your face on the way out. A tall vase makes a great place to park umbrellas.

Lamy adds, "We are usually more inclined [to keep] everything neat and tidy if the space is beautifully designed and the decor is stylish." ■

Merlisa Lawrence Corbett is a freelance writer based in central Florida.



Buyers' picks

Product selections from
Costco's Furniture buying team



Kai Lo

Brady Bussell

Margaret Faubion



Cuddle Aria Fabric Convertible Sectional

This versatile piece has a reversible chaise with a hidden storage compartment underneath. The sleeper pulls out with ease and can accommodate two adults. The wood frame and durable woven fabric upholstery provide long-lasting support, while the high-density foam seat and back cushions offer extra comfort. Features include a built-in charging station, complete with two power outlets and two USB ports. Available in dark gray. Item 1653363. Warehouses/Costco.com.—*Kai Lo*

Tresanti Kerrigan Chairside Table

Enjoy the style and space-saving versatility of this chairside table, which features wooden or glass door panels. The marble top is complemented by the convenience of AC power, USB and USB-C outlets, as well as an adjustable shelf. This could be just the decorative addition for your living room, bedroom or home office. Item 1653366. Warehouses/Costco.com.

—*Brady Bussell*



Newport 9-Piece Dining Set

Whether it is a large family gathering or an intimate dinner with friends, this rustic and roomy set is the ideal choice for any dining room. The table features a beautiful antique white finish complemented by a brown tabletop and an 18-inch self-storing leaf to add extra elbow room. Includes comfortable seating for eight with chairs upholstered in taupe stain-resistant fabric. Item 1653372. Warehouses/Costco.com.—*Margaret Faubion*



FROM LEFT: © PRESSMASTER; O.LEG / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Home office organization

The right layout, location and equipment can make sure your home office works for you

by ERIK J. MARTIN

COSTCO CONNECTION

Home office equipment, furniture, furnishings and more are available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Three years ago, the pandemic forced millions of Americans to embrace the concept of working from home. Many companies have since called workers back to their original job sites, but 71% of businesses are permitting employees to work fully or partially from home, per a 2023 report by Buffer, a social media management tool. If you are one of the many who have learned to work efficiently from home but need to better equip your workspace, the following tips may help.

Barbara Oldham, a professional organizer in Topeka, Kansas, says a

well-designed home office can increase productivity and work satisfaction. “When you have a designated workspace that is functional and comfortable, it can help you focus on your job and stay organized.” Conversely, a poorly planned space can make it difficult to concentrate, trigger fatigue and musculoskeletal problems, and result in clutter, lack of privacy and even safety hazards, she says.

Location. An ideal spot is a room with a door or an area with minimal distractions that will permit you to work comfortably without feeling crowded or compromised.

“When you have a designated workspace that is functional and comfortable, it can help you focus on your job and stay organized.”

— BARBARA OLDHAM ★
Professional Organizer

In many homes, this means a spare bedroom, basement, attic or another private area. The average size of a home office in the U.S. is 120 to 150 square feet, according to online magazine *Architecture Lab*. The pros recommend a minimum of 100 square feet. Try to pick an area with one or more windows that allow for plenty of natural light.

Equipment. The experts interviewed for this story recommend equipping your home office with a minimum of the following: a desk, a rolling chair, lighting fixtures, one or more cabinets, bookcases or storage units, and perhaps a cart or stand for your printer and supplies. Opt for a desk—preferably an L-shaped one—with ample surface area to accommodate papers, files, your monitor, phone and knickknacks. Convertible standing desks with adjustable heights are popular nowadays to prevent unhealthy sitting for long periods.

Layout. “Try to place the desk or workstation facing a window for better light, without glare, and position your cabinet and storage units within easy reach or above the desk,” advises Margarita Bravo, an interior designer in Denver.

Give careful thought to where the outlets are located so that you can minimize cord and cable runs. “They’re not only trip hazards, but if the cords get damaged, they become fire hazards, too,” cautions profes-

sional organizer Christina Hidek, a Costco member in Cleveland, who recommends using cord channels and never placing cords beneath carpets.

If you have a desktop PC and shredder, they can be placed on the floor out of the way but not too far from your chair. Your printer and scanner should be situated on a sturdy surface like a nearby cart or shelf, preferably within arm’s reach of your chair.

“Lastly, opt for a combination of ambient, task and accent lighting. Use LED bulbs with a color temperature of 4000 to 5000K for optimal focus, and place task lighting, such as a desk lamp, on the side of your dominant hand to minimize shadows while working,” adds Bravo.

Aesthetics. The color you paint your office can promote productivity and efficiency, too. “Light blue helps reduce stress,” suggests Oldham. “Refreshing green promotes creativity and focus. Clean and neutral white makes a space feel open and bright. Gray, a sophisticated color, fosters a professional atmosphere and enhances focus,” she adds.

With the right planning, design and arrangement, you can create a comfortable, productive and safe home workspace built to take care of your business needs. ■

Erik J. Martin is a Chicago area-based freelancer.



How to share a home office

Many workers have to share a home office space with a loved one due to spatial constraints. Here’s how to coexist harmoniously and efficiently:

- Set clear boundaries and expectations for the area.
- “Establish designated areas for each person and use room dividers for privacy,” recommends Margarita Bravo, an interior designer.
- Communicate consistently about schedules, preferences and needs.
- Respect each other’s space. “Clean up after yourself and avoid distracting activities like loud phone calls,” professional organizer Barbara Oldham advises.—EJM

Efficient filing tips

Need to keep hard copies and important records? A simple file cabinet is still a key piece of equipment. Arrange files alphabetically,

by topic or by date. Be consistent and label folders clearly. Regularly purge files to decrease clutter, but hold on to crucial legal paperwork like tax documents for at least seven years.

“Place important or frequently accessed files toward the front of the drawer,” says professional organizer Barbara Oldham. “And anything confidential should be locked up.”—EJM



Buyers' picks

Product selections from
Costco's buying team



Forrest Beckwith

Jeni Murphy

Trent Giacomini

Samsung 27-inch Class CF39 Series Curved Monitor

Upgrade your outlook with this high-tech LCD monitor with screen curvature that lets you enjoy panoramic views while you work or play. It features a slim, half-inch profile, a contrast ratio that displays deep blacks and bright whites, and AMD FreeSync™ technology that adjusts the monitor's refresh rate to match the content it's displaying. The screen can reduce blue light emissions and flickers at the touch of a button, and an energy-saving mode dims brightness. Item 1200689. Warehouses/Costco.com.

—Forrest Beckwith



OttLite LED Desk Organizer Lamp

Perfect for a dorm or office, this lamp features LED technology simulating natural daylight, a convenient wireless charging station, a USB port and a storage area with divider for pens, scissors, glasses and more. The lamp has a flexible neck and three touch-controlled brightness settings, with high-contrast, low-glare lighting that is designed to help you see clearly and comfortably. The LEDs are rated to last up to 40,000 hours. Item 1653261. Warehouses/Costco.com.

—Jeni Murphy



Epson EcoTank ET-2850 Special Edition

Print, copy and scan photographs, graphics and everyday documents with fine detail and rich color. This Epson printer features refillable ink tanks for cartridge-free printing. You can adjust settings easily while operating the printer from your smartphone or tablet. Package includes one set of EcoTank ink and a bonus bottle of black ink, which can print up to an additional 7,500 pages. Item 1644561. Warehouses/Costco.com.—Trent Giacomini

Sweat equity

An examination of perspiration

by LANCE FRAZER



BELOW: © SHEKAKA; ARTINSPIRING; LEFT: CUNAPLUS / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



COSTCO CONNECTION

Water and a variety of sports drinks and electrolyte replacement items are available in Costco warehouses and at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com).

Everyone sweats. Whether it's due to nerves, exercise, work or just a really hot day, our pores open and release fluid, so we can cool off by evaporation. "Sweat just means that your body temperature is elevated and you need to stay hydrated," says Costco member Christopher Minson, a professor in the Department of Human Physiology at the University of Oregon.

When we can't sweat, or sweat when we don't need to, it's time to worry.

Unusual symptoms

Excessive sweating without apparent cause (hyperhidrosis) is more socially disruptive than harmful, and usually treatable with medications. Night sweats are associated with menopause, but also with more serious conditions, such as certain cancers. If you experience them, it's wise to follow up with a doctor visit.

You should also be alarmed when you can't sweat (anhidrosis), says Dr. Lewis Nelson, chief of the Division of Medical Toxicology at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, as this can lead to heat exhaustion and heatstroke, with serious impacts on the body and brain.

A range of congenital or genetic conditions can have an impact on the ability to sweat, as can a variety of conditions, including psoriasis, burns, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis. "There are also reactions to some medications that will decrease sweating—some for

an overactive bladder or incontinence, and certain medications for depression," adds Minson. "If you're exercising and are unable to sweat, you can become overheated in as little as 10 minutes."

Staying on top of fluid loss

Sweat can pull critical substances like sodium and magnesium from the body. Too much sweating without replacing lost fluids can lead to heat exhaustion, with spasms, muscle cramps, nausea and tiredness. Go beyond that point and you run the risk of heatstroke, which can be fatal.

Minson points out that sweating removes critical electrolytes, and adds that as the body's temperature increases, key proteins begin to break down, with a serious effect on the brain.

"The key thing is to replace the body's lost fluids and electrolytes," says Dr. S. Max Vale, a clinical assistant professor in the University of Washington School of Medicine's dermatology division. "Stay away from anything with alcohol in it, as alcohol is a diuretic [as is caffeine]. In extreme circumstances, you can also go to electrolyte solutions like Gatorade and Powerade, but under most conditions, you'll want to stay with water."

Adds Minson. "Listen to your body: If you're feeling thirsty, drink!" ■

Lance Frazer is a freelance writer in Cameron Park, California.

Brain pain

Methods to help find relief from headaches

by SUJA NATARAJAN



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COSTCO CONNECTION

Over-the-counter and prescription headache treatments are available in Costco pharmacies and at Costco.com.

Headaches can bring life to a grinding halt. The National Headache Foundation estimates about 40 million Americans live with headaches. However, not all headaches are created equal. Understanding headache types and triggers, and making the right lifestyle changes, can help prevent them.

Common headaches

The most common headaches include tension, cluster and migraine.

Tension headaches. These types are often associated with stress or musculoskeletal problems in the neck. “The pain is usually dull and aching, and occurs across the forehead or around the back and sides of the head,” says Dr. Christopher Gay, pain management physician at Alaska Center for Pain Relief in Anchorage.

Cluster headaches. These typically present as intense pain on one side of the head with searing pain around or behind

the eye. “Attacks come and go and can last for weeks to months. They are hard to treat and occur more often in men than women,” says Dr. Clifford Segil, a neurologist at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, California.

Migraines. Migraines typically occur in women and involve pulsating pain. Symptoms can include nausea, loss of appetite, or heightened sensitivity to light, smell or sound. Migraines can last from four to 72 hours, says Dr. Medhat Mikhael, a pain management specialist in Fountain Valley, California.

Common triggers

Exertion, posture, food, anxiety, hunger, dehydration and sleep deprivation are among the common triggers that can cause headaches. Causes can also include medications, changes in hormones and underlying medical conditions. It is good to work with a pain specialist who can recommend the best treatment for you.

Exertion. During a workout, the blood vessels in the head dilate for increased blood circulation, which can cause an exertion headache. Similarly, exercising in extreme weather and at a high altitude can trigger an exertion headache, says Mikhael. “Hydration, rest and analgesics are the fastest ways to get rid of an exercise headache.”

Posture. Bad posture, prolonged sitting and excessive computer use can cause cervicogenic (originating from the neck) headaches. A forward head posture and a slumped posture can cause the neck and shoulder to spasm, and lead to tightness that can cause tension headaches.

Improved workplace ergonomics, better posture, exercise, stretching, massage, and heat and cold are ways to relieve cervicogenic headaches.

Food. Certain foods, ingredients and beverages may trigger headaches or migraine attacks. Aged cheeses, chocolates, some wines, salty foods and excessive caffeine are among the things that can trigger headaches. A 2019 study published in *The American Journal of Medicine* found that consuming more than three servings of caffeinated beverages is associated with migraine-related headaches. A 2016 article published in the journal *Headache* suggests that caffeine, alcohol and monosodium glutamate may trigger headaches or migraine attacks.

Track, identify and eliminate such food items to reduce the chances of a food-related headache.

Anxiety. When the body experiences stress, the sympathetic nervous system triggers the release of stress hormones—adrenaline and cortisol—and, in a chain reaction, the muscles in the neck and scalp tense up, causing anxiety or stress headaches.

Gay suggests meditation, breathing exercises, painkillers, guided imagery and prescription medications to treat stress headaches.

Hunger and dehydration. According to the American Migraine Foundation, missing meals can trigger headaches because of low blood sugar levels. Similarly, per a 2021 article published in *Current Pain and Headache Reports*, dehydration can be a source or trigger for headaches.

Drink plenty of water throughout the day and during workouts to prevent a dehydration headache. Regular mealtimes can minimize hunger headaches.

Sleep deprivation. Lack of sleep is associated with painful headaches and exhaustion during the day. A 2011 study published in *The Journal of Pain* suggests that lack of sleep increases the creation of specific proteins in the body that contribute to intense headaches.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends seven or more hours of sleep for good health and well-being. ■

Suja Natarajan is a writer based in Virginia.



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Natural therapies

Natural ways to manage headaches include aromatherapy, rhythmic and deep-breathing exercises, cognitive behavioral therapy, massage and self-massage, biofeedback, muscle relaxation, acupuncture, meditation, yoga, reducing stress, and eliminating loud noises and bright lights.

Cold packs and warm compresses on the back of the neck can help relieve headaches. Warm compresses promote blood flow and reduce muscle tension. In contrast, cold packs have a numbing effect, which may decrease the feeling of pain, says California-based Costco member Deborah Reuss, the academic dean of undergraduate studies at Pacific College of Health and Science.—SN

Getting help

Headaches aren't a condition to ignore. See a doctor if your headaches are sudden and intense, frequent, more

severe than usual, don't improve with over-the-counter drugs, or if you can't perform routine activities such as working or sleeping.

Neurologist Dr. Clifford

Segil suggests looking for any changes in the pattern of headaches, or if the headaches feel suddenly different and require a physician's attention.—SN



Chicken and Tortellini Salad

DRESSING

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup red wine vinegar
2 tsp fresh garlic, minced
½ tsp salt
⅛ tsp pepper

2 cups rotisserie chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
Salt and pepper, to taste
10 oz fresh three-cheese tortellini
2 cups loosely packed baby spinach
1 cup red onion, diced
1 cup grape or cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup seedless cucumber, diced
1 can (2.25 oz) sliced black olives, drained
¼ cup feta cheese
¼ cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves, chopped

Prepare the dressing: Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a large jar (or measuring cup). Cover and shake (or whisk) until completely combined. Set aside.

Season chicken with salt and pepper.

Cook the tortellini in a large saucepot according to package instructions, then drain.

In a large bowl, gently combine chicken, tortellini, spinach, onion, tomatoes, cucumber, olives and feta cheese. Pour about ¼ cup dressing (or more, to taste) over the salad. Reserve remaining dressing.

Cover and refrigerate salad until ready to serve. Stir in basil just before serving. Makes 8 (1-cup) servings.

Note: Use remaining dressing to refresh any leftover salad.

Recipe courtesy of Blair Lonergran (theseasonedmom.com)

Protein greens

Make meaty mixed salads for your next meal

by MARCY GOLDMAN

Everyone wants healthy salads, and social media has no shortage of food influencers tossing up chickpeas, tofu, grains and fiber-friendly pulses with the usual salad staples. But what about meat? Many people still want some heftier protein—such as seafood, chicken or beef—to bolster all that light fare.

Of course you can always add a chicken breast to your greens, but here are some fresh ideas for creating a satisfying salad:

- Try Korean ribs over shredded cabbage and Sriracha-spiked

cellophane noodles, all topped with kimchi.

- Make a *shish taouk* salad with Middle Eastern marinated grilled chicken kebabs, couscous, hummus and greens.

- For seafood lovers, grilled salmon, shrimp or crab meat is a natural addition to a Caesar salad.

The ways to add muscle-building protein to your salads are limited only by your imagination. For a little more inspiration, try one of the recipes on these two pages. ■

Marcy Goldman is a Montreal-based chef-host of Betterbaking.com.

Citrusy Shrimp and Avocado Salad

**1 lb medium shrimp (31/40 per lb),
peeled and deveined, cooked
(warm or cooled)**

**8 cups salad greens, such as
arugula, spinach or spring mix
Fruity (or lemon-flavored)
extra-virgin olive oil**

½ lemon or ½ orange

**1 avocado, pitted, peeled and
sliced or diced**

1 shallot, minced

4 oz sliced almonds, toasted

**Kosher salt and freshly ground
black pepper**

Toss the shrimp with the salad greens in a large bowl. Lightly drizzle with olive oil and a generous squeeze of the citrus, then toss lightly to coat. Add the avocado, shallot and almonds. Season with salt and pepper; serve.

Makes 4 servings.

*Recipe and photo courtesy of Heidi Larsen
(foodiecrush.com)*



Black and Blue Steak Salad

1 lb boneless top sirloin steak, cut ¾ inch thick

¼ cup Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp salt

1 tsp black pepper

½ cup cherry tomatoes

6 cups spring mix greens

1 avocado, pitted, peeled and thinly sliced

¼ red onion, thinly sliced

¼ cup blue cheese crumbles

¼ cup dressing of choice

Place steak in a zip-close bag with Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Seal; turn steak to coat evenly. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, then remove steak from marinade. Place steak on grill over medium heat. Grill, covered, for 7 to 11 minutes for medium-rare (an internal temperature of 145 F) to medium (an internal temperature of 160 F) doneness, turning occasionally.

Remove steak from grill and let it rest. While it is resting, grill the tomatoes for 2 to 3 minutes or until they burst. Remove tomatoes from the grill, and slice the steak across the grain.

Fill a platter or large salad bowl with greens. Top with burst tomatoes, avocado, onion and blue cheese. Top with steak slices, then serve with dressing of your choice. Makes 4 servings.

*Recipe and photo courtesy of Courtney Whitmore
(pizzazzerie.com)*



© DARIAUSTIUGOVA / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

COSTCO CONNECTION

Ingredients for salads can be found in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.



The Douro region in northern Portugal

COURTESY OF BOB HOLLER



© J.P. DORIGO

Bob Holler is a Costco wine and liquor buyer.

COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of wines, including those from Spain and Portugal, are available in select Costco warehouses.

Great grapes

Growing world-class red wines in Portugal and Spain

by BOB HOLLER



Recently Costco's wine team explored Spain's Rioja and Ribera del Duero regions, as well as Portugal's Douro region. These regions produce age-worthy red wine from the same grape, which is called by different names in each region. The grape is called Tempranillo in Rioja, Tinto Fino or Tinta del Pais in Ribera del Duero, and Tinta Roriz in Portugal.

Spain

Rioja region red wines have commanding flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry. Winemakers in this region predominantly use American oak, which contributes to soft round tannins, and imparts flavors of vanilla and sweet spices. Small percentages of Graciano and Mazuelo grapes are often added to increase complexity and aromatics. Wines from this region tend to be lighter and more elegant than wines from Ribera del Duero.

Wines from the Ribera del Duero region are often 100% Tinto Fino or Tinta del Pais, but small amounts of cabernet, merlot and malbec can be added to the blend. These wines are full-bodied, deeply concentrated, and complex with black fruit character and great acidity. French oak is preferred in this region. While French oak imparts some of

the same flavors as American oak, the flavors tend to be more subtle.

Spanish wines are often labeled with an aging statement. Crianza is aged in barrels and bottled for a minimum of two years, while Reserva is aged for three years and Gran Reserva is aged for five years.

Portugal

Portugal is home to an astonishing 250 indigenous grape varieties, many of which are grown in the picturesque, terraced Douro region. Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca, Trincadeira and Touriga Nacional are the most notable varieties. This hot, dry region produces wines with concentrated bold fruit, complexity and high tannins.

Douro is also home to tawny and age-worthy vintage port (fortified wine). Other regions, such as Dao, Lisbon and Alentejo, produce a range of wines from light and fruity to more serious with notable minerality and solid structure. The diverse wines of Portugal are like a hidden treasure just waiting for you to explore.

When you visit your local Costco warehouse, we hope you'll be impressed with the fruits of our visit to these regions. I know I am! ■

Flavor and function

Costco sauerkraut supplier Wildbrine hits the mark with taste and nutrition

by RANDI DONAHUE



© CHRISTY MOYER

Mother Nature is a key element behind the sauerkraut from Costco supplier Wildbrine.

The Santa Rosa, California-based company sources organic cabbage via partnerships with local California farmers, chasing the sun to ensure they can use the freshest produce year-round.

“Once it arrives, we inspect each head of cabbage before hand-processing it to remove the outer leaves and core,” says Hannah Lewis, Costco member and chief marketing officer for Fermented Food Holdings, which took ownership of Wildbrine in 2021. “We then shred and salt the cabbage, mixing in garlic before we begin the fermentation process in our small-batch bins where the naturally occurring cultures do their magic over 15 to 30 days.”

The “magic” is lacto-fermentation—a process that breaks down natural sugars, forming lactic acid—to nix harmful bacteria, but keep beneficial bacteria alive.

“When the fermentation is complete, you have a sauerkraut that contains a wide variety of probiotic organisms,” says Wildbrine co-founder and Costco member Chris Glab. “They are healthy and thriving. Then we create an environment to foster the guys we want—the lactobacillus probi-

otic organisms—and exclude the spoilage organisms like yeasts and molds.”

The result is a versatile and tangy raw cabbage with a long shelf life. It’s also chock-full of natural probiotics that, when consumed regularly, may contribute to a balanced gut, and facilitate better overall health, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

Wildbrine came to life in 2011. Having already created and sold a prepared-foods company, business partners Glab and Rick Goldberg were presented with an opportunity to team up again, taking a local nonprofit’s sauerkraut-making operation (with which Goldberg was involved) to market. When the nonprofit’s executive director approached them about taking it over completely, Wildbrine was born.

After a decade in the market and thinking long term, in 2021, Goldberg and Glab sold Wildbrine to Fermented Food Holdings (FFH). Glab became FFH’s chief innovation officer.

Wildbrine now produces sauerkrauts of various flavors, but one of its most popular and versatile—the Raw Organic Sauerkraut (sold at Costco)—contains just three original ingredients: cabbage, sea salt and garlic. The sauerkraut can enhance anything from avocado toast to grilled meat, but is zesty and flavorful enough to be enjoyed all by itself. ■

Randi Donahue (randidonahue.com) is a Florida-based freelance journalist.

ROUND AND ROUND

Wildbrine deploys a closed-loop system in production, with cabbage scraps returned to the farms on which they grew for farmers to use as animal feed or compost. Some parts of the cabbage, like the soft outer leaves and the tough core, have even inspired new Wildbrine products.—RD

COSTCO CONNECTION

Wildbrine Raw Organic Sauerkraut (Item 1098785) is available in Costco warehouses and for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.

Maggie O'Farrell

Item
1748942

© SOPHIE DAVIDSON



Worth 1,000 words

Maggie O'Farrell's latest explores the life of a young duchess

by KIRSTI SHARRATT

Maggie O'Farrell's latest novel, *The Marriage Portrait*, tells the story of a resilient young woman's fight for her life, and although the circumstances were very different, O'Farrell herself almost died when she was a girl.

At 8 years old, she contracted encephalitis and was in intensive care for several months, where she spent nearly all her time listening to audiobooks and reading. "That's when reading became a very important part of my life," she recalls.

Alongside her love of reading, O'Farrell remembers always having an urge to write. "The doctors thought I wouldn't walk again or be able to hold a pencil or write," she says. However, she proved them wrong by getting back to school, where English was her favorite subject.

Her illness left her with a stutter, which she credits with giving her hypersensitivity to language and vocabulary. "Stammerers can think of about five synonyms for a particular word that they don't want to say," says O'Farrell, a Costco member who lives in Edinburgh, Scotland. "You can't underestimate what a relief writing is for a stammerer—the idea that the words

can just flow from your pen nib makes writing an absolute joy."

Today, O'Farrell is the author of a memoir, two children's books and nine novels, including *Hamnet*, which won the 2020 Women's Prize for Fiction.

Set in Italy in the Renaissance—a period O'Farrell describes as a dichotomy between beauty and brutality—*The Marriage Portrait* was inspired by the real-life duchess Lucrezia de' Medici. Lucrezia was the subject of Robert Browning's poem "My Last Duchess," which O'Farrell had studied at university. "It features a 16th-century duke showing a visitor a portrait and saying, 'This is my previous wife. And by the way I murdered her.' It's an astonishing moment."

O'Farrell later saw the portrait of Lucrezia de' Medici by the Italian artist Bronzino. "As soon as I saw it, I just knew I had my next book," O'Farrell says. "[Lucrezia] looks really worried; she looks as if she has something to say, and I wanted to tell her side of the story." ■

Kirsti Sharratt is a freelancer who lives in St Andrews, Scotland.

ONLINE BOOK PICK

BOOK *Pokémon Discovery Collection*

PUBLISHER
DK

The *Pokémon Discovery Collection* two-book set lets readers ages 6 to 9 discover Pokémon and their world. Discover various regions and meet trainers and famous Pokémon teams, while learning about battles and competitions. These books—*Pokémon Ash's Atlas* and *Pokémon Visual Companion*—are packed with facts, stats and everything fans need to know to catch them all.

The set also includes a life-size Pikachu poster.



COSTCO CONNECTION

The *Pokémon Discovery Collection* box set (Item 1741996) is available now at Costco.com. *The Marriage Portrait* (Item 1748942; 7/11) will be available in most Costco warehouses.

Writer's block

New thriller digs deep into a fictional suburban town

by JUDY GELMAN

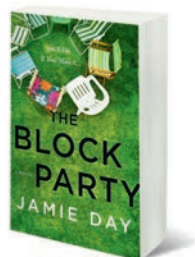
Costco's suggested Book Club read provides insight into a selected novel, as well as an appropriate recipe to accompany your own book club's discussion.

During a brainstorming session for the book that would become *The Block Party*, Jamie Day's editor mentioned attending a neighborhood party "and a lightbulb went off," Day recalls. "We agreed a block party would be fun—and a great title."

Day drew on his experiences growing up in a close-knit suburban community where he enjoyed backyard football games, barbecues and neighborly bonding. "On my street, everyone knew each other and one another's business," Day reminisces. "But, as my youthful innocence faded into adulthood, I learned that behind the idyllic facade of my childhood street, there was a darker side filled with secrets, lies and betrayals."

In Day's novel, a murder rocks a Memorial Day party on posh Alton Road in Meadowbrook, Massachusetts. Who was the victim, and who was the perpetrator? The domestic thriller delves into neighborhood rivalries and suspicions, revealing the hidden dangers lurking within.

The Block Party unfolds from the perspectives of residents Alex Fox and her teenage daughter, Lettie, who look back



The Block Party (Item 1749980) will be available in mid-July in most Costco warehouses.



Jamie Day

© MICHAEL NAIMO

on the year leading up to the murder. "Alex, the grounding force in the neighborhood, connects us to multiple people," explains Day, "and allows readers to observe the observer." And through Lettie, readers get another perspective. "Teenagers have a very rich inner world, and I wanted to give readers that insight," adds Day.

The novel's reverse chronology begins with the murder. "Readers turn pages because they care about the characters, and they want answers," says Day. "I created questions about who was killed and why. From there, the characters take over."

As Alton Road neighbors gather over meals for numerous events throughout the year including Friendsgiving, Girls' Night, Christmas Eve and block parties, the mystery unfolds. "These are pivotal scenes where they exchange gossip, rumors and innuendo over food," says Day.

To complement a book club discussion, Day suggests serving block party fare such as potato salad and burgers, along with a vegetarian alternative. He envisions Lettie, who is passionate about animal welfare and environmental health, enjoying Mushroom Sliders. "Lettie loves her block party burgers; only hers are never made from sentient beings," he explains, "so enjoy these tasty sliders during your visit to fictional Meadowbrook." ■

Judy Gelman is the creator of the website Bookclubcookbook.com.

Lettie's Mushroom Sliders

8 Tbsp butter, divided
1 Tbsp olive oil
1¼ lbs mushrooms, sliced
1 shallot, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp thyme leaves, chopped
¾ tsp kosher salt, divided
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
12 pull-apart slider rolls
1 cup grated Gruyère, divided
1 cup grated fontina cheese, divided
3 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
¼ tsp garlic powder

Heat oven to 350 F. In a large skillet, over medium, heat 2 Tbsp butter and olive oil. Add mushrooms and cook until golden brown.

Add 4 Tbsp butter, shallot, garlic and thyme. Cook until shallot softens. Add ½ tsp salt and Worcestershire sauce. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring frequently.

Cut rolls in half horizontally, split but not separated. Place bottom buns cut side up on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with half of the Gruyère and fontina cheese. Spoon mushrooms on top, then sprinkle with remaining cheese. Cover with top buns.

Melt 2 Tbsp butter, and place in a small bowl. Stir in Parmesan cheese, garlic powder and ¼ tsp kosher salt. Brush tops with Parmesan mixture.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until lightly browned and cheese has melted. Cut sliders into individual portions. Serve immediately.

Makes 12 sliders.

Adapted from Carolynscooking.com



Just the goods

Costco's online appliance program delivers value, without hidden costs

The message that Costco's appliance team wants to convey to Costco members is as simple and straightforward as the appliance program itself: It's all about the value. Excellent products. Clear pricing. No hidden charges, fees or add-on costs. "What you get through Costco's program is, in our opinion, simply the best value," says Jeremy Noble, a buyer for Costco's appliance program. We asked Noble and buyer Connor Hovsepian about the program basics. Here's a look.

Costco Connection What kind of appliances will members find at Costco.com and which brands do you carry?

Jeremy Noble Whether you are looking for refrigerators, dishwashers, cooking or

laundry appliances, we have the best options for members from the major industry brands, such as LG, Samsung, Whirlpool, GE Appliances, KitchenAid, Maytag and Bosch.

CC How quickly can I get my appliances when I purchase through Costco.com?

Connor Hovsepian We keep inventory of our bestsellers on hand to ensure members can get them as quickly as possible—for many items as quickly as three to five days. Look for the "Costco Direct" tag, or search "Costco Direct" at Costco.com (see "What is Costco Direct?"). Other items may be stocked at our suppliers' facilities with a longer lead time.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LG

Find the right appliances at tremendous value at Costco.com

Savings made simple

As this comparison chart of a Maytag dishwasher illustrates, the initial price at Costco.com and at a competitor can seem to be close. However, while Costco.com's price reflects the total before sales tax, other retailers often tack on costs for a variety of extras that Costco.com does not, driving up the final total and resulting in a big difference.

	Costco.com	Competitor A
 Posted price	\$579.99	\$548.00
 Delivery & Installation	Included	\$199.00
 Installation Parts	Included	\$39.96
 2 Year Warranty	Included	1 year
 Haul Away	Included	\$50.00
 Pre-tax total	\$579.99	\$836.96

Actual Maytag front-control dishwasher comparison taken 5/18/23

CC How does Costco.com's pricing compare with other retailers?

JN If you look at the initial price for an item at Costco.com, and at another retail site, you might think the competition's price is lower. But at many retailers, that price isn't what you end up paying at checkout, after they have added delivery, installation, haul away of your old appliance and more (see "Savings made simple"). And, you won't see those additional costs until you've gone through the entire checkout process.

At Costco.com the price you see is the price you get, and you should always be saving money. Our price includes delivery and installation, and required parts in most areas, haul away, and two years warranty coverage (versus the one-year industry standard coverage).

CC What other savings are available?

JN At Costco.com we offer the ability to bundle and save on many purchases. We

offer competitive prices throughout the year, plus additional savings during major holiday promotions.

CH Additionally, Executive members receive 2% back on their purchase, plus an additional 2% back if the items are purchased with a Costco Anywhere Visa Card by Citi.

Members can go to Costco.com and search "appliance warranty calculator" to calculate their coverage and rewards.

CC What are important points to consider before ordering?

JN Before purchasing an appliance, members will want to consider these two important aspects: fuel type and fit. Make sure the fuel type of the appliance (gas or electric) is compatible with the connections in your home.

Equally important is to make sure it will fit—not just where you want it, but every step of the path it takes to place it inside: driveways, doorways, hallways, etc. Walking the path prior to placing your order is key. ■

WHAT IS COSTCO DIRECT?

Members shopping at Costco.com will come across many items with a "Costco Direct" tag. Buyer Jeremy Noble explains: "The Costco Direct tag indicates that an item is stocked at our distribution center, so the order and the delivery can be fulfilled more quickly."

A "build your bundle" feature provides even greater savings on an order. "When appliances are bundled on the same order, we can reduce the freight costs and pass the savings along to the member," says Noble. Find Costco Direct items by visiting Costco.com and searching "Costco Direct."

ICONS: ANNA FRAJTOVA; GRAPHIXMANIA; ANNA LENI; KOVALTOI / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



A package makeover for Kirkland Signature Tempura Shrimp greatly reduced the size of the box. The original version is in the back.



© COSTCO PHOTO STUDIO

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

Spotlight on packaging

Costco's quest to reduce waste while protecting goods

by TIM TALEVICH

When the concept of value is mentioned at Costco, discussion often focuses on product quality: the freshness of the apples, the size and taste of the famous pumpkin pies, the convenience of big packs of Kirkland Signature™ bath tissue. Now, Costco buyers are looking hard at how those items are packaged, as part of the company's sustainability efforts. In addition to how an item is made, the way it is packaged is becoming a core part of the item's value.

"The goal is to reduce packaging waste, while still protecting products, ensuring food safety and complying

with laws and regulations," says Tim Wahlquist, who oversees Costco's packaging team. "It's a complex process," he explains, "because new packaging must be an improvement—for example, the cardboard for boxes that replace plastic should come from certified forests, ensuring the wood fiber used in them is responsibly sourced."

Costco recently adopted packaging guidelines, with the initial focus on Kirkland Signature products, where buyers have the most control. The guidelines ask:

- Can the package be smaller, using less material overall?
- Are boxes and plastic containers made from recycled materials?



The Kirkland Signature line of nuts is moving from plastic jars to bags, significantly reducing plastic in the packaging.

- Regarding cardboard specifically, if it's not made of recycled fibers, do the fibers come from certified forests?
- Are the new packages recyclable or certified compostable?
- Is labeling clear to help members know how to dispose of the package?

Success stories so far

New packages meeting these standards are starting to show up in numerous product categories.

A good example is the Kirkland Signature line of nuts. Transitioning these products from plastic jars to bags means 85% less plastic is used in the packaging, without sacrificing quality.

The packaging for Kirkland Signature Tempura Shrimp also underwent a makeover—a foam tray was eliminated and the box is smaller. The result is that 250,000 pounds of paper and plastic packaging will be eliminated each year from this product alone. Also, smaller packaging means more items can fit on a truck, reducing transportation costs.

At the same time, because the primary goal of packaging is to protect the product and make sure it isn't damaged or destroyed, "there are some cases where using plastic packaging still makes sense," says Wahlquist. He explains that significant resources—such as water, materials and energy involved during the manufac-

turing and growing process—are wasted when products are damaged.

"Until feasible alternatives are available, Costco's goals are to have plastic packaging made from recycled content and be widely recyclable," Wahlquist says.

Seeing the bigger picture

The focus on better packaging is part of Costco's broader sustainability goals. These cover all aspects of the company: how it sources food, with an aim to protect people, lands, forests and oceans; how it operates its more than 850 global warehouses to use energy and water wisely, and minimize waste through donation and recycling programs; and how it supports local communities.

In creating its sustainability programs, Costco aligned its objectives with the global Sustainable Development Goals developed by the United Nations as an urgent call to end poverty and improve communities around the world, while tackling climate change.

One of those goals calls for responsible consumption and production. "Packaging is part of that effort," says Sheri Flies, Costco's vice president of sustainability and compliance. "We're committed to doing our part in this vital area." ■

RECYCLING RESOURCES

Here are some handy resources with recycling tips:

U.S. EPA
Epa.gov/recycle

Keep America Beautiful
Recycled.org

Local options
Earth911.com

The Recycling Partnership
Recyclingpartnership.org/what-can-i-recycle

Carton Council
Recyclecartons.com

For details on Costco's Sustainability Commitment and packaging policy, go to Costco.com, search "sustainability," then click "Merchandising: Our Principles & Products" and "Packaging."—TT

How to read a label

Finding whether a package can be recycled or composted can be frustrating. Costco is addressing this issue by using a labeling program called How2Recycle (how2recycle.

info) on more and more Kirkland Signature items. These labels give clear instructions about recyclability through the recycling label on the page. "We want our members to know how to properly recycle,

compost or dispose of packaging," says Tim Wahlquist, a member of Costco's responsible sourcing and packaging team. "We continue to aggressively expand our labeling efforts in all our regions."—TT



SPONSORED CONTENT



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © COSTCO PHOTO STUDIO; © STANDRETT; OLLY; IRIANA SHIYA; ROGERPHOTO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Suite of services

Costco offers home, business solutions

by DAN JONES

Did you know that members have access to a suite of Costco Services for home and business from insurance and payment processing to water delivery? Here's a look at what's available from third-party providers.

Auto and home insurance.* Members get exclusive discounts and benefits for auto, home, renters, umbrella and specialty needs.

Bottled water delivery. Bottled water is delivered to your home or office, and hot and cold bottom-load dispensers are available for rental.

Business health insurance.* Small-business owners can access some of the health insurance resources that large employers use.

Costco Auto Program. Members get exclusive rates on new and select pre-owned vehicles, and enjoy extra savings through limited-time specials. Members can also purchase parts, service and accessories at participating service centers.

Life insurance.* Help protect your loved ones by choosing the amount of coverage

you want with an initial term period of 10 or 20 years.

Member Prescription Program.

Tap into exclusive pricing at thousands of network pharmacies for prescriptions, pet medications and vaccines. Members can also have their prescriptions mailed.

Payment processing. These user-friendly and efficient payment-processing solutions for business owners provide all-in-one point-of-sale systems that let you access digital invoicing, contactless payments, security features and more.

Personal and business checks.

Purchase checks, with security features and accessories—including return address labels and checkbook covers.

Pet insurance.* Get insurance for your dogs and cats, with comprehensive coverage for things such as emergencies and surgeries, plus 24/7 online access to a licensed vet or vet technician.

Truck rental. Costco members can save big when renting vans and trucks. ■

HOME IMPROVEMENT

Costco Services includes a range of installation programs to help simplify and beautify your home. Services include heating and air conditioning, custom window treatments, carpet and flooring, garage doors, cabinet refacing, custom home organization, water treatment systems, automatic standby generators, residential solar and more.—DJ

COSTCO CONNECTION

For more information about these services, including Executive member savings, visit Costco.com and click "Services."

*Services are provided to Costco members by third parties. *Plans and insurance services are offered by licensed third party providers and made available through Costco Insurance Agency, Inc., a licensed agent. Costco Insurance Agency, Inc. is not licensed in New York state. Insurance products are not obtained through the Costco Insurance Agency in New York. Costco Insurance Agency, Inc.'s California license number is OD08407. Costco Wholesale, Costco Insurance Agency, Inc. and its subsidiaries do not underwrite insurance, pay claims or guarantee any of the products or services offered by third parties. Specific products, features, rates and discounts may vary and may not be available in all states in accordance with state filings and applicable law.*



Mexico: Fairmont Mayakoba

Discover a beachfront resort located in Riviera Maya that's surrounded by a nature preserve, a lagoon and the Caribbean Sea. Guests will enjoy numerous on-site restaurants and bars, seven swimming pools, including a children's pool with a water slide, a kids' club and a rejuvenating spa. An all-inclusive plan is available for purchase. Costco Travel's package includes a Digital Costco Shop Card. To learn more, visit [CostcoTravel.com](https://www.costcotravel.com).



Case-Mate Fuel 4-in-1 Wireless Charging Station

Charges iPhone, Apple Watch and AirPods; also works with Samsung and other Qi-compatible wireless charging devices up to 15W. [CostcoNext.com](https://www.costconext.com) only.

The latest Costco finds



Life Comfort 10' x 9' Blanket

This ultra-soft, oversize blanket is perfect for family time, sporting events and more. Available in four designs. Item 1630405. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses/costco.com).

Berkshire Life Soft Blanket

You'll sleep cozy with this dense and plush blanket featuring a heathered design. Available in gray, purple, teal and linen. Item 1719975 (Twin), 1600819 (Queen), 1600820 (King; warehouses only). Item numbers vary by color at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com). [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses/costco.com).





Anne Klein Ladies' Gauze Button-Up Top

Featuring a relaxed fit, this double-gauze designed top features a front button closure, front chest pocket, long sleeves and a roll tab on each sleeve. Colors: white, green, purple and blue (warehouses only). Sizes: XS-XXL. Item 1586160. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses.com).



Flora Nikrooz Ladies' 2-Piece Pajama Set

Super soft and comfortable, this pajama set features a short-sleeve top with front chest pocket and an open leg pant with functional drawstring. Available in floral black, pink, blue and mini leopard print (warehouses only). Sizes: S-XXL. Selection varies by location. Item 1675469. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses.com).

Puma Men's Performance Hoodie

Featuring side venting for extra comfort and a two-panel hood with crossover neck, this hoodie is constructed with moisture-wicking and lightweight material with four-way stretch. Colors: black, gray and blue. Sizes: S-XXL. Selection varies by location. Item 1668853. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses.com).



Levi's® Youth Assorted Pants

Choose from the modern classic Levi's 511 Flex Stretch Slim Fit jean and the Levi's Twill pant (not shown), the modern classic Levi's 720 High Rise Super Skinny jean and the Levi's Twill Cargo Jogger. Item 1603530, 1707287. Colors, sizes and selection may vary by location. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.warehouses.com).





PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAPITAL CONCERTS

UNSTOPPABLE FOURTH

Michael Colbert works with more than 20 government and non-governmental Washington agencies and organizations to put *A Capitol Fourth* together. He supervises everything from creative content to publicity and promotion, and oversees the television professionals who participate annually. “Working on these shows, it’s always been about giving back,” he says.—SM



Creating a fabulous Fourth

It has been more than 40 years since Jerry Colbert decided to celebrate America’s independence with the world. *A Capitol Fourth*, which features a variety of musical entertainment followed by fireworks launched from the reflecting pool at the Lincoln Memorial, was first televised on PBS in 1981—and now reaches an audience of more than 15 million globally.

Since Colbert’s passing in 2017, his son, Costco member Michael Colbert, carries on the legacy, working year-round to plan

every detail of the event and a separate Memorial Day production. “He wanted to do something that would unify us all in celebration and joy—to bring a concert about America to all of America,” says Colbert of his father. “I am very humbled and honored to continue this great tradition.

“The National Symphony Orchestra playing the national anthem and thousands of people with their hands on their hearts—it doesn’t get much better than that,” he says.—Shana McNally

Clockwise from top: Fireworks spectacular over Washington, D.C.; the event finale in 2022; Jerry and Michael Colbert.