

Please note:

The downloadable version of the *Costco Connection* is temporarily provided without advertisements. We are working to correct this.

**Thank you,
Costco Connection team**

Short cruises ★ Supplier spotlight: Simple Mills ★ Rosh Hashana

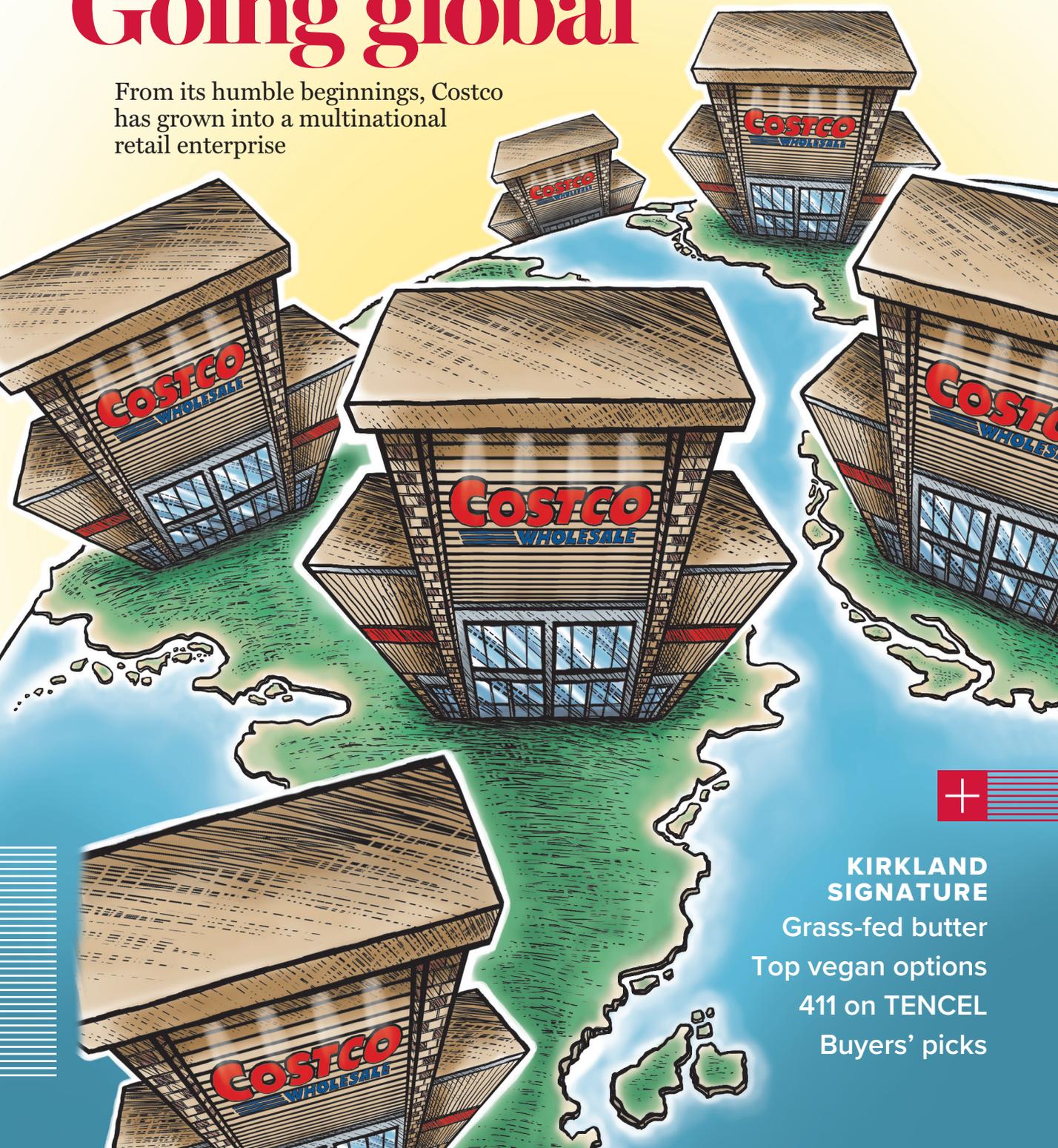
COSTCO Connection[®]

SEPTEMBER 2023

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS

Going global

From its humble beginnings, Costco has grown into a multinational retail enterprise



**KIRKLAND
SIGNATURE**

Grass-fed butter
Top vegan options
411 on TENCEL
Buyers' picks

COSTCO **Connection** *September*

September 2023 | Volume 38 | Number 9

Table of Contents

COVER STORY

24 A worldwide run

As Costco adds to its story by growing globally, it has embraced the wants, needs and cultures of each country.
by Will Fifield, Dan Jones
and T. Foster Jones

★ SPECIAL SECTION: KIRKLAND SIGNATURE

32 A brand beyond

A better butter
by Jen Madera

Making vegans smile
by Mary Bishop

A versatile, sustainable fiber
by Jen Madera

Buyers' picks



A lot of natural goodness goes into the making of Kirkland Signature™ Grass-Fed Butter.

Table of Contents *September*

Up Front

COSTCO LIFE

- 12 For September**
All about Liptember, Barbie doll facts, daddy-daughter shopping day and more.

DEPARTMENTS

- 7 Publisher's Note**
- 9 Member Comments**
- 15 For Your Business**
A look at qualities today's business leaders must have.
by Ayeshah Abuelhiga
- 17 Tech Connection**
Why AppleCare+ is a no-brainer protection plan.
by Marc Saltzman
- 20 Travel Connection**
Short cruises can be a great respite if you are short on time or money.
by Lois Alter Mark
- 93 Member Connection**
Kristen Scott, a Canadian singer-songwriter, turned to music after suffering a personal tragedy.
by Dan Jones



*Farm to Table
The Costco Way*
Following page 67.

Lifestyle

FOR YOUR HEALTH

- 54 The story of your stool**
Poop can offer a surprising amount of insight into your overall health.
by Robert Greathouse

FOR YOUR TABLE

- 60 A tasty tradition**
Discover the foods enjoyed during Rosh Hashana.
by Milly Dawson
- 65 Supplier spotlight:
Simple Mills**
Great tasting snacks that are good for you and good for the environment.
by Tim Talevich
- 67 Pirates' treasure**
Rum is versatile, tasty and woefully underrated.
by Russ York

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT

- 73 Author spotlight:
*The Girl in the Eagle's Talons***
Lisbeth Salander returns in the latest installment in the *Millennium* series.
by Stephanie E. Ponder
+ *NASA's Bees* by Rob Waugh.

Shopping

INSIDE COSTCO

- 74 Buying Smart:
Countertops**
Costco's Home Improvement program helps members upgrade their countertops with quality products at a Costco value.
by Andrea Tomkins
- 81 Supplier spotlight:
Wellness Pet Company**
This company wants to help care for pets and the planet.
by Debbie L. Miller
- 82 Treasure Hunt**
A sampling of what's in the warehouses and at Costco.com.
- 87 Costco Services:
Primo Water**
Stay hydrated with this water delivery service that offers refreshing perks.
by Dan Jones
- 89 Special Events**
Exciting products offered for a short time.



20



PUBLISHER Sandy Torrey storrey@costco.com

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Stephanie E. Ponder 425-427-7134 sponder@costco.com

EDITORS

U.S. Will Fifield wffield@costco.com

Canada Christina Guerrero cguerrero2@costco.com

REPORTERS

Shelley Crenshaw screenshaw@costco.com

Dan Jones daniel.jones@costco.com

Jen Madera jimadera@costco.com

COPY EDITORS Cindy Hutchinson, Shana McNally,

Whitney Seneker, Alexandra van Ingen

CONTRIBUTORS

Ayeshah Abuelhiga, Mary Bishop, Milly Dawson,
Robert Greathouse, T. Foster Jones, Lois Alter Mark,
Debbie L. Miller, Marc Saltzman, Tim Talevich,
Andrea Tomkins, Russ York

ART DIRECTOR Lory Williams lwilliams@costco.com

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTORS

David Schneider dschneider@costco.com

Brenda Shecter bshecter@costco.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Ken Broman, Steven Lait, Megan Lees, Chris Rusnak

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 ADVERTISING MANAGER

Kathi Tipper-Holgersen 425-313-6581 ktipper@costco.com

ASSISTANT ADVERTISING MANAGER

Susan Detlor 425-313-6916 sdetlor@costco.com

ADVERTISING SPECIALIST

Raven Stackhouse 425-416-1632 rstackhouse@costco.com

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

Aliw Moral 425-313-2558 mmoral@costco.com

ADVERTISING COPYWRITER Bill Urlevich

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION SPECIALIST Josh Livingston

ADVERTISING GRAPHIC DESIGNER Christina Muñoz-Moye

NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

Michael Colunno 973-664-7797

michael.colunno@mediapartnersgroupllc.net

BUSINESS MANAGER Jane Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER Rossie Cruz rcruz@costco.com

CIRCULATION COORDINATOR Luke Okada

ONLINE PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Dorothy Strakele connection@costco.com

COSTCO WHOLESALE

P.O. Box 34088, Seattle, WA 98124-1088

999 Lake Drive, Issaquah, WA 98027

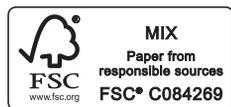
Fax: 425-313-6718 Email: connection@costco.com

SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES

The *Costco Connection* is mailed to Primary Executive members. You can change your subscription via live chat or mail. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for processing.

LIVE CHAT Go to Costco.com, click on "Customer Service" and then "Live Chat."

MAIL Membership Processing, P.O. Box 34783, Seattle, WA 98124-1088



The *Costco Connection* is published by Costco Wholesale. All editorial material, including editorial comments, opinion and statements of fact appearing in this publication, represents the views of the respective authors and does not necessarily carry the endorsement of Costco Wholesale or its officers. Information in the *Costco Connection* is gathered from sources considered to be reliable, but the accuracy of all information cannot be guaranteed. The publication of any advertisements is not to be construed as an endorsement of the product or service offered unless it is specifically stated in the ad that there is such approval or endorsement. Products advertised may not be available at all locations at the time of publication. Publishing offices are located at 999 Lake Drive, Issaquah, WA 98027. Copyright © 2023 Costco Wholesale.

NW BA LA SD

From good to great

This issue's cover story is not only a great show-and-tell of Costco's growth, but for me, as a 36-year employee, it's also a bit of a trip down memory lane. As the story explains, Costco started off as a place that sold a limited number of items, often in bulk sizes, in a no-frills warehouse building. It's hard to accurately convey what a novel concept it was at the time. Seeing people shop in warehouses with bare, concrete floors that they paid to get into felt almost revolutionary in the early 1980s.

And it was. As the company grew in size and in success, we began to ask if the Costco model could apply to other essentials that we all need. You know, things such as gas, home appliances, glasses and contacts, pharmacy items and more. The answer was, and is, yes. Each successive new area of the company was developed as a way to increase the value of your Costco membership.

A great example is our Kirkland Signature™ line of products. We have developed products for our private-label brand in nearly every category you'll find in our warehouses, from clothing to household goods to pet food. The label means that Costco buyers played a key role in creating the product (sometimes completely from scratch) and that it has received our stamp of approval—our signature—that it offers a particularly excellent value to our members. This issue's Special Section discusses new developments in our Kirkland Signature line.

I sincerely hope that you enjoy reading this issue and that Costco helps you make the most of this time of year. ■



© COSTCO PHOTO STUDIO



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

Coming next month We'll be taking a look at the company Jazwares, which is behind the cuddly and collectible Squishmallows.

Follow us on



Follow us on



MEMBER
COMMENTS



The story continues

I just got the August issue of the *Costco Connection* and thoroughly enjoyed the articles. I had to comment on the cover story, “Second chapters.” I am 94 and have had at least six second chapters and I am still having some, although not for pay.

After a career as a naval officer, I worked as an electrical and mechanical engineer in a naval shipyard. I retired from these jobs and worked on several projects for defense contractors.

I have worked as a fire inspector for insurance companies, taught basic sailing for a sailing school [and] worked as a financial advisor. I also taught my grandson how to make minor home repairs of all kinds, which we did for neighbors at reduced cost.

I’m not doing any of this anymore but still having fun and writing my autobiography, which is almost finished.

Robert H. Knight

Charleston, South Carolina

In praise of ZOA energy drinks

In the August issue, I read “Energy solutions,” which is about the zero sugar ZOA drinks that my husband loves. He loves the taste and the fact that this item has zero sugar. I hope Costco keeps the ZOA drinks regularly stocked.

Kecia Woodson, via email

Another headache trigger

I enjoyed your story “Brain pain” in the July issue. While it covered most common headache triggers, it didn’t mention sinus headaches. As a sinus sufferer myself, headaches and low-grade fevers over years are enough for me to consider surgery. The issue is real.

Christine Farmer, via email

Much ado about packaging

I was delighted to read your excellent article “Spotlight on packaging” in the July issue of the *Costco Connection*. I live in a community with an active, volunteer-run recycling program. Your efforts to reduce plastic and other packaging materials are so important to all of us. Bravo! Please keep us posted as Costco continues its work in this vital area.

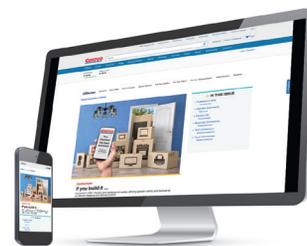
Cleve Pinnix, Lacey, Washington

Quick & Easy
THE COSTCO WAY



Orgain Collagen + Probiotics 2-Ways

Make overnight oats with blueberries and a piña colada smoothie for a fruity breakfast with a dose of collagen. View this recipe and others at Costco.com. Search: “Quick & Easy” and click “Breakfast.”



Advertising and products

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.

Digital edition

Access the magazine online each month at Costco.com (search “*Costco Connection*”).

Talk to us

Do you have a comment about something you read in the *Connection*? Please send a note, including your full name, phone number and address, to:

EMAIL

connection@costco.com

MAIL

Costco Connection
P.O. Box 34088
Seattle, WA 98124-1088

© PESHKOVA; CHINNAPOONG; PAVLO; KLYMENKO; MICHAELJUNG; RAWPIXEL.COM / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

A colorful statement

This month, wearing bright lipstick is more than a fun fashion statement. It's an invitation to start a conversation about women's mental health. Welcome to Liptember.



Back story

LAUNCHED IN 2010 by Australian mental health advocate Luke Morris, Liptember is a monthlong campaign that focuses on raising awareness of women's mental health.

Now expanding globally, Liptember is different from National Mental Health Awareness

Month in May. It focuses on the unique challenges women face, which include societal beauty standards and sexism in the workplace. The bright lipstick is an outward symbol of why it's critical to support women's mental health, now more than ever.

Kirkland Signature™, Costco's private label, was introduced in 1995. It has grown to include a wide range of products, from mixed nuts to grills.



SHOPPER'S SHUFFLE

Daddy-daughter day out

Joe Salvatore snapped this shot of his daughter, Eliana, at the warehouse in Holbrook, New York. "She loves being my shadow as we check off our to-buy list," Salvatore says.

COURTESY OF JOE SALVATORE

THROUGH THE AGES

History of Barbie

Since Barbie was founded by Ruth Handler in 1959, the toy has evolved. Here are some facts about the iconic doll from Barbiemedia.com. Find Barbie toys in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

- Barbie was named after Handler's daughter, Barbara, and Ken, after her son, Kenneth.
- The doll first appeared in her iconic black-and-white striped swimsuit.
- The first celebrity Barbie doll was based on the British fashion model Twiggy in 1967.
- In support of equal rights, Barbie released Christie, one of the first Black dolls, in 1968.
- Barbie has had more than 200 careers, including astronaut, pilot, firefighter, journalist and entrepreneur.
- More than 100 dolls are purchased every minute, with a total of 58 million sold annually in 150 countries.



MEN'S HEALTH

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

About 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime, according to the American Cancer Society. Get screened in September—Prostate Cancer Awareness Month—especially if you're between the ages of 55 and 69.

© NURYADIN / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



The Barbie brand includes a host of different toys.

According to a *Harvard Business Review* study, face-to-face communication is the best way to support, coach and lead teams.

FOR YOUR BUSINESS

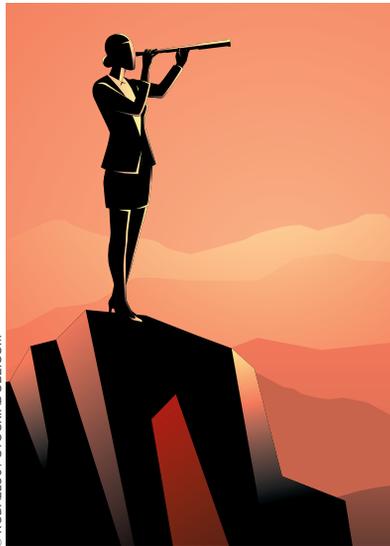
by AYESHAH ABUELHIGA

Effective business leaders must develop key skills that go beyond familiar management responsibilities. Just as important to strategic planning, hiring and tending to the company's financial health, are roles such as coach, motivator and mentor. Instead of "chief executive officer," CEO should stand for "chief engagement officer," as CEOs connect with shareholders, customers, employees, their board, the media and others. To succeed in today's business world, leaders should learn the following five skills:

Culture building. Good companies foster open and transparent leadership, which develops trust and strong team relationship dynamics. It is also important for leaders to live by their words through consistent emphasis on their company's cultural values and core purpose.

Being a spokesperson. Today's leaders must train to be great public speakers. Strong communication skills can help inspire trust, compassion, stability and hope, which are critical to achieving teammate buy-in, as well as customer admiration and loyalty.

Building universal accountability. Leaders often focus on building accountability in their teams, but do not realize they should also hold their external stakeholders accountable. If a company values diversity, equity and inclusion, for example, the leader must be a vocal advocate of the company's adherence to uphold it. At the board level, it's about engaging a diverse membership to help steer the company's policies and initiatives.



© RUDALL30 / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Being a mission-driven leader. Customers and employees are increasingly looking for businesses with a mission they believe in. Mission-driven leaders must nurture the vision behind the mission and spread it to team members, and always keep in mind why customers support the business. To do this, leaders must constantly provide team members with opportunities to learn about the mission and discuss ways to implement it as a part of one's everyday life.

Digital leadership. Many leaders must manage the shift to remote working as a new normal. To do this, they must create small, highly empowered teams; provide real-time decisions and support; and build a collective, transparent and deeply shared culture. Adept leaders continually reinforce the company's culture and communicate the company's values. ■

Under the surface

A look at lesser-known qualities of effective business leadership

MASON DIXIE FOODS



Ayesha Abuelhiga is the founder and CEO of Baltimore-based Mason Dixie Foods, which specializes in baked goods and snacks.

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco offers a variety of essentials for small businesses, from products to services, at a great value. Learn more at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com) under "Services" at the top of the page.

One-on-one time

Take the time to frequently schedule in-person one-on-one time with your team members. A leader's schedule is ever-changing

and often full, which can signal that you are too busy doing "more important" things. Scheduling in-person one-on-ones with your team members helps strengthen your

bond and respect for them both professionally and personally. It reinforces a culture of openness and gives team members the assurance that their efforts are seen.—AA

According to Allied Market Research, the global electronics warranty market will more than quadruple by 2030.

TECH CONNECTION

by MARC SALTZMAN

As a technology journalist, I'm often asked if buying extended warranties for devices is a good idea. My standard answer is, it depends. If the warranty is reasonably priced, and offers comprehensive coverage, then it makes sense. After all, a little insurance can go a long way toward making you feel confident about a tech purchase, especially for higher-priced items or if you're accident-prone.

But when it comes to Apple devices, AppleCare+ (Apple's protection plans) is a no-brainer because you don't have to spend a lot to safeguard against all kinds of accidental damage. You'll probably bring many of these products (MacBook Air, iPad, AirPods and Apple Watch) with you on long trips or daily commutes, which increases the odds of something happening to them.

Apple offers AppleCare+ for its products regardless of where you purchase them, but Costco members can save up to 24% off AppleCare+, depending on the product. This is a big savings, and for the exact same coverage that would cost you more if you purchased it elsewhere. And it covers the wide assortment of Apple products you can purchase at Costco.

Most Apple products include a one-year limited warranty that covers hardware failures and manufacturing defects. To get more coverage, AppleCare+ can be added to an Apple product at the point of purchase.



© SDXIE / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Protect your tech

Extend the service warranty on Apple products at a discount

Depending on the Apple product, AppleCare+ provides up to three years of hardware coverage, which includes accidental damage protection, such as a broken screen or liquid damage.

As of September 2022, AppleCare+ covers an unlimited number of accidental damage incidents, up from two incidents every 24 months previously. There is, however, a fixed service fee depending on the device and type of damage.

Other benefits of AppleCare+ include Express Replacement Service—Apple will ship you a replacement device so you don't have to wait for a repair—as well as priority 24/7 access to Apple Support by chat or phone.

AppleCare+ is a great way to give yourself peace of mind and solid protection for your Apple gear. ■

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.

Twitter

@marc_saltzman

Email

connection@costco.com

Please include "Tech Connection" in the subject line.

COSTCO CONNECTION

To extend protection on Apple products, AppleCare+ is available in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com at a big savings.

Lost and found

Be sure to enable "Find My" on all your Apple devices to locate a misplaced device. Open the "Find My" app on another

Apple device—such as an iPhone, iPad or Mac—and select "Devices." On an Apple Watch, the app is called "Find Devices." Alternatively, go to iCloud.com/find and log in. You

will see the missing device on a map, represented by a green dot. If it's been turned off or is offline, or the battery is dead, you will see its last known location.—MS

Short waves

Taking a shorter cruise is a great vacation and cost-effective way to explore the open sea

by LOIS ALTER MARK



MICHAEL MARK

Lois Alter Mark is an award-winning travel writer and avid cruiser. She's been on more than 25 cruises and recently came back from the cruise of a lifetime to Antarctica.



For those who have never been on a cruise before but have been curious about what it's like, or have been looking for a short getaway but just don't have the time or budget for a longer trip, consider taking a two- or three-night cruise. Short cruises regularly depart from convenient ports around the country and offer all the perks of a longer vacation with a wallet-friendly price tag. Best of all, you can still feel like you've had a nice, relaxing vacation. Here's a look.

Testing the waters

A shorter cruise lets you experience everything that avid cruisers love, from all-you-can-eat buffets to world-class shows to endless views. You'll see what it's like to spend a carefree day at sea, taking advantage of the ship's many amenities and activities. You'll get a chance to wake up in a lovely new location without having to move your belongings. You'll understand why, for cruisers, the journey is as important as the destination.

Inclusive savings

It only makes sense that a two- or three-night cruise will cost less than a seven-night cruise, but the savings go well beyond the price of the cruise itself. Because a cruise already includes your accommodations, meals and activities, it's actually a budget-friendly way to travel—especially because it allows you to eat as much as you want. Plus, you'll save because you don't need to book costly flights to the actual destination.

Nearby ports

You may be surprised to learn that you can sail out of a wide variety of ports in the U.S., from Miami and Port Canaveral, Florida, to Los Angeles and San Diego—even Galveston, Texas (see "Growing Galveston"). Typically, East Coast cruises sail to the Caribbean, while cruises from the West Coast head to Mexico.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: © MICHEL VERDOURE; CELEBRITY CRUISE; © DISNEY.

Clockwise from left: Cruise ship leaving Miami Beach; relax in cruise ship ambience; dining options abound even on short cruises.

Sunny delights

Most shorter cruises focus on sunny destinations so you'll truly feel like you're on vacation. Surrounded by beautiful ocean views, you may dock in Cozumel or Ensenada, Mexico, or Nassau, Bahamas, where you can spend the day enjoying the local food, music and shops, or simply spread out on a lounge chair and take in the warm, tropical breeze. Disney Cruise Line, Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean International have their own islands and take care of everything to make your trip, well, a day at the beach.

Splurge options

For cruise lovers, a short cruise can be a good time to treat yourself to an upgrade. Always wanted to have a private balcony or see what it was like to stay in a suite? Now's the time to try it since you're paying for fewer nights. Love the spa? A cruise-long pass will also be less expensive during a short cruise. You can use the money you're saving to book a specialty restaurant that may not be in your budget for a longer cruise.

In short, two- or three-night cruises are likely to make you want more. Whether you opt for longer itineraries or do more frequent short getaways, you'll find yourself being drawn to the call of the sea. ■

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Travel offers both shorter and longer cruises, as well as vacation packages, rental cars and hotel-only options for destinations in the United States and around the world. To learn more, visit [CostcoTravel.com](https://www.CostcoTravel.com) or call 1-877-849-2730.

Growing Galveston

Galveston, Texas, has become a thriving cruise port over the past few years. In fact, it's the largest port in the country and the fourth busiest, with three

terminals serving some of the most popular cruise lines.

With so many cruise lines departing from Galveston, you have lots of options for a short trip to Mexico or the Caribbean. It only takes 30 to

45 minutes to sail into open water, so you'll be relaxing in no time. Plus, Galveston is a fun city to spend a day or two before or after your cruise.—LAM



COVER
STORY

Expanding frontiers

At the 1983 Seattle opening of Costco's first warehouse, the founders envisioned that if they were successful, the venture could perhaps grow to a dozen locations. Few could have predicted that one day Costco Wholesale would be a name familiar to people all over the world.

by Will Fifield, Dan Jones and T. Foster Jones

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

© TIMOTHY BURGESS



Left: Docklands, Australia warehouse; Above: The first Costco warehouse, located in Seattle.



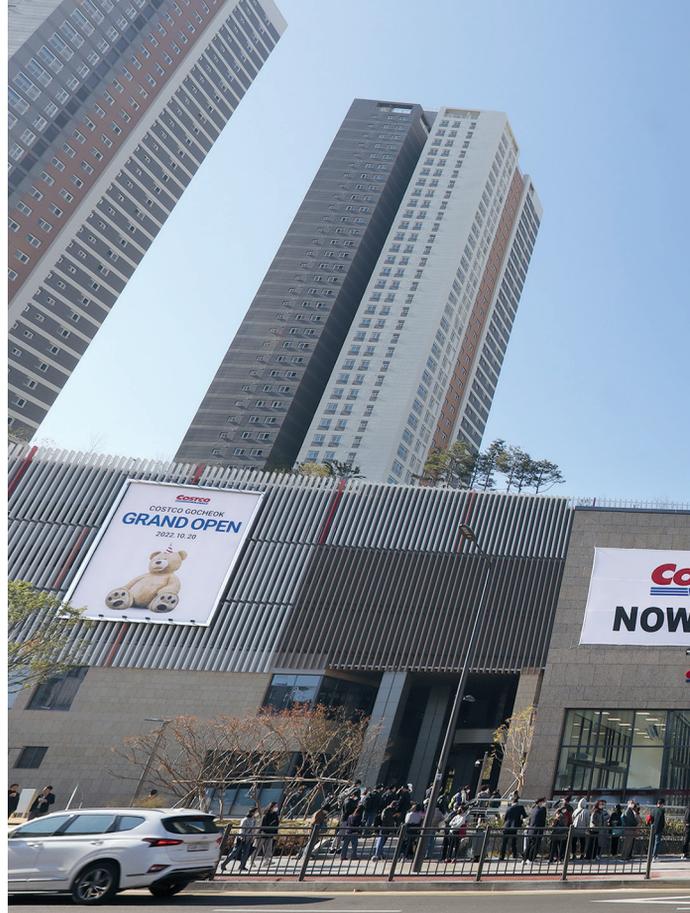
T

he idea for Costco came in the early 1980s, after Seattleite Jeff Brotman, whose family had deep roots in the retail business in that area, was urged by his father to check out the bustling Price Club warehouses in California. The younger Brotman immediately flew down to California and quickly realized he was in agreement with his father: There was nothing similar in the Pacific Northwest.

Looking for somebody to help start and run the new business, Brotman asked around among his contacts and was told there was really only one guy for the job, a man who had worked with Price Club and understood this new warehouse model: Jim Sinegal.

The pair reached an agreement, scraped together \$7.5 million from investors to back the startup and in 1983 nervously opened the first Costco, in an industrial area in south Seattle. According to a popular story among company longtimers, the warehouse's first employees were told to park their cars in the customer lot to make the place look busy.

But the business survived, grew to 10 warehouses within a couple of years and, in an ambitious and complex move, merged with its competitor, Price Club, in 1993, creating a company with almost 200 warehouses and 43,000 employees. Along the way, it helped drive revolutions in the way products are manufactured, distributed, marketed and sold.



COSTCO THROUGH THE YEARS

SOURCES: COSTCO TODAY AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH BY THE CONNECTION

1983

Jim Sinegal and Jeff Brotman open Costco #01.

1985

First \$1.50 hot dog and soda cart opens.

1987

Optical, Bakery, Produce and Meat Departments begin.

1993

Price Club and Costco merge.

1994

First Asia warehouse opens.

1995

Kirkland Signature™ is introduced; first gas station opens.

1983



Clockwise from top: The Gocheok, South Korea, warehouse opened in 2022; Jim Sinegal (left) and Jeff Brotman at the opening of the first Costco warehouse in Seattle in 1983; a Costco gas station.

According to Costco's 2022 annual report, its revenue was \$222.7 billion. It operates more than 855 warehouses globally—including more than 590 in the U.S.—with 300,000 total employees and 125 million members worldwide, making it the third-largest retailer in the world (based on global sales).

Going international

In planning Costco's international expansion, some were worried that the concept of paying for a membership to buy items in bulk might get lost in translation. Tubs of peanut butter, a lifetime supply of toilet paper and the means to transport and store such items are typically American, after all. But the truth is, whether you live in Seoul, Sydney or Seattle, the value proposition is the same: A Costco membership is worth the savings on everyday necessities and wow items. Plus, the Food Court's hot dog and soda combo translates to "a steal" (yep, it's a buck-fifty around the world) no matter which language you speak.

This shared philosophy is what has led to Costco's well-known strategies: focusing on a narrow selection of products in a wide range of categories; proceeding with steady, but cautious, growth; and never selling seconds or inferior goods.

Pierre Riel, executive vice president of Costco's international division, oversees the company's efforts to launch its operations in new countries. He shares that the company's philosophy toward expansion is more than just a business plan.

"Our perspective is that by bringing value to people with each new warehouse



PHOTOS COURTESY OF COSTCO WHOLESALE

WILLING TO ADAPT

"When necessary, we adapt our warehouse buildings to better serve the communities in which we operate," says Eric Orren, vice president of Costco's real estate operations.

For example, a warehouse in the Santa Fe neighborhood of Mexico City is located almost entirely underground, hidden from view. It was built next to a large public park, and the warehouse was designed to function as an extension of the adjacent park. It features a soccer field, basketball courts and other recreational areas, as well as a massive green roof.

"This warehouse allows us to operate in this community in a way that meets the community's needs and our needs," Orren says. "We look for these win-win adaptations as we analyze new markets."—*Will Fifield*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

1997

Costco Executive Membership launches.

1998

Costco.com goes online.

2000

Costco Travel is introduced.

2006

500th warehouse opens in La Quinta, California.

2019

Digital Membership launches in the Costco app.

2022

Costco opens warehouses in Sweden and New Zealand.

opening, we're actually doing something good for the community," says Riel. "Helping people make ends meet, helping business owners run their businesses ... and creating new jobs and career opportunities—all this is healthy for the community."

Expanding warehouse operations began in Canada in 1985 and in Mexico in 1992. Today, you can also find Costco in Australia, mainland China, France, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

Growth mindset

Even though it's been 40 years since the first Costco warehouse opened, Craig Jelinek, Costco's CEO, says, "We still view ourselves as a growth company. We see exciting opportunities, both in existing markets and potential new markets, where our model would be successful."

As for what's inside the warehouses, each country features items specific to that part of the world—mostly foods that cater to local taste preferences. The remaining goods comprise many of the same non-food items you'd see in a U.S. warehouse. And, the company's Kirkland Signature™ items are universally revered for their quality and value.

In addition to warehouses, Costco also has international e-commerce sites in many countries through which it does business.

Jelinek says that no matter where Costco puts down roots, it's important to maintain a consistent company culture to ensure that all employees worldwide are invested in its business goals. He says that reiterating Costco's history, values, ethics and merchandising strategies is crucial to overseas success. "We don't take it for granted," he says. "We pay good wages and benefits across the board, but beyond that, we pay attention to other needs, like how our employees are managed, developed and treated." ■

WORLD OF WOW

A snapshot of interesting items available around the world.

UNITED KINGDOM

First location: Thurrock
Number of locations: 29
Unique items: Marmite, Indomie Mi Goreng Noodles



ICELAND

First location: Kauptún
Number of locations: 1
Unique item: Spatchcock chicken with piri-piri marinade

CANADA

First location: Burnaby, British Columbia
Number of locations: 107
Unique items: Balderson Cheese, organic dark chocolate coconut cups

UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO

First location: Seattle
Number of locations: 590
Unique items: Bear spray, custard pie, professional sports tickets

MEXICO

First location: Satélite
Number of locations: 40
Unique items: *Pan de muerto*, Biscayan-style cod, *Rosca de Reyes*



SWEDEN

First location: Arninge
Number of locations: 1
Unique item: Marinated pork collar



MAINLAND CHINA

First location: Minhang, Shanghai
Number of locations: 4
Unique items: Geoduck, blacklip abalone, wild black tiger prawns, crayfish tail



SOUTH KOREA

First location: Yangpyung
Number of locations: 18
Unique items: Fried honey pastries, Korean-style stir-fry hot pot, sea squirt

JAPAN

First location: Hisayama
Number of locations: 32
Unique items: Smoked Bonito Tataki, red sea bream loin, corn chowder



TAIWAN

First location: Kaohsiung
Number of locations: 14
Unique item: Alishan oolong tea

NEW ZEALAND

First location: Auckland
Number of locations: 1
Unique items: Metal kiwi bird sculpture, feijoa

SPAIN

First location: Sevilla
Number of locations: 4
Unique items: *Milhojas de crema* cake, seafood salad



FRANCE

First location: Villebon
Number of locations: 2
Unique items: St Michel Madeleines, 15-month and 24-month comté



AUSTRALIA

First location: Docklands, Melbourne
Number of locations: 15
Unique items: Vegemite, bubble tea





Beneficial butter

A look at the making of Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter

by JEN MADERA

Cows grazing on a dairy farm in New Zealand.



COSTCO CONNECTION

Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter is available in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.

Who knew that butter could be good for you? It turns out that cows that graze on grass produce milk that’s packed with health benefits. Then, it takes a skilled manufacturer to turn—or churn—that milk into a high-quality, flavorful butter. That’s what Costco buyer Mark Klauber and his team were searching for when they collaborated with Westland Milk Products in Hokitika, New Zealand, to create Kirkland Signature™ Grass-Fed Butter, launched in 2021.

According to Hamish Yates, general manager of sales and marketing at Westland Milk Products, when eaten in moderation, Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter provides a number of benefits for your diet. “It offers a natural source of vitamin A and boasts high levels of conjugated linoleic acid, which assists in regulating the immune system and maintaining cardiovascular health.

These high levels of omega-3 fatty acids also offer anti-inflammatory benefits,” says Yates. “We were aiming for high-quality, grass-fed butter with a great taste at an affordable price, and that’s what we’ve come up with,” Klauber adds. Here’s a look at how the product is made.

The grass is greener

Globally, there are no regulations for the percentage of grass that must make up a cow’s diet in order to label a dairy product as grass-fed. Costco and Westland Milk Products, however, set an extremely high standard.

According to Yates, the cows that supply the milk for Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter feed on at least 95% grass, with a rigorous process to ensure the accuracy of this number.

“Each one of our supplying farms is audited annually to calculate the amount of grass-fed forage consumed by their herds. This takes into consideration all of the supplementary feed



brought onto any farm, the land area of the farm's own grazing pastures, herd numbers, herd breed types and a number of other factors to determine the percentage of grass-based feed consumed," says Yates.

The remaining 5% of supplementary grain feed the cows consume on these farms does not contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs)—that's because GMOs and growth hormones are banned in New Zealand dairy farming.

From farm to fridge

Approximately 400 local farms supply the fresh milk used to create Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter.

Help in the kitchen

Whether you bake with it or simply spread it on your favorite toast, Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter can be used in any recipe that calls

for butter. "This product will elevate the flavor and texture of dishes. This is particularly apparent in cooking and sautéing, tossing through vegetables, using in sauces, and especially when spread

on bread, biscuits or scones, where the true natural richness of the butter can be savored," says Hamish Yates, general manager of sales and marketing at Westland Milk Products.—JM

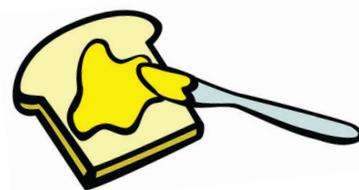
"The farms are beautiful, and you can see the herds are healthy and have plenty of space," Klauber says.

The milk is collected from the farms daily—except in winter, when the cows are rested before the calving season. It is then brought to the Westland Milk Products factory, located on New Zealand's South Island. Here, the milk is pasteurized, the milk and cream are separated—or skimmed—and the cream is chilled and churned using the Fritz churn method, a traditional European method of butter making dating back to 1893.

Yates says that during the churning process, the fat content percentage of the cream doubles, as the liquid buttermilk separates and drains away. This process ensures consistency in the quality and taste of the product.

Westland Milk Products has a long history in butter making. "The company's origin can be traced back more than 150 years in the region, when a small group of farmer-owned butter factories merged together. The current site has been churning butter since 1976," Yates explains.

The company is staffed by highly skilled, experienced butter-makers. "They know by eye when the butter is just right," Yates adds. ■



LEFT: PHOTOS COURTESY OF WESTLAND MILK PRODUCTS; ABOVE: © MIKESS / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

GOLD MINE

Kirkland Signature Grass-Fed Butter is a distinctive bright golden color and boasts a rich flavor—all because of the cows' diet. "This color is 100% natural, and is due to the higher levels of beta-carotene in the cream, which is derived directly from the grass the cows eat," says Hamish Yates, general manager of sales and marketing at Westland Milk Products.

Luckily, there's plenty of beautiful rolling hills for the cows to graze on in the region. "The West Coast of New Zealand is naturally perfect for growing grass, because of its very high rainfall. No or very little human intervention is required—by way of irrigation systems—to ensure lush, thick grass grows year-round," Yates adds.—JM



Vegan options

Top plant-based Kirkland Signature items for everyone

by MARY BISHOP



EMILY HAINES

Mary Bishop is a food consultant and writer. Her company (theveganmary.co) offers a range of culinary services.

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find these and other Kirkland Signature items in Costco warehouses. Costco Grocery is available at Costco.com.

As a vegan of almost nine years, I've noticed plant-based eats abound in the aisles of Costco. These Kirkland Signature™ favorites hit the trifecta: affordable, practical and vegan.

Kirkland Signature 100% Italian Extra Virgin Olive Oil. With an earthy flavor, vitamin E and a modest price point, this cold-pressed oil is a kitchen staple with uses well beyond sautéing. Use in homemade vinaigrettes, hummus and sauces for a creamy texture.

Kirkland Signature Organic Whole Cashews. These unsalted and unroasted cashews are the proverbial building block for many vegan recipes—from dairy-free dips and condiments to sauces and creams. With a nutrition profile that includes minerals, protein and healthy fats.

Kirkland Signature Stir-Fry Vegetable Blend. A colorful variety including broccoli, carrots, peas, peppers and onions, this blend makes meals a snap. The resealable bag is a mainstay in my freezer and a go-to when fresh veggies aren't in season. Not merely for stir-fry, try it in pasta, soup or a Buddha bowl.

Kirkland Signature Organic Quinoa. This gluten-free ancient grain (technically a seed) has gained popularity thanks to its mild nutty taste and substantial health benefits. Unlike some plant-based proteins, quinoa delivers all nine essential amino acids. Cooking quinoa is more forgiving than rice, so I suggest making a batch to use throughout the week in salads and sides. It also freezes well.

Kirkland Signature Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips. These dairy-free morsels are a home chef's dream. Stored properly, they stay fresh for months, making a single bag perfect for Halloween treats, festive seasonal desserts and Valentine's Day surprises. They are also a simple way to jazz up dishes such as oatmeal and energy bites.

Kirkland Signature Organic Maple Syrup. Mother Nature's sweetener is a vegan delight. Use this versatile ingredient in everything from salad dressings to desserts. It also makes a healthier, antioxidant-packed substitute for sugar in most recipes. ■

Grab-and-go

Try these Kirkland Signature beverage and snack options:

Kirkland Signature Green Tea Matcha Blend. Mixed into hot water or milk, this green

tea matcha blend makes for an easy antioxidant boost. Try it blended into smoothies.

Kirkland Signature Cashew Clusters. If your diet allows for honey, these vegetarian bites of almond

and pumpkin seeds offer a sweet crunchy snack.

Kirkland Signature Peanut Butter Pretzels. These are sweet, salty and great for road trips or movie marathons.—MB



Versatile fiber

Learn more about TENCEL, a soft material created from wood

by JEN MADERA



© LENZING AG



COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find a range of products made with TENCEL, including Kirkland Signature Baby Wipes, in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

You might have noticed TENCEL™, made by Lenzing, cropping up as a component in many products.

It can be used in disposable products—such as baby wipes—and also in clothing. What is TENCEL, and why use it?

TENCEL is a versatile fiber that can be used to make a variety of items, from baby wipes and cleansing towelettes to clothing and bedsheets. Here's a look into the fiber that was used to develop several Kirkland Signature™ products.

Unlike synthetic materials and plastics, this fiber is created from sustainable natural sources and starts as a plant—in this case, a tree. “TENCEL fibers are wood-based fibers that are sourced from certified forests,” says Tom Carlyle, a commercial manager for Lenzing. Pulp derived from wood contains cellulose, a naturally occurring material that all plants create during the photosynthesis process. The wood pulp is used to produce the TENCEL fibers, which can then be made into a base for

both non-woven disposable materials and reusable textile fabrics. TENCEL is incredibly soft, breathable and cool to the touch, making it an excellent material for clothing and any other products that come into contact with the skin. It's also resistant to bacterial growth.

TENCEL fibers are fully biodegradable in soil, fresh water and seawater, meaning they will break down completely after 42 to 65 days. When composted properly, it creates a sustainable life cycle of the item. In contrast, waste from plastic products won't decompose for 20 to 500 years, according to the United Nations website. Because TENCEL is harvested from wood, a renewable resource, and is used to create products that are biodegradable, the patented production process results in what Lenzing describes as a closed-loop system with a low environmental impact. ■

Into the woods

Lenzing sources the wood pulp used to make TENCEL fibers from certified forests, including three of its own plants in

Lenzing, Austria; Paskov, Czech Republic; and Indianópolis, Brazil.

TENCEL is mainly made from eucalyptus trees, but can also include wood from beech, spruce, birch

and pine trees. In an effort to support endangered and primeval forests, the company does not source wood or pulp from endangered areas.—JM



Buyers' picks

Product selections from Costco's buying team



Keri Ries

Angie Nowosielski

Trisha Carroll

Kirkland Signature Motor Oil

Regular oil changes may improve your engine's performance, extend its longevity and help your vehicle achieve its peak gas mileage. Keep up on maintenance with our selection of motor oils, which were developed to reduce wear on critical parts and maximize fuel economy. Choose from full synthetic 5W-30, 5W-20 and 0W-20 options, along with Heavy Duty Diesel 15W-40 (available in warehouses only), depending on your engine's required viscosity grade. Various item numbers, pack sizes and quarts per container. Select warehouses/Costco.com.—Keri Ries



Kirkland Signature Pâté Cat Food Variety Pack

Our pets deserve the very best. Give your cat variety with 15 chicken, 15 turkey and 15 salmon wet food meals, which feature animal protein as the first ingredient. The 3.5-ounce servings do not contain any artificial flavors, colors or preservatives, and are free of corn, wheat and soy. Item 1647381. Warehouses/Costco.com.—Angie Nowosielski



Kirkland Signature Organic House Decaf Coffee K-Cup Pods, 120-count

Do you love the taste of coffee but want to skip the caffeine? Kirkland Signature™ Organic House Decaf Coffee K-Cup Pods are made with 100% organic Arabica coffee. Just pop one in your Keurig coffee maker for a cup of delicious, medium roast coffee. I love to brew a cup in the afternoon when I'm craving the taste of coffee, but it's too late in the day for the caffeine. Item 4054240. Costco.com only.—Trisha Carroll

Inside info

What does your poo say about you?

by ROBERT GREATHOUSE



© MED PHOTO STUDIO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



NICOLE KILIAN

Robert Greathouse is a naturopathic physician based in Arizona.



COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco offers over-the-counter supplements and prescription medicines for digestive health in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Poo. We don't usually talk about it, but it is an important indicator of health that can give you insight into what is going on inside your body. If this system is off track, other systems in your body may be, too.

What is normal?

To be able to pick up on the clues your poo is giving you about your health, you have to know how it looks at its healthiest. The important qualities can be remembered with the acronym CROCS: consistency, regularity, odor, color and shape.

Consistency. Ideally, a normal stool is whole, soft and well-formed, with a smooth or cracked surface.

Regularity. The medical consensus is that normal regularity follows the "three by three" rule—going some-

where between three times per day and three times per week.

Odor. Odor can be an important indicator of the health of your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Normally, little to no odor should be detectable.

Color. A normal stool is on the spectrum of brown to dark brown.

Shape. A normal stool has a uniform soft sausage shape.

What is abnormal?

Any deviation from the normal CROCS qualities may indicate changes happening inside your body. Many organs can contribute to stool changes, including but not limited to the gastrointestinal tract, liver, pancreas, thyroid and gallbladder.

Regarding consistency and shape, stool formed as hard little round pellets indicates constipation, which often occurs from decreased water or fiber intake. If your stool is loose or in

liquid form, this could be a result of something irritating the GI tract, food poisoning or a more serious condition, like inflammatory bowel disease, or liver, pancreas or gallbladder disease.

Having bowel movements too frequently is an indicator that something is causing it to move too quickly through your GI tract. However, not going frequently enough puts you at risk for other unpleasant experiences.

Although certain foods can create odorous stool, odor typically occurs with overproduction of a type of gas/fermentation from bacteria in the GI tract and could indicate the presence of an intestinal infection, malabsorption disorders, or liver, pancreas or gallbladder disorders. If it recurs or persists for more than a few days, your physician can help you find the cause.

A change in stool color is a key insight to what may be occurring in your GI tract. Most color changes can be the result of diet changes, medications or gastrointestinal disease (see “Color-coded”).

How can you maintain a healthy gut?

The best approach to a healthy gut is to be proactive with the everyday choices that promote a foundation of wellness. A diet rich in protein and fiber, especially from vegetables, is a great start. Protein helps repair the gut lining, keeping it strong and tightly knit. Fiber keeps bowels moving regularly and supports beneficial gut bacteria.

Exercise and stress reduction also promote regular bowel function by

supporting blood flow to the intestines, encouraging bowel movement and stimulating the neurological system of the gut to stay regular. Stress can significantly affect digestion and movement of the intestines, possibly contributing to either constipation or diarrhea.

Ongoing research shows that probiotics may have benefits for gut health. Scientists are beginning to find specific purposes for certain strains of probiotics and how they can be used for particular diseases. Talk to your doctor or other licensed health professional in order to use probiotics to your benefit.

Don't take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs unless they are necessary, as they can damage the intestinal lining. Relying on laxatives and other supplements to help you go can lead to other imbalances.

Minimize foods that may irritate your gut. These can vary from person to person, but often include spicy foods, reduced-calorie sweeteners, caffeine and alcohol.

Finally, avoid foods you can't tolerate or foods that cause symptoms like gas, bloating, fatigue, headache, joint pain, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Keep a diet diary that tracks your symptoms along with your diet so you can find out which foods may be the culprit.

Learn to understand what your poo is saying about you. ■



Color-coded

Pay attention to changes in stool color.

Black. May be due to intestinal bleeding and you should see your doctor right away.

White. Indicates conditions involving the gallbladder, liver or pancreas.

Green. Could be caused by certain green plants and chlorophyll supplements, or an overproduction of bile.

Red. Beets are a common dietary culprit. Red may also be caused by blood from the large intestine or hemorrhoids.

Orange. Caused by some medications, but more commonly by beta-carotene, which is found in carrots, sweet potatoes and other colored foods.

Yellow. May indicate too much fat in the stool. The stool can also have a greasy appearance, which could indicate malabsorption or decreased bile.—RG

© ANTON PORKIN / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Notable changes

If you are experiencing stool changes, take note of other symptoms you have been experiencing since the stool changes

began. If you experience associated abdominal pain, rectal pain, blood in the stool, white stool, gas and bloating, multiple days of diarrhea, constipation longer than five to

seven days, a feeling of incomplete emptying, strong odor, nausea, vomiting or weight loss, promptly schedule an appointment with your physician.—RG

A sweet new year

Rosh Hashana is celebrated with food and traditions

by MILLY DAWSON

My 4-year-old, Mia, used to sing a song summing up the main food tradition of Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year: “Well, I can cook. And I can bake. And I can make a honey cake. I’ll make it big and round and sweet—for Rosh Hashana. What a treat!”

A major festival, Rosh Hashana falls in the Hebrew month of *Tishri* (TEESH-ray), in September or October. This year, it begins at sunset September 15. During this holiday Jews eat various sweet foods, hoping for a happy, prosperous new year.

Honey cakes, apple cakes, and apples or chunks of challah (egg bread) dipped in honey feature prominently at festive tables. The sweetness matters, not the honey, so vegans can easily use maple syrup or molasses for holiday dipping. Tzimmes, stews of root vegetables and dried fruits, can be added to the feast.

Some also avoid nuts, which make one thirsty, to have an easier time praying for hours. For main dishes, beef briskets are often prepared with prunes and chicken dishes with apricots, the fruit adding sweetness. Many Jews also avoid sour or bitter foods, such as pickles and horseradish.

Rosh Hashana literally means the “head of the year.” Some people actually place a fish head on the table or a whole fish with the head on. Both are



Jewish Apple Cake

© MARYANN DWYER (THEBEACHHOUSEKITCHEN.COM)

meant to remind diners to strive to be leaders in working for peace and harmony—to be as the head and not as the tail.

By far, however, the most important Rosh Hashana custom involves the sense of hearing, not taste. That custom involves hearing a ram’s horn, or shofar, blown. It’s a riveting, strange, ancient sound. The 12th century philosopher Moses Maimonides explained that the shofar blasts were telling the people, “Rouse your-

selves from your lethargy. Search your deeds ... mend your ways ... leave your evil path.”

Another holiday custom involves food but not eating. During a ceremony called *tashlik* (TOSH-leekh), which means “casting off,” Jews gather beside a body of water and symbolically reject their prior sins by throwing bits of bread into the water. Serving a round challah, rather than a long loaf, is a custom that signifies the endless cycle of the years past and yet to come. ■

Milly Dawson is a Florida-based writer.

Jewish Apple Cake

Baking spray with flour
2½ cups sugar, divided
2 tsp ground cinnamon
4½ cups Gala apples, peeled, cored and cut into small chunks
2¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 cup vegetable oil
⅓ cup orange juice
2 tsp vanilla extract
4 large eggs

Preheat oven to 350 F. Generously apply baking spray to a 10-inch tube pan. Set aside. In a large bowl, whisk ⅓ cup of the sugar and the cinnamon. Add the apple chunks and toss until well coated. Set aside. In another large bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk remaining sugar, vegetable oil, orange juice and vanilla. Blend wet ingredients into the flour mixture until just combined. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition.

Add ¼ of the batter to the prepared tube pan. Add ⅓ of the apple chunks. Repeat two times, ending with the last ¼ of the batter. Bake for 60 to 75 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool cake on a wire rack to room temperature, then remove from pan onto a serving plate.

Makes 16 servings.

Recipe courtesy of MaryAnn Dwyer (thebeachhousekitchen.com)

Tzimmes

2 large yams or sweet potatoes (about 2 lbs), peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 lb carrots, sliced
½ cup orange juice
1½ cups pitted prunes
½ cup dried cranberries or raisins
3 Tbsp brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
Salt and pepper, to taste

Place all the ingredients into a 6-quart multi-use cooker and stir until well combined.

Close the lid; select manual pressure for 2 minutes. When done, release the pressure using the quick release.

If it's more liquid than you'd like, remove the lid and sauté until liquid evaporates to your liking. It shouldn't be soupy.

Makes 6 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Toni Okamoto (plantbasedonabudget.com)



COSTCO CONNECTION

Apples, honey and other ingredients can be found in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.

Smarter snacks

Simple Mills provides healthy ingredients, sustainably sourced

by TIM TALEVICH



Katlin Smith

© PHOTO COURTESY OF SIMPLE MILLS

Simple Mills makes crackers and snacks using nontraditional ingredients, with a goal of being healthy not only for people but also for Earth. The *Connection* recently chatted about sustainable food-sourcing practices with CEO Katlin Smith, who started the company in her kitchen a decade ago.

Costco Connection Simple Mills doesn't focus on being sugar-free or fat-free. Instead it focuses on the ingredients it includes. Can you elaborate?

Katlin Smith There are so many items out there that are made with things that we want to be eating less of, instead of things we want to be eating more of. Our products [include] only carefully selected, natural ingredients, nothing artificial ever.

CC The ingredient lists on your products reflect that. Rather than wheat and corn, we see buckwheat, watermelon seed and arrowroot, to name a few. Why are these ingredients important?

KS These ingredients help people diversify their diets. And having those diverse ingredients is really important for our broader agricultural system.

I started this company after cleaning up my own diet and taking out a lot of the processed food and sugar, and realized how much of an impact that eating healthy foods can have on our bodies. And from there, I realized food has a really large impact on our planet as well. In using all these different ingredients, we're supporting regenerative agriculture (see "Diverse ingredients"), which is designed to be a self-feeding system where you don't need chemical inputs to grow your food, and where you don't have to continually replant food.

CC Working closely with farmers is very important to you. How do you achieve that?

KS We believe farmers are key to transforming our food system, so we have forged direct contracts and share with them our vision to build more sustainability into how we feed people. Also, we actively support partnerships that promote farming practices that have the potential to improve soil health and food safety. It's really remarkable how different the land looks when you see these practices implemented. ■

COSTCO CONNECTION

You can find Simple Mills Almond Flour Sea Salt Crackers (Item 1564814) in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Diverse ingredients

Sugar cane, corn, rice and wheat are the mainstays of many foods today. Simple Mills uses over 40 unique

crops beyond those. Growing a diverse variety of crops is a cornerstone of regenerative agriculture, which strives to improve soil health,

provide pollinator habitat and increase soil carbon storage through steps such as no-till farming, planting cover crops and avoiding pesticides.—TT

Unsung spirit

Aged rum has been overlooked for too long

by RUSS YORK



Aged rum is a tasty spirit with a growing fan base.

© ERIC / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



© COSTCO PHOTO STUDIO

Russ York is a buyer in Costco's wine, beer and spirits department.

COSTCO CONNECTION

A limited supply of Kirkland Signature™ 15-Year-Old Aged Rum is available in select Costco warehouses.



Rum has long been associated with the sun-soaked Caribbean and swashbuckling pirates. Mixed with cola or in a daiquiri, it is synonymous with quintessential beachside cocktails. And typical rum is perfect for these drinks, but the unsung hero is the simple, yet refined, aged rum.

Sweet from the start

All rum is derived by fermenting and then distilling sugar cane molasses or straight sugar cane juice. The alcohol is then usually placed in oak barrels to soften the flavor and add sweetness and color. Various types of rum are commonly referred to as dark, light, spiced, black or aged. Don't let the color mislead you—many of the most popular rums today may have coloring added in order to maintain consistency and darken the appearance.

Better with age

Aged rum follows the same production principles, but added flavors and colors are usually avoided. That's because the oak barrels do all the work. Typically these rums age for about three to 12 years, depending on the desired style and profile. Similar to bourbon and scotch, the longer the rum is aged in a barrel, the darker the spirit becomes, and the more rounded and softer the taste profile can get.

The price is right

Due to its affordability and wonderful flavor, aged rum is rising in popularity. In many cases, you can find a quality 20- to 23-year-old aged rum under \$80, whereas finding a scotch or bourbon at that level can cost thousands. Aged rum is also being recognized for its ability to replace bourbon or whiskey in many standard cocktails. For example, try an Old Fashioned using a quality aged rum instead of bourbon.

That alone is enough to raise a glass to rum. ■

FUN RUM FACTS

- Rum has a long history—especially with sailors. According to Pusser's Rum, in 1655, Great Britain's Royal Navy began serving rum to crew members on Royal Navy warships. This continued until 1970.
- Mount Gay Rum distillery, located in Barbados, is the oldest rum distillery in operation. It dates back to 1703, according to *Cheers* magazine ([cheersonline.com](https://www.cheersonline.com)).—RY

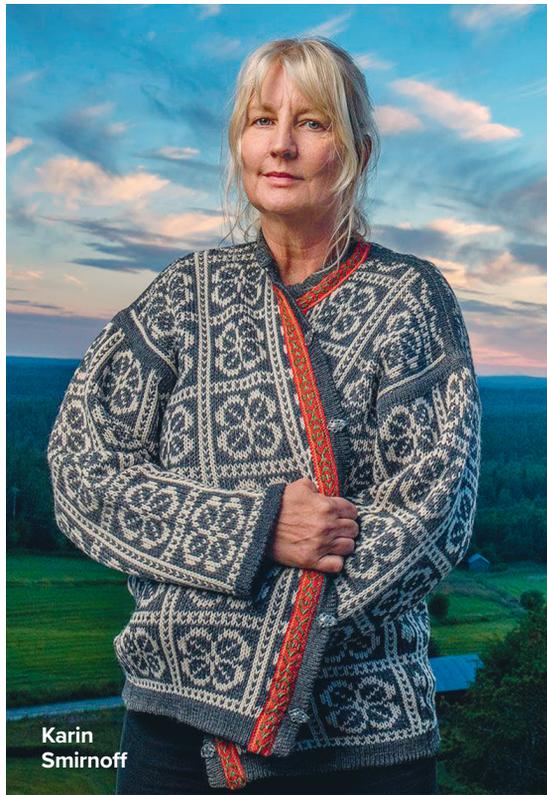
Strong women

Karin Smirnov takes up Lisbeth Salander's story

by STEPHANIE E. PONDER



The Girl in the Eagle's Talons (Item 1765467; 8/29) will be available in most Costco warehouses.



Karin Smirnov

THRON ULLBERG

Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist are back. This time Swedish writer Karin Smirnov continues the fast-paced stories of the stars of the *Millennium* series, which began with Stieg Larsson's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

In *The Girl in the Eagle's Talons* Lisbeth is named guardian to her niece, Svala, while Mikael faces troubling rumors about his would-be son-in-law. The *Connection* recently asked Smirnov about *The Girl in the Eagle's Talons*.

Costco Connection How did you prepare for writing this book?

Karin Smirnov I had to find a plot of course and knew instinctively that I would place the story up north where I live (and actually where Stieg grew up). There is a lot happening in this area of Sweden with the mines and minerals we have, the growing need for electricity and huge land areas that are being exploited. The population is growing very rapidly and hence also a criminal world that I realized would be perfect turf for Lisbeth Salander.

CC What did you find most challenging—or exciting—about continuing the stories of Lisbeth and Mikael?

KS Lisbeth Salander was one of the reasons that I liked Stieg's novels so much. She is a phenomenal character. ... But I felt that I needed to let her develop a bit, and I was thinking about how to do that. Give her a child? No, too much trouble, and I couldn't picture Lisbeth changing diapers. In those thoughts, Svala was born. A teenager, but in some ways more of a grown-up person than Lisbeth.

Mikael was more difficult for me to build a relationship with. I have always thought that he is a bit one-dimensional. ... But I think he will show more sides as the story goes on.

CC What else would you like readers to know about you and/or this book?

KS I feel proud continuing to write about Stieg Larsson's iconic characters, and I hope that the reader will find the engagement that I have felt writing the book. This first part has an overall background theme of exploiting the world to develop electricity. The next parts will have oil and mining as backdrops. And Lisbeth Salander will always carry on fighting men who hate women, of course. ■

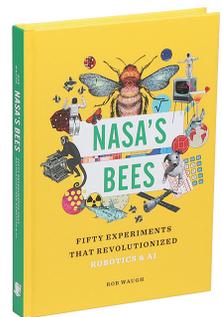
ONLINE BOOK PICK

BOOK
NASA's Bees

AUTHOR Rob Waugh

Do you know an inquisitive young reader who is interested in robotics? If so, *NASA's Bees: Fifty Experiments That Revolutionized Robotics and AI* will help fuel their love of learning.

Intended for kids age 12 and older, this fully illustrated book offers a definitive look at the scientists and inventors who pioneered and shaped robotics and AI.—SEP



COSTCO CONNECTION

NASA's Bees (Item 1766057; 9/12) will be available at Costco.com.



© FULL KITCHEN

Upgrade your space

Transform your kitchen (or bathroom) with Costco's Countertop Installation program

by ANDREA TOMKINS



© TED SIMPSON

Andrea Tomkins 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.



The kitchen is often called the heart of the home due to its central role in our daily lives. Food is prepared, shared and consumed here, but it's also a place for everyday living. Kitchens are versatile, multipurpose spaces that also serve as workstations for chores, crafting, schoolwork and working from home.

The team behind Costco's Countertop Installation program keenly understands that if the kitchen counter is where you are rolling out the cookie dough and helping the kids with their homework, that counter needs to be a durable, high-quality product that enhances your home's aesthetics, functionality and value.

Cosentino, the company behind Costco's program, has been operating in North America for more than 25 years and has a presence around the globe. It focuses on natural stone, quartz and Dekton, an innovative material designed to minimize or eliminate carbon emissions throughout its life cycle (see "More about Dekton").

Through Costco's Countertop Installation program, the process for members who want to upgrade their countertops is remarkably easy and convenient. "All of the big decisions are made in one appointment in the comfort of your own home," says Kelly Martin, Cosentino's national account director. "It's truly white-glove service."

Getting started

The first step is to go to Costco.com, click “Shop” and in the drop-down menu under “Home & Installation Services,” click “Countertop Installation.” Fill out the form on that page to request a complimentary, in-home consultation. Alternatively, you can initiate the process by calling 1-877-433-1377.

You will either speak to, or be contacted by, your local Cosentino dealer, who will get the ball rolling with some easy questions about your wishes and requirements. You and the dealer will set up an appointment with a design specialist, who will come to your home and work with you to select the best options for you and your space.

“You basically have a designer on your team,” says Martin. “They are well-versed in what materials are best for your purpose, not just the latest trends, and do a great job to make sure the member is happy in the long run.”

During your appointment, the design specialist will take detailed measurements, review samples with you, finalize the design with you and confirm the project costs.

Installation, done right

As with any home remodel project, having new countertops installed correctly is the key to success and longevity. Cosentino dealers complete the project according to the design plan you and the specialist came up with, and anyone who enters your home through the program will be a trusted professional.

“We put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into building this network of dealers that we trust,” says Martin.

“They’re long-standing partners of Cosentino’s and they’re vetted through a formal background check process. Given Costco’s high standard of service, dealers are required to hold all licenses required to operate and install by federal, state and local regulations.”

You can get transferable warranties on all Cosentino products. There is a 15-year warranty available for Cosentino’s natural stone counters, and a 25-year warranty for the company’s Silestone (quartz) and Dekton countertops. If you decide to sell your home, a transferable warranty on a new kitchen countertop might just be the thing that seals the deal with potential buyers.

When the job is completed, not only is there a gorgeous counter to enjoy for years to come, you’ll also receive a Costco Shop Card for 10% of its cost.

A cut above

“Costco does the heavy lifting for our members to make sure they’re getting the best quality and the best value,” says Eric Strasik, assistant buyer in Costco’s Home & Installation department. He says that instead of members spending time and energy getting quotes from multiple contractors and hoping to find someone they trust, Costco carefully selected Cosentino to work with because of their commitment to providing quality countertops and expert installation.

Martin summarizes the benefits of Costco’s Countertop Installation program: “It’s the expertise, the experience and the support that you get. You just don’t find that anywhere else.” ■



© STEFZ / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

MORE ABOUT DEKTON

Dekton is a high-performance material composed of a unique blend of quartz, porcelain and glass particles. It is renowned for its exceptional durability and resistance to scratches, stains, heat and UV radiation. It’s also nonporous, which means low maintenance and easy cleaning. What’s more, it is resin-free, so no need for sealers. Dekton is available in a range of colors and finishes, making it a versatile and attractive choice for kitchen or bathroom countertops that combine both aesthetic appeal and practical functionality.

—AT

Sustainability matters

Sustainability is a core value at Cosentino. The company has many green initiatives, but here are a few worth mentioning: One-third of its production includes

reused and recycled materials, making it the only company in the industry with its own waste management and treatment plants; all products are manufactured with 100% certified renewable electric energy and

its solar park produces the equivalent of the energy usage of 42,000 households. Cosentino also recycles 99% of the water used in production processes, achieving “zero level” water discharge in rivers and seas.—AT

Pets and the planet

Wellness Pet Company reaches its goals with sustainability, philanthropy

by DEBBIE L. MILLER



COURTESY OF WELLNESS PET COMPANY

COSTCO CONNECTION

Find a variety of Wellness Pet Company products in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Costco supplier Wellness Pet Company, which manufactures food, treats and supplements for cats and dogs, is committed to partnering with organizations to help people, pets and the environment.

Building a better brand

Wellness Pet Company has roots extending back as far as 1873, when it began as A. Hubbard & Son Bakery in Gloucester, Massachusetts. In 1961, animal nutritionist Jim Scott Sr. bought the company. His son, Jim Scott Jr., took over operations in the 1990s—when he worked with a team of veterinarians, animal nutrition experts and scientists to create pet food made of natural ingredients—and the Wellness Pet brand launched in 1997. The company offers products that include wet and dry dog and cat food, grain-free dental chews and treats.

“Our latest offering, Wellness Good Kitty wet cat food, was crafted with ingredients that support skin, coat, digestive, bone, joint, immune and heart health,” says Dr. Danielle Bernal, global veterinarian with Wellness Pet Company.

More than food

As the products at Wellness Pet Company evolved, so did the company’s sustainability goals. In the last eight years, it has diverted more than 589,000 empty pet food bags from landfills as the first U.S.-based pet food company to partner with recycling company TerraCycle. TerraCycle collects materials most recyclers won’t accept and creates planters, playground building materials and other products. Wellness Pet Company has set a goal to transition to 100% recyclable packaging by the end of 2025.

Last year, Wellness Pet Company also donated over 100,000 pounds of pet food to shelters and pet fosterers in the U.S.

“We are passionate about crafting natural, proven nutrition for dogs and cats and we understand that our role as an organization, beyond creating delicious and nutritious meals and treats, is critical to enabling a shared life of well-being between people and pets,” says Wellness Pet Company CEO Reed Howlett. ■

Debbie L. Miller is a Brooklyn, New York-based journalist.

Walking to help

Wellness Pet Company has partnered with Pet Partners—an organization that advocates for the

therapy benefits that pets provide to seniors, hospital patients, veterans and children in need—to sponsor a virtual event called World’s Largest Pet Walk

on September 23 of this year. The event raises money for Pet Partners’ Therapy Animal Program. For more information, visit petpartners.org.—DLM



Lillian August Ella Sleeper Sofa

Make your seating area inspired with this mid-century modern sofa upholstered in a soft, neutral gray fabric. Tufted back cushions provide stylish comfort, while the tapered legs feature a warm brown finish. Sofa extends for a lounge/sleeping option. Item 1695434. **Costco.com only.**



Dot's Original Seasoned Homestyle Pretzels 35 oz. Bag
Pretzel twists with a swirl of buttery, sweet and spicy tang in each bite. Item 1751772. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

The latest Costco finds



GreenPan 3-Piece Non-Stick Skillet Set

Featuring Infinite8 Ceramic Non-Stick Interior, this set includes 8", 10" and 12" frying pans finished with polished gold-tone handles. Item 1713230. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**



Berkshire Faux Fur Throw

This throw delivers extra comfort and cozy warmth. Toss it on the bed or over the couch for easy use. Available in three styles: elevated stripe, textured plaid and stretch ruched. Selection may vary by location. Available late September. Item 1727165. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

Berkshire Grace Faux Fur Heated Throw

Warm up fast in this throw, which features auto shut-off at four hours, four heat settings and a built-in EZ Touch remote. Available late September. Item 1727175. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**





Texas: Austin and San Antonio

Grand adventures await, including outdoor recreational activities ranging from swimming to hiking and mountain climbing to biking, and a world-famous live music scene. Vast cuisine options are to be savored, from iconic Tex-Mex dishes to authentic flavors from Old Mexico. Whether you want to explore the region's rich history, experience its diverse cultural offerings or dine at nationally acclaimed restaurants, the Lone Star State rewards every kind of traveler. To learn more, visit CostcoTravel.com.



Giant Art – *Where the Ocean Ends* by Andreas Feldtkeller

Bring some larger-than-life style into your space with this canvas print. Rendered on eco-friendly materials with fade-resistant archival inks, you can display this oversized art print anywhere in your home. **CostcoNext.com only.**



Hang Ten Ladies' Utility Jacket

This jacket with a cozy fleece-lined collar features a herringbone canvas shell, two side pockets and two upper flat pockets that button. Available in green, black and copper. Sizes: XS–XXL. Selection may vary by location. Item 1702255. **Warehouses/ Costco.com.**



Karma 5'3" x 7' Area Rug

These stylish rugs are constructed with GRS (Global Recycling Standard) certified recycled polyester yarns. Available in multiple designs. Selection may vary by location. Available late September. Item 1731837. **Warehouses only.**



SPONSORED CONTENT

Refreshing options

Primo Water helps Costco members stay hydrated

by DAN JONES



© DS SERVICES OF AMERICA, INC. D.B.A. PRIMO WATER NORTH AMERICA

Water is essential to our health. It helps us regulate our temperature, lubricate and cushion our joints, protect sensitive tissues and more, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Your Costco membership can help you stay hydrated with some refreshing perks through Primo Water, a provider of water dispensers and bottled water options. The company offers exclusive Costco member pricing on home and workplace delivery.

The process is simple and convenient: Online or over the phone, members select the products and dispenser they want delivered. They can choose from 3- or 5-gallon bottles of water that are delivered approximately every two weeks.

The *Connection* recently caught up with Mark Campbell, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Primo Water, to discuss how the company serves Costco members.

Costco Connection What is Primo Water and how can Costco members benefit from the service?

Mark Campbell For over 100 years, Primo Water's bottled water delivery services have helped families and businesses across the U.S. stay hydrated and refreshed. In addition to bottled water options (purified, purified with added minerals, spring and artesian

waters), we also have state-of-the-art, bottom-loading water dispensers for your home or office. Signing up for Primo Water delivery ensures that Costco members can enjoy delicious, quality water at a member-exclusive price.

CC What's new at Primo Water?

MC We recently introduced Primo Water Plus™ alkaline water in select areas. It's purified water, scientifically formulated with added minerals for a pH of 9.5 (at the time of bottling). Primo Water Plus is available in 3-gallon bottles. Its delicious taste makes it easy to meet daily intake quotas, yielding the benefits that proper hydration brings. We're excited to roll it out nationally in the coming months.

CC How is Primo Water helping to take care of the environment?

MC We are committed to promoting environmental sustainability, responsible sourcing, waste reduction and efficient transport. For example, each reusable, recyclable 5-gallon water bottle can keep up to 1,500 single-use water bottles out of landfills and oceans. This figure is based on the expected lifetime use of one refillable Primo water 5-gallon bottle compared to the equivalent volume of water in single-use water bottles. ■



COSTCO CONNECTION

For more information on Primo Water bottled water delivery service, visit Costcowater.com or call 1-888-432-4823.

FOR SCHEDULES & DESCRIPTIONS

Go to Costco.com or download the Costco mobile app from the App Store or Google Play. Click “Shop” and find “Special Events” to view the online items and events schedules.



Customizable Bullfrog Spas

Help relieve your pain, soak away stress and reconnect with loved ones. Thanks to the patented JetPak Therapy System™ you can personalize Bullfrog Spas® to fit your specific needs. Enjoy relaxing while saving energy and money with this state-of-the-art hot tub.



Duxiana Luxury Beds

Since 1926, four generations of the Ljung family of Sweden have studied ways to blend the science of sleep with the ultimate in luxury and comfort. The result is one of the most technologically advanced beds in the luxury mattress market. Available online only September 1–October 1 at Costco.com.

A limited-time showcase of exciting products



Cutco Cutlery

Established in 1949 and backed by The Forever Guarantee, Cutco manufactures a wide variety of fine cutlery, including high-quality kitchen knives and utensils, at its factory in Olean, New York.



Fanatics NFL Team Apparel

Show your team pride with these officially licensed NFL lifestyle shirts and sweatshirts featuring comfortable fabrics with team colors and logos.

WAREHOUSE HOURS

Monday–Friday 10 a.m.–8:30 p.m.
 Saturday 9:30 a.m.–6 p.m.
 Sunday 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
 Pharmacy closed Sunday
 Costco.com 24 hours a day,
 7 days a week



SONG FROM THE HEART

The following are the lyrics from Kristen Scott's song "I Feel Nothing, Nothing At All."

*I feel nothing, nothing at all.
You said nothing, nothing at all.*

*What have you done?
How could you bear so much pain?
What pushed you to it?
How could you conceal it?*

*Blinded by love,
Forever safe in your arms.
I couldn't see it,
I could never believe it.*

*I used to be fearless,
Not afraid of anything,
Until I saw you lifeless there.
I loved you completely,
And I gave you everything,
And still you left me unaware.*

*I feel nothing, nothing at all.
You said nothing, nothing at all.*

*Helplessly numb,
Your battle hidden from view.
No one could see it,
No one could believe it.
We'll never have the answers,
But the question still remains,
What led you to your despair?
We loved you completely,
And we gave you everything,
And still you left us unaware.*

*I feel nothing, nothing at all.
You said nothing, nothing at all.*

© JOANNA JENSEN PHOTOGRAPHY



A healing voice

Calgary-based singer-songwriter Kristen Scott lost her husband, Ira, to suicide on May 27, 2018.

She's used music to help her along her journey of healing.

Scott, who is also an award-winning music teacher, released a video for her single "I Feel Nothing, Nothing at All," (tinyurl.com/yfynt3s) in 2022 as a

means of catharsis and in hopes of raising awareness of suicide prevention. September marks National Suicide Prevention Month, with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10. (For more information, visit afsp.org.)

"For me, music has had a therapeutic capacity to heal my untreatable emotional wounds," Scott says. "The melodies I write penetrate deep into my soul, repairing all the damaged fragments hidden there and providing me solace that I can't get from anyone or anything else."—*Dan Jones*

Clockwise from top: Kristen Scott in the recording studio; Scott says, "If you're struggling ... please know that you are not alone."