



The Rational Walk @rationalwalk

Oct 18 · 18 tweets · [rationalwalk/status/1582269743415070721](https://twitter.com/rationalwalk/status/1582269743415070721)

Yesterday, I became a \$COST member primarily because I am researching the company and wanted to experience it firsthand.

Here are some observations, both about the experience and a few pricing examples.

I easily saved more than the \$60 membership cost on my first visit.

1/



I purchased the \$60 Gold Star membership b/c I doubt that I would spend the \$3K that would make the Executive membership 2% cash-back deal pay off.

I got a strong upsell pitch ... the guy tried a few times. I was mildly irritated, but hey, he was just trying to do his job.

2/

Busy day and didn't eat before going to Costco.

It was 2:30 and I was very hungry. Went to the food court and ordered the hot dog combo and a slice of pizza for \$3.84.

Not my normal food choice but filling and cheap.

Savings? At least \$6 less than a supermarket deli lunch.

3/

I had no shopping list and just wanted to browse the entire warehouse but, of course, I knew that I would pick up some merchandise.

I started at the front of store where they had "treasure hunt" items. These are opportunistic buys offered to members, but not regular SKUs.

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Some clothing items -- and I was surprised that they were seasonally relevant, not overstocks from summer. Nice winter gloves rather than tank tops, for example. Other warm items. Most under \$20.

Didn't buy any of these items.

5/

First items in cart were nuts. I eat a lot of nuts.

Crazy, crazy cheap.

- Two 3 lb bags of walnuts at \$9.99 each, or \$3.33/lb. TJs walnuts are \$5.99/lb. Savings: ~\$16.

- Two 2.5 lb bags of almonds at \$10.39 each, or \$4.16/lb vs TJs almonds at \$6.99/lb. Savings: ~\$14.

6/

- One 2.5 lb bag of cashews for \$14.79, or \$5.92/lb vs. \$7.99 at TJs. Savings: ~\$5.

Just on nuts, I have already saved \$35 vs. Trader Joes which itself has very good prices on nuts vs. Safeway or Whole Foods.

\$35 saved just on nuts. Which is nuts.

7/

Now this is insane: Two 2 lb bags of Peet's whole bean coffee for \$11.99 each, or 0.375/ounce. Regular price of this coffee at Safeway is \$13.99 for 10.5 ounces (\$1.33/ounce).

64 ounces for \$23.98 vs. 10.5 ounces for \$13.99.

Savings: ~\$61 !!!

8/

Now, here's the thing:

I would NEVER pay \$13.98 for 10.5 ounces of Peet's coffee at Safeway. I normally buy coffee via mail order for ~ \$0.50/ounce.

So I really saved about \$8 vs normal coffee habit, but Peet's is better IMO.

I'm going to call savings here \$8, not \$61.

9/

Kirkland dishwasher pods. 115 count for \$10.79, or 9.4 cents per pod. I would normally buy Safeway's generic pods which are \$8.99 for 60, or 15 cents per pod.

Savings on 115 pods: ~\$6.50

10/

Kirkland Toilet Paper: \$19.99 for 30 rolls, or 67 cents per roll. I didn't check the size of rolls, but they are pretty big and normally I pay \$6 for 6 rolls at Safeway, so savings here is at least \$10.

11/

I bought a number of other things (total merchandise came to \$240) but I'll stop with these few examples because I already covered the cost of membership.

Savings:

Food court: \$6

Nuts: \$35

Coffee: \$8

Dishwasher pods: \$6.50

Toilet paper: \$10

Total: \$65.50

12/

So, is Costco worth it?

From a savings standpoint, it is obviously worth it just on one trip. These are all things I regularly buy and they are not quickly perishable. And my membership is good until October 31, 2023, not for one visit.

13/

The caveat is that it is time consuming, especially for me. I had to borrow a car, drive to Costco and park in a very crowded lot (Costco validates parking so that was free).

Time is worth something.

14/

The time penalty is higher than usual for me.

Since I live in a high rise in an urban area, I can't just pull into an attached garage and had to park on the street and carry up my purchases.

So for my lifestyle, Costco is kind of a hassle.

15/

But this was not really a shopping trip. it was more of a research trip, so it took a lot longer than it would have if I had prepared a list. Also, now I know the store and future trips will be faster. People who live in suburban locations won't experience my parking issues.

16/

Overall, I was impressed with the experience. Busy, but not crazy on a Monday mid-afternoon.

If I can cover my membership cost in one trip, anyone can do so.

My plan is to go to Costco each month with a list prepared in advance for efficiency, avoiding weekends.

17/17 /end

I neglected to comment on the bakery ...

Talk about running the gauntlet if you're at all trying to limit carb intake.

Didn't make any purchases, but not because I wasn't tempted. The bakery quantities were just too large for it to make sense on these perishable items.

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