

Shopping

“Going to the Grocery Store”

Reading

Going to the grocery store in a new country can feel difficult and overwhelming. Sometimes there are different customs and rules of etiquette. This reading will give you important information about grocery store rules in Iowa!



First, let's talk about entering the grocery store. When you walk in, you have two options - a basket or a shopping cart. You use a basket when you need only a few items. You use a shopping cart (or just *cart*) when you want to get a lot of items or heavy items, like soda, water, etc.

Important: when you are done shopping, you need to return the shopping cart or basket to their areas. In the parking lot, you will see special places for the shopping carts. Put the shopping cart there. Do not put the shopping cart on the grass or where cars drive - this is considered rude and dangerous for the cars!



Second, let's talk about the produce section. In the produce section, you can find fresh fruit and vegetables. You will see many different kinds of every fruit. For example, typically you can find more than 10 different kinds of apples. You will see whole, fresh fruit and cut-up (or “pre-prepared”) fruit in plastic containers. Typically, the whole fruit is cheaper, but the prep-prepared fruit is more convenient.

It is important to know that not all fruit is given a price in the same way. What do I mean by this? Well, sometimes fruit has a price ‘per item.’ For example, avocados are typically charged a certain amount per avocado. You will see a sign that says “Avocados \$2” and this means that every avocado costs \$2. However, this is not the same for every fruit. For example, bananas and grapes are purchased not by item, but instead by the weight of the fruit! You will see a sign next to these items that says “Bananas \$0.58 per lb.” This means that you will weigh the bananas to know the

price. How will you know how much your fruit weighs? Grocery stores typically have scales (shown in the picture above) that you can use to weigh your fruit. Then, you know how much it will cost.



Third, it is important to understand how discounts work in American grocery stores. Sometimes you will see a price reduction, but when you go to the check-out, the price did not lower! Why is this? Sometimes discounts are for members only. Luckily, you can become a member for free at most grocery stores, like Hy-Vee (Example: at Costco, you must pay a yearly fee to be a member). When you see a lower price with a sign saying “Hy-Vee Perks Price”

(see image on the left), this means you need to be a member to get this discount. You can become a member for free at the Customer Service Desk in the store or online. If you become a member, you can save money on food, gasoline, and other products. This is a good way to save money!

Lastly, remember in the U.S. you cannot barter at the grocery store! The employees cannot change the price of the items for you. It is best to not argue with the employees about prices. Instead, if you have a question or concern about a price go to the Customer Service Desk or ask to speak with a manager.

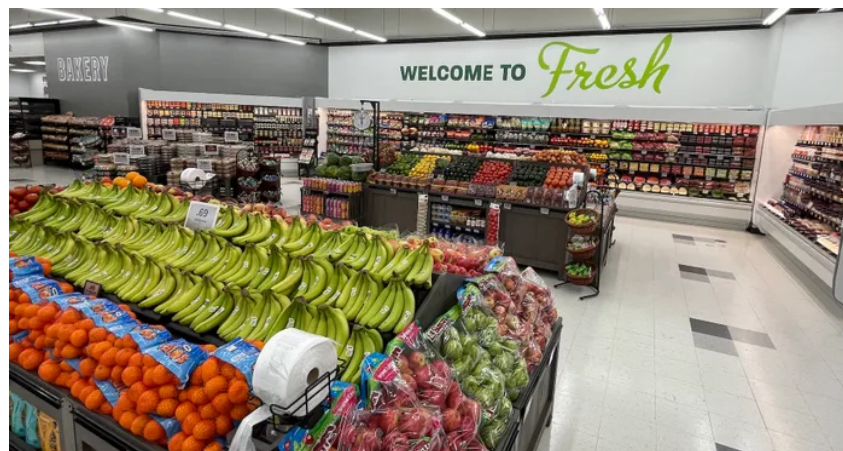


Image: Hy-Vee Produce Section. Iowa City.

Questions

True or False? If False, correct the statement.

1. All grocery store memberships are free. True / False
2. Bananas are priced by the weight of the item. True / False
3. It is polite to return your basket or cart to the store when you are done shopping. True / False
4. You cannot know how much your fruit weighs before you purchase it. True / False
5. You can get all discounts at a store even if you are not a member. True / False
6. Rules of grocery vary based on country and culture. True / False
7. You can barter in grocery stores in Iowa like at Hy-Vee. True / False
8. If you have a question about a price, you should go to the Customer Service Desk. True / False
9. You can get a membership at grocery stores at the Customer Service Desk. True / False

Free Response Questions

1. What is the polite thing to do with your shopping cart when you are done shopping?
2. In your own words, why is buying bananas different from buying avocados at a grocery store in Iowa? Give examples of other common fruits or vegetables that are priced like bananas and then avocados. For example, pineapples are typically bought like avocados.
3. What was something new you learned from the reading above?
4. Do you enjoy grocery shopping? Why or why not?
5. How often do you go grocery shopping? Do you go grocery shopping or does someone in your family go?

Share a story

1. Have you shopped at Hy-Vee before? What was it like? What was confusing? Is Hy-Vee your favorite grocery store in Iowa? If not, what is and why?
2. Compare and contrast the rules of etiquette in the reading to customs of grocery shopping in your home country. How is grocery shopping similar? How is it different? Which style of grocery shopping do you prefer?