

Which online grocery store should I shop from in Vancouver?

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I've always wished I was one of those people who enjoy grocery shopping, but I really don't. This is due to three main reasons: First, when I look at my busy calendar, I can't help but feel as if the time I allocate to grocery shopping could be used to do something more productive such as working on an assignment, catching up with a relative or even just sleeping. Second, I always end up spending more time than planned in the stores because I rarely find the correct aisle on the first try and when I finally do, I get confused by all the options. Lastly, I often overestimate the amount of groceries I can carry, hence going home is frequently a struggle.



Source

In view of the upcoming winter and school assignments becoming more and more time-consuming, I've decided to explore online grocery shopping. My goals in doing so, as you might have already guessed are to save time, minimize the amount of effort it takes to carry groceries and of course save money by finding the cheapest online store.

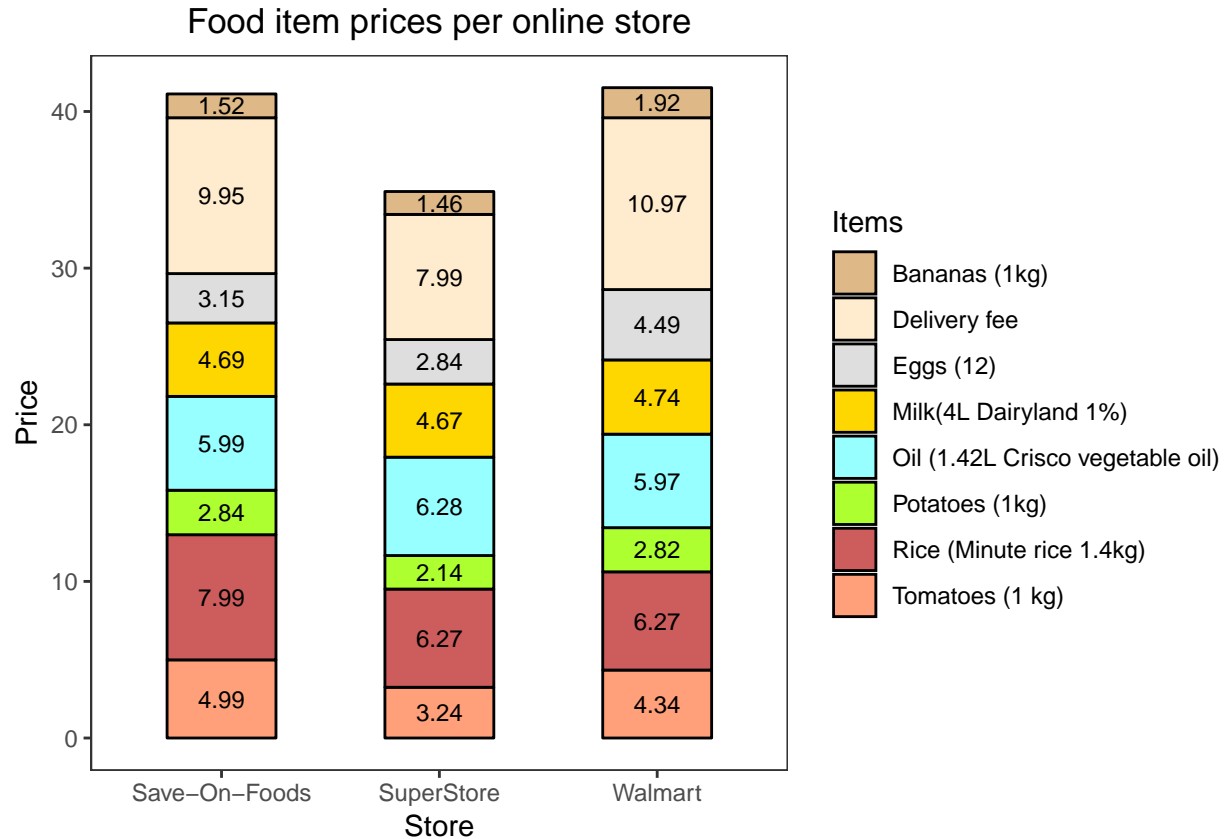
Oh, did I also mention that I'm new to Vancouver? I first had to research all stores with an online presence and same-day delivery services. My delivery fee budget was at most \$20 (significantly lower than the dollar value I would put on the time I spend in grocery stores weekly). In addition, I did not want any additional restrictions such as a minimum order value. Below is a summary of my findings:

Store	Online presence	Delivery services	Delivery fees (\$)
Save-On-Foods	Yes	Yes	9.95
Superstore	Yes	Yes	7.99
Walmart	Yes	Yes	10.97
Whole Foods Market	No (order might be sent by phone or email)	Yes	10
Safeway	No (items should be chosen in store)	Yes	10
IGA	No (items should be chosen in store)	Yes	10
Stongs Market	Yes	Yes (\$50 minimum order)	10.99
Thrifty foods	Yes	Yes (\$50 minimum order)	7.95
Choices market	Yes	Yes (2-3 days)	10
No frills	Yes	No	NA
Your independent grocers	Yes	No	NA

As you can see from the above table, my options were quickly reduced to 3 stores, namely Save-On-Foods, SuperStore, and Walmart. OK... but how did you compare them? you asked. Like everyone else, I have some items that I regularly purchase. However, I randomly picked 7 products from the list of allowed Food Stamps items in the US. In other words, I focused on the minimum products someone needs to be healthy. Prices were obtained from the respective websites.

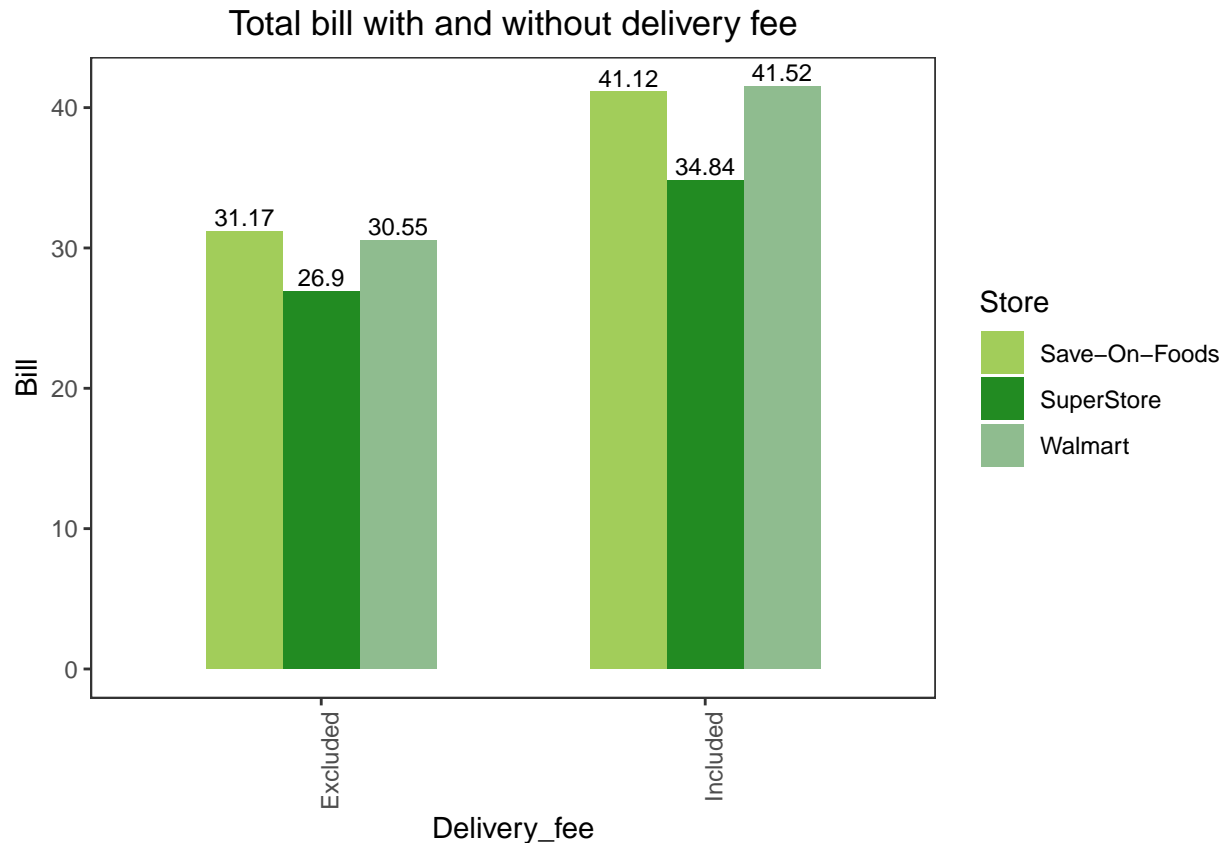
The below graphs show bananas, eggs, milk, tomatoes, rice, potatoes, and oil prices accross the 3 stores as well as delivery fee.





Did I hear SuperStore is the cheapest? Correct! All products are cheaper at SuperStore but oil. If I were to purchase these 7 items, my total bill before tax would be \$34.89 at SuperStore, \$41.12 at Save-On-Foods and \$41.52 at Walmart. SuperStore is about \$6.63 and \$6.23 cheaper than Walmart and Save-On-Foods, respectively. However, when the delivery fee is excluded the price gaps shrink and Walmart becomes more competitive than Save-On-Foods. Then, Superstore is \$3.65 cheaper than Walmart and \$4.27 cheaper than Save-On-Foods.

This means that assuming online prices are a reasonable proxy for in-store prices, Walmart is a cheaper option than Save-On-Foods as far as in-store shopping is concerned. Interesting, right ? But let's not diverge ... SuperStore is still the winner !



You might have noticed that I chose specific brands instead of an average price per item. I'm aware that the results would have been more impartial with the latter approach and that an analysis conducted with different brands and/or quantities could have yielded different results. In other words, my approach only works for me but not everyone. This is the main limitation of this research.

All things equal, I will be shopping at Superstore online very soon !

Sources

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