

## Finding your best value in paper towel brands

There are a couple of reasons you should carefully compare paper towel brands to find the one that gives you best value. If you're environmentally oriented, you know you're saving trees by using the recycled paper towels. The second reason concerns your budget. Paper towels are expensive and they aren't all the same. Next time you're shopping, look for these comparison points, listed right on the label.

First, look at the number of sheets per roll. Some paper towel brands give you more sheets than another brand, but don't go by that alone. Look at the size of each sheet. You may be shocked to discover each sheet is about half the size of a normal paper towel. If you don't check both the number of sheets and the size, you won't know until you get home and open the package. Few of us have the chutzpah to return a roll and demand a refund, although the store would probably oblige you.

Now you look to see if the sheets are single or double layered. Some paper towel brands with a quilted, embossed surface are double layered, while others are not. You can just eyeball the circumference of the paper towel package, compared with another. If one has the same number and size of sheets as another, but one's considerably smaller, the smaller of the paper towel brands is likely to be less absorbent, so you'll end up using two to wipe up a spill, where one sheet of a thicker paper towel would suffice.

Some of the most expensive paper towel brands go overboard on the thickness, claiming it will wipe up a big mess with just one sheet. Although the claim is true, how many big messes do you have in a day? We don't generally reuse a paper towel because most of the time, it's a sticky spot of syrup or a bit of egg white. The purpose is to throw out the germs, not recycle them! So the ultra paper towel brands are probably not a good value. Let the product suit the task.

Your last comparison is the price difference between a single, double or a big pack of six or eight rolls. The price label the grocer places on the shelf gives you a price per-unit comparison, such as 2.1 cents per sheet. You'd think the big eight-pack paper towel brand would be your best value, but that's not necessarily the case.

When you've looked at all the factors, you'll find it's fairly easy to decide which paper towel brands are your best bet. Buy and try. You may get it right the first time. If not, reevaluate on your next trip to the store. When you find a brand that lasts, just keep buying that brand!