

The 7 Most Baffling Things About American Grocery Stores

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDBErrGGHUY&t=6s>

Transcript: <https://dontveter.com/ec/grocerystores.pdf>

Hello. This year I have been doing a lot of videos devoted to trying American food for the first time.

This video is sponsored by SimpliSafe. After all, there's no safe like SimpliSafe.

And something that you don't really see in those videos is the fact that we have to go and get the ingredients from a supermarket.

I have two missions on this mission. Number one, to pick up some of the ingredients for Maryland crab cakes, which I'll be making in my next video.

And, number two, to show you some of the baffling things about American grocery stores.

And just as we pull into the parking lot at Jewel-Osco, if you've not yet subscribed to this channel, do that now. In the meantime, let's go shopping.

Well, first thing to notice is that you don't have to put any kind of coin in in order to procure a shopping trolley or cart as they're known here.

This is something you will see at Aldi, which is something that you see at Aldi around the world, but for the most part, American carts don't require it.

In the UK, coin operated trolley are a bit more prevalent, with some supermarkets employing them and others not.

Back in 2017, these trolleys made the news when many of them were incapable of accepting Britain's new 12-sided pound coin.

You know, I was just thinking about something. When we were in Britain, we were walking around one of the supertores out there and I noticed these stools that I had forgotten about.

They used to be in all of the grocery stores in England. They still are, it seems.

And you don't see them as often in American grocery stores. Perhaps it's because the shelves are slightly higher up.

So, the shelf stackers who use those stools in Britain, they need something a bit taller.

So, usually what you see in grocery stores here are things like ladders to help them get to those higher spaces.

Cuz as you can see, I'm a tall person. I can only just about touch that.

And on the subject of size, it won't surprise anyone to learn that American supermarkets are generally bigger than their UK counterparts.

I found this to be especially true at Walmart, whose retail spaces are so big, they're not even supermarkets, but hypermarkets.

A hypermarket combines a supermarket with a department store. Basically, a one-stop shop for everything.

However, it might surprise some to learn that Britain has its own hypermarkets with the likes of Tesco Extra, usually found on the outskirts of town.

That said, at 70,000 square ft, even these don't stack up to those Walmart Super Centers, which average about 100,000 square ft.

I have no idea how to find crab meat. I've never done this. If you want we could just go to Baltimore.

Hello. Just had to quickly come back from the store because I realized I forgot to lock the door and then realized actually that doesn't matter because even if my wife's cousin Chad has found out our address, we are protected by SimpliSafe.

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Again, visit simplisafe.com/lostinthepond to customize your system today. The link is in the description below.

You won't normally find milk of this size showing up in Asda because we just don't have the fridge space for it.

And that's not all. The inclusion of preservatives as well as a different pasteurization method means that American milk actually lasts longer than British milk.

So, Americans can justify buying it by the gallon.

But what is a gallon? Because both countries have different ways of defining that. A US gallon measures in at 128 fluid ounces, while a UK gallon equates to 160 fl. ounces.

And so you might think, "Ooh, Lawrence, you lied. British milk is bigger."

Well, not really, because in the UK, milk is not typically sold by the gallon, but in pints and liters.

The largest bottle on the market is the six pint bottle, which is a tad smaller than a US gallon.

Even if a UK pint is one and a quarter the size of a US pint, it's all quite confusing.

I think this will just about fit in our fridge.

One thing you'll often notice in US grocery stores is the price tag. It's very inviting.

It usually ends in 99. It makes you think, okay, it's 1 cent cheaper than say \$8 if it's \$7.99. And that's great.

So, you get the thing, you put it in your cart, and you walk up to the till thinking, "All right, great. We've made some good deals here."

Until sales tax happens. In the US, sales tax is added at the point of purchase and after 17 years living in the country, I no longer bat an eyelid at this.

But having arrived here from a country where value added tax is included in the price tag, it did briefly make me reconsider buying a ukulele when I barely had enough money to justify it in the first place.

What's this? Refrigerated eggs. This is not something you would see in a British store where the eggs are usually placed just on a shelf somewhere away from refrigeration.

And why is that? It all comes down to both countries' attempts at preventing contamination.

In the United States, the USDA mandates that eggs must be washed and sanitized before they reach the consumer. Basically, this is to ensure that it's not covered in chicken (droppings).

The European Union, on the other hand, says that class A eggs must not be washed, which sounds mental, right?

Except the EU believes that washing eggs can do more harm than good.

And there's a couple of reasons for this. When a hen lays an egg, she coats it in a cuticle in order to protect the egg against contamination once it pops out.

Anyway, it's thought that washing eggs can result in the removal of this cuticle, making eggs vulnerable to pathogenic contamination.

In America, the USDA requires producers to wash eggs in water with a minimum temperature of 90° F.

They are then rinsed with a special cleaning spray with the intention of eradicating contamination and then dried.

Not drying the eggs would mean that the resulting moisture could become a breeding ground for salmonella.

Additionally, using cold or dirty water in the cleaning process would cause bacteria to seep in and there'd be no extra lives for that egg.

So, what's this got to do with refrigeration?

Well, firstly, the USDA freely admits that washing the egg can remove the cuticles. So chilling the eggs in store becomes more critical.

In Britain and the EU, not so much.

One thing that's often mentioned about US grocery stores is that the cashiers, when you get to the till are usually standing up.

A lot has been made of how this is not great for, you know, your physical well-being and all of that.

We're not used to this in Britain where they are sitting on a stool.

And as somebody who has just rubbish knees, I can completely empathize.

On the other hand, arguments in favor of this, usually by those that own the stores, seem to be that standing up looks more professional and that it gives the cashier more range of movement, which, as I'm demonstrating here, is obviously true.

And I take back everything I said in the previous scene.

But let me know in the comments what you think. Should cashiers be able to sit like they do in Europe, or should they stand like true patriots?

Of course, increasingly both countries are adopting self checkouts. And Chicago's Jewel-Osco is no exception.

I'm well practiced in this. And in fact, self checkouts are, I think, amazing cuz you don't have to talk to anybody unless you're buying alcohol, but I quit alcohol and that was one of the reasons being social.

What's going on with that? That no eggs. What? I used to be good at it. That did it. We did it. That's good. Old Bay seasoning. How many store provided bags did you use today? Zero.

And of course, with Britain and America being two nations divided by a common language, you can't really talk about grocery stores without talking about some of the terminological differences.

A big one, of course, as I mentioned earlier, is trolley versus shopping cart.

And of course, when you come to pay in Britain, you go to the till. In America, it's the cash register.

And one that stood out to me recently as people that don't usually go in store but in fact go to the curbside pickup lanes.

In Britain, which I'm surprised to say does have curbside pickup. It's just there. It's called click and collect.

If you liked this video be sure to watch eight American habits that confused me as a Brit. Until the next video.