



# THE **LEAN** BERETS

## AVENGERS OF HEALTH!

# “COSTCO SHOPPING GUIDE”



*The Lean Berets are big fans of saving you money and effort with your everyday health and fitness needs. Grocery shopping, for example, is an area that we take very seriously. If you have witnessed any of our “Firing Squad” videos to this point, you will know that we do not like to be duped by false advertising or bunk marketing practices. And, we also don’t like when you fall prey to the charlatans as well. That being said, it is our ongoing effort to provide you with the straight-up facts about what you put into your body. We far extend ourselves to investigate ingredient labels and nutrient facts panels to make sure you are not being deceived! --The Lean Berets*

In a utopian world, we would be able to buy organic food all the time with no questions asked. However, as you are probably well aware, the price of organic food is quite higher than your conventional fare. No worries compadre. After a series of trips to this warehouse club store, it occurred to us that Costco has welcomed many healthy, and in some cases, organic products through their doors. This means you can buy in bulk and pay less than you would in a specific health food store or conventional grocery store. Due to numerous inquiries about healthy shopping from clients, friends and family members, we got the motivation to create a convenient Costco shopping guide for your personal use. Take it with you and there is little chance of error when you start shoveling supersized boxes and containers into your buggy. In true Lean Beret fashion, this is as close to grade two as possible so you will hopefully not be confused. All of the recommendations will be either organic or free of contaminants and pollutants.

- **Produce:** You will find uber amounts of good-looking produce, but stick with the organic stuff just because it is available. Apples, baby carrots, spring mix, baby spinach and baby spinach/arugula mixture are always slam dunks, and keep your eyes peeled for other types of organic produce that crop up from time to time like



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grapes, raspberries, potatoes, oranges and avocados. There is an entire walk-in cooler dedicated to produce. Be sure to scope it out!

- **Dairy:** The dairy section has a plenitude of foods and beverages to choose from. You will find organic milk as well as hormone-free milk—look specifically for *Darigold* and *Kirkland Organic*. Yogurt is a hot item in many of your refrigerators and you are in luck. Costco has both *Fage* and *Chobani*, which are Greek yogurt producers who do not use cows treated with hormones to produce their products. To round out your dairy needs, look for *Darigold* cottage cheese and sour cream.

If you have a problem with lactose or are vegan or vegetarian, you can get soy milk too. Although *Silk* is a company put on the black list by many organic purists, it's still an option if you need to satisfy your craving, and you will find it in the cooler at Costco. \*(If you want to know more about the backstory, contact Kevin Rail directly for the extra information) In the meantime, just make sure the soy is non GMO. This will be clearly stated on the label. Be vigilant because this is something The Berets do NOT have tolerance for!

- **Eggs:** These oval-shaped critters get a section all to themselves. Costco has an abundance of eggs to choose from. You can get them in 18-packs for the same price you'd pay for a dozen in a health food store. That's quite a deal. Look for any ones that are vegetarian fed, organic or specifically say the chickens were not shot up with hormones or antibiotics. Our favorites are the free-range omega-3 eggs by *Oakdell Farms*.
- **Meats:** You meat eaters are going to be happily pleased because there is a generous amount of free-range and hormone-free options to choose from. First off, bison is always safe and you will find it ground up in packages. Also fix your eyeball on packaged sausage, chicken, cold cuts and turkey. You will find all of these in the standup coolers near the back of the store. *Aidell's* is a safe company that comes to mind that has a number of sausage options for you to try. For the rest of your meat eating needs, make sure to refer to the fine print and only buy those meats that say they are free of antibiotics and hormones. You should know the drill by now amigos!
- **Bread:** Believe it or not, you will find a handful of decent breads at Costco. Although they don't have sprouted, which is our preference, they do have the next



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best thing—100 percent whole grain. Look for *Kirkland*, *Orowheat*, *Milton's* and *Dave's*. Be aware that *Orowheat* has GMO soy and corn ingredients. However, it is also free of trans fats, HFCS, and artificial flavors and colors. This creates a gray area, and allows the bread to narrowly escape The Firing Squad because the company makes an effort to avoid a lot of the pollution that other companies don't. The take-home message is to buy bread with at least 3 g of fiber per slice that has no HFCS, hydrogenated oils, colors, numbers or abbreviations in the ingredient label. Take the investment of time to check too!

- **Cereal/Granola/Grains:** Who doesn't like a nice bowl or handful of cereal from time to time? Look for *Nature's Path* Ancient Grains granola, which is always a safe bet, *Kirkland Organic* and *Roland*. *Quaker* also has an all-natural granola option, but we are not 100% fans of the company because they also have a laundry list of so-called healthy products that are not even close. Some of which will definitely find their way to The Firing Squad. This is a stricter stance of course, but do what's best for you and your family.
- **Nut Butter:** Peanut butter is one of our favorite foods, and we can likely speak for a lot of you as well. Look for *Adams All Natural* and *Kirkland Organic*. We prefer monster-sized containers of *Adams*, but you can also get two-packs of *Kirkland*. Do not be fooled by the *Skippy All Natural*. It's nothing but glorified regular peanut butter. The easy way to judge your PB is by going right to the ingredient label. If there are more than two ingredients, throw it over your shoulder and move forward! *Maranatha* is another safe company you will find at Costco. They have almond butter, which is awesome!
- **Nutrition Bars:** Nutritional bars hit the spot when you are rushed or working long days and need a hit of food to keep you from peacing out. *Clif*, *Lara*, *Kind* and *Mary May's* are safe options at Costco. Once again, be aware of the ingredients in bars. Steer clear of the fake sugars, artificial colors and flavors, and HFCS.
- **Frozen Items:** Frozen foods can be a life saver, and you will find no shortage of healthy options at Costco from vegetables to meats to miscellaneous items. *Madame Edamame*, *Foster Farms chicken*, *Bybee Farms* organic green beans and sweet peas, *Amy's* frozen lasagna and *Sunrise Growers* frozen berries all make the safe list. And just for the record, edamame is about as close to a perfectly balanced



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food you could find. That’s critical when you are a vegan and need a quality protein to feed your muscles.

- **Miscellaneous:** A Costco shopping guide would not be complete without a miscellaneous category. This is where all those sort of grey definition items go.
  - In the event you are unfamiliar with chia seeds, your best bet is to go online and do some research. These little circular pellets are powerhouses of nutrition. Not only are they high in fiber, but they are complete proteins, packed with antioxidants and have a generous blend of essential fats. Look for 32-oz. bags of organic chia seeds from the *Nutiva Company*. You will most likely find them on an end cap with some demo person nearby. Don’t eat what they’re carving up though, because it’s generally bad news.
  - Coconut oil is another slam dunk. This stuff shares a common characteristic with a contortionist--flexibility. You can use it as a spread for sweet potatoes and bagels, you can consume it as a supplement by shot gunning a tablespoon full, you can slather it on your skin to relieve dryness and sunburn, and it’s versatile enough to cook with. Unlike a lot of vegetable oils, coconut oil has a high smoke point, which means it does not break down and become carcinogenic at high heat. Carcinogenic is a fancy word that means toxic and promotes free radical buildup in the body. Once again, snoop around the end cap of an aisle in the canned foods area and fix your eyeball on the *Nutiva Brand*. These guys are pretty well represented at Costco. Both the coconut oil and chia seeds are organic too, which makes me rest a lot easier at night.

*We hope this Costco Shopping Guide to healthier options helps you. Note that not all Costco stores have the same items; therefore, some of the suggestions here might not be offered in your particular region.*



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