

Grocery & Shopping Manual for International Students in Saint John

A Practical Guide for Saving Money, Eating Well & Navigating Canadian Stores

Introduction

Welcome to Saint John, New Brunswick! Grocery shopping in Canada might look different from your home country. This manual is designed to help you make smart shopping decisions, understand Canadian food products, and find affordable options using local tips and tools.

Where to Shop

Major Grocery Stores

- **Saint John East:** Atlantic Superstore, Walmart, Sobeys Extra, No Frills, Giant Tiger, Costco
- **Uptown:** Giant Tiger, Sobeys, Drew & Jen's No Frills
- **North:** Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore
- **West:** Walmart, Sobeys, Giant Tiger, Drew & Jen's No Frills
- ** **Costco** (membership required)

Ethnic Grocery Stores

- **Mediterranean & Asian:** Kim's Grocery, Happy Garden, Saint John Asian Market, Fresh Ville Supermarket, Milledgeville Convenience
- **Middle Eastern:** Cedar's Food Market
- **African & Caribbean:** Global Food Market
- **Latin American:** Tienda Latina
- **Vegan Store:** The Feel-Good Store, Corn Crib Natural Foods Ltd

Farmers Markets

- Saint John City Market
- Queen Square Farmers Market (summer only)

Discount and Dollar Stores

- Dollarama
- Giant Tiger
- Great Canadian Dollar Store

Thrift Stores

- Salvation Army Thrift Store
- Value Village
- Mission Thrift Store
- Habitat for Humanity (Restore)
- Outfits
- Guys Frenchy's
- Hospice Shoppe

Shopping Tips (Expanded)

Buying in Bulk vs. Small Quantities

- **Bulk Buying:** Cheaper per item. Great for rice, pasta, beans, frozen veggies, or toiletries. Stores like Costco and No Frills are ideal.
- **Small Quantities:** Better for fresh produce, dairy, or new items you want to try. Avoid waste if you have limited fridge space.

Unit Pricing & Store Brands

- Most stores list **unit prices** on shelf labels (e.g., \$/100g or \$/L) — compare them to get the best deal.
- **Store brands** (e.g., No Name, President's Choice, Compliments) are often just as good as brand names but cost less.

Seasonal Shopping

- **Summer (local & fresh):** Berries, tomatoes, corn, greens
- **Winter (cheaper):** Potatoes, squash, apples, carrots
- **Spring (fresh & local):** Spinach, asparagus, rhubarb, green onions
- **Fall (harvest Season):** Pumpkins, squash, apples, cabbage, beets, pears
- When fresh is expensive, buy **frozen** (nutritious and affordable) and often on sale.

Discount & Student Savings Programs

PC Optimum Card

- **Get it at:** Superstore, Shoppers Drug Mart, No Frills
- **How:** Sign up in-store or at pcoptimum.ca
- **Use:** Scan card or app to collect points on groceries, personal care, and pharmacy items
- **Bonus:** Watch for bonus points events and load digital offers weekly

Scene+ Card

- **Get it at:** Sobeys, Foodland, FreshCo, Cineplex, or sceneplus.ca
- **How:** Register online or via the app
- **Use:** Collect points at grocery stores, restaurants, Cineplex theatres, and for travel
- **Tip:** Link to your Scotiabank debit/credit card for automatic points

SPC Card (Student Price Card)

- **Get it at:** spccard.ca or through your school
- **Cost:** \$11.99/year (or free with eligible student bank accounts)
- **Use:** Participating fashion, tech, and food retailers
- **Note:** Some local stores accept student IDs for discounts even without SPC

Other Tools & Apps

- **Flipp/Reebee:** Browse weekly flyers by store
- **Checkout 51 / Rakuten:** Get cashback for uploading receipts or shopping online
- **Flashfood App:** Buy food nearing expiry for big discounts at Superstore






Yuka App – Product Health Scanner

Yuka is a free app that lets you scan barcodes to see how healthy a product is. It rates items (0–100) based on nutrition, additives, and ingredients.

- Red score? Yuka suggests healthier alternatives.

- Works for food **and** personal care products.
Great for new shoppers unsure about unfamiliar brands!

Understanding Canadian Labels

- **Nutrition Facts:** Look for calories, fat, sugar, fiber, and protein
- **Allergy Info:** Common allergens are listed in **bold**
- **Expiry Date:** Check “**Best Before**” vs. “**Use By**”
- **Symbols:**
 -  Halal
 -  Kosher
 -  Vegetarian/Vegan
 -  Gluten-Free
 -  Organic (Canada Organic logo)

Popular Brands vs. Store Brands

- Brand: Kraft, Heinz, Kellogg’s
- Store: President’s Choice (Superstore), Compliments (Sobeys), Great Value (Walmart)

Budgeting for Groceries

Estimated Monthly Grocery Budget (for one student)

- Conservative budget: **\$180–\$250/month**
- Moderate budget (includes meat, snacks): **\$300–\$350/month**

Affordable Staples

- Rice, oats, lentils, pasta
- Frozen veggies
- Canned beans, tuna
- Bread, eggs, peanut butter
- Bulk fruits/veggies (carrots, onions, bananas)

Plan Before You Shop

- Make a list
- Shop with flyers (Flipp/Reebee)
- Stick to a budget
- Try free meal planning tools (see next section)

Price Comparisons (2025)

- Eggs (12-pack): **\$3.50–\$4.50**
- Milk (4L): **\$5.50–\$6.00**
- Bread (loaf): **\$2.50–\$3.50**
- Apples (1 kg): **\$3.00–\$4.00**
- Rice (5 kg): **\$8–\$12**

Transportation & Delivery Options

- **Bus:** Saint John Transit (student pass available)

- **Walking/Biking:** Many stores in Uptown and East Side are walkable
- **Grocery Delivery & Pickup:**
 - PC Express (Superstore)
 - Walmart Pickup
 - Instacart
 - Flashfood (discounted food pickup)

Emergency Food Assistance Resources

- **UNB-SJ Campus Pantry:** Free food for students (email or drop-in)
- **Food Bank:** is a service for people facing food insecurity. They serve as a crucial resource for people who may not have enough food to eat due to financial hardship or other circumstances. For more information on Food Banks in the Saint John Region, visit <https://nb.211.ca/search/>
- **Romero House:** Free daily meals
- **St. George's Anglican Church Pantry:** Community groceries

Meal Planning Tools

- **Mealime** – Quick recipes and smart grocery lists
- **Yummly** – Personalized recipe suggestions
- **Canada's Food Guide App** – Government-approved nutrition and meal tips
<https://food-guide.canada.ca>