

# How gas prices are changing grocery shopping

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As the Iran war continues to drive gas prices higher, consumers are cutting back on grocery spending, according to new data from Snipp, a loyalty and promotions technology company.

Its March survey of 1,000 U.S. adults found that 66.4% have changed their spending habits, at least somewhat, as a direct consequence of increased fuel costs.

The average price for a gallon of regular unleaded gas in New York state was \$4.069, as of April 6, according to AAA.

## Where are shoppers cutting back?

Shoppers are buying fewer non-essential grocery items.

- 51.7% report spending less on snacks and beverages.
  - 38.1% on alcohol.
  - 34.9% on fresh meat and seafood.
  - 32.9% on prepared/deli foods.
- Even two core staples are seeing cutbacks: fresh produce (20.1%) and dairy (18.7%).

## What else are shoppers doing to save?

- 40% of respondents say they have

switched to buying cheaper store brands.

- Nearly 29% are buying in food bulk, which also allows them to make fewer trips to the store, saving on gas.
- 13% have switched to shopping at lower-priced retailers.
- 13.1% are making more purchases online, which eliminates fuel costs entirely.

Meanwhile, just 5.9% are dipping into savings or using credit to maintain their spending levels.

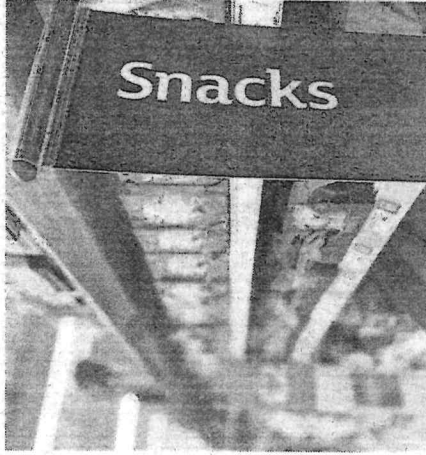
## What actions are shoppers willing to take if gas prices remain high?

Grocery prices increased 0.5% from January 2026 to February 2026 and are 2.4% higher than in February 2025, according to the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Higher fuel prices tend to drive up grocery prices.

What actions are shoppers willing to take if gas prices remain high?

- 52% told Snipp they would drive less and combine trips.
- 44% said they would delay large purchases.
- 43.7% said they would seek more discounts and promotions.
- 28% said they would switch to cheaper store brands.



Grocery shoppers are cutting back on snack purchases as gas and food prices rise. GETTY IMAGES

## Grocery prices vary widely by store. See which chains are cheapest

Where you shop for groceries can significantly impact how much you spend, according to a recent analysis by Consumer Reports.

The report found shoppers can pay dramatically different prices depending on the supermarket, with gaps of more than 33% between the cheapest and most expensive stores. Researchers used Walmart — the nation's largest grocery seller — as the baseline for comparison.

Most Americans shop at multiple grocery stores each week, but the report suggests store choice can still make a major difference in overall spending.

## Cheapest grocery chains

Warehouse clubs ranked as the most affordable overall.

Costco was the cheapest, with prices about 21.4% lower than Walmart, followed closely by B.J.'s Wholesale Club at 21% less. Discount grocers Lidl (8.5% cheaper) and Aldi (8.3% cheaper) also ranked among the lowest-cost options.

## More expensive supermarkets

At the higher end, Whole Foods Market was the most expensive, with prices nearly 40% higher than Walmart. Other chains with higher prices included Trader Joe's and Publix.

## How the rankings were determined

Consumer Reports commissioned the research from Strategic Resource Group, which compared baskets of common grocery items across major chains. Prices were collected in six U.S. metro areas — including Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles — during late summer 2025.

Contributing: USA Today Network