I'm not a bot



Costco is taking new steps to prevent nonmembers from entering its stores, but there are still several ways to shop at Costco without paying an annual fee. In a notice on Costco steps to prevent nonmembers from entering its stores, but there are still several ways to shop at Costco without paying an annual fee. In a notice on Costco without paying an annual fee. In a notice with a notice without paying an annual fee. In a notice with a no meaning youll need to present a Costco card with a photo or a valid photo ID like a drivers license. The changes will make it more difficult to evade the member requirement to enter the store, and itll be harder to freeload off a friends account. "We dont feel its right that nonmembers receive the same benefits and pricing as our members," Costco said in a statement last year regarding related measures. Most of Costcos profits come from membership fees, and the company says theyre what makes it possible for Costco to offer the low prices that draw crowds of customers to its stores. But if youre not a regular Costco shopper, it could be hard to justify buying a membership, which will cost at least \$65 starting Sept. 1. The good news is theres a trick involving gift cards that makes it possible to shop in-store without a Costco membership. Ads by Money. We may be compensated if you click this ad.Ad How to shop at Costco with a gift card Under Costcos policies, anyone can shop at warehouse locations if they present a Shop Card, which is just a gift card. These cards can be purchased in-store, and electronic versions are available online. The catch is that Costco Shop Cards can only be purchased by members, so for this trick, youll still need to rely on a family member or a friend with a membership to buy a gift card for you. Youll likely have to pay your friend back because the companys policies require the name on your debit or credit card to match the account name. If you're worried about using this strategy, rest assured that the gift card method is allowed: "Non-members as well as members may use Costco Shop Cards to shop at any Costco location in the U.S.," a Costco customer service FAQs page reads. In online forums, shoppers report that theyve been able to use small denomination Costco gift cards (ex. \$25) to get in the door. Then they can fill up a cart and pay for the rest of the total with other payment methods like cash or debit. Keep in mind, however, that the rules and enforcement may vary from store to store. Other ways to shop at Costco without membership If the gift card method is too much hassle, there are several other ways to shop at Costco without a membership. Much of Costcos inventory is available online, and the company has free shipping on many items. Unfortunately, online prices are sometimes higher to offset shipping costs and nonmembers pay a 5% surcharge over what members pay for online orders. Nonmembers can order items with same-day delivery using Instacart.com, however, the prices are higher than what you would find shopping in person. Costco has also teamed up with UberEats for delivery available to members and nonmembers though this option is currently limited to select store locations, and nonmembers still pay more. Lastly, there are several things that anyone can get at Costco without a membership, including alcohol (in 14 states), prescriptions and eye exams. But to get the full Costco shopping experience with the lowest prices and to be able to order the famous \$1.50 hot dog deal youll either need to pay for a membership or try the gift card method. How much is Costco membership? Costco membership options: The standard Gold Star membership is \$60 per year (increasing to \$65 on Sept. 1) and it includes a household card that can be used by a second person who lives at the same address as the account holder. The Executive membership (\$120) gets you 2% back on all purchases, which pays for itself when you spend \$3,000. The price of this membership will increase to \$130 on Sept. 1. Ads by Money. We may be compensated if you click this ad.Ad More from Money: Best Credit Cards of August 2024 Here's How Much Time and Money America Spends Doing Taxes Every Year These Credit Unions Offer CDs With APYs up to 9.5%. Do You Qualify? /em Many credit cards offer cash-back rewards specifically on grocery-type expenses which could apply when purchasing Campbells Soup from this wholesale club; leverage these partnerships where possible!In conclusion, even though holding a membership is generally beneficial when shopping at Costco, smart strategies enable savvy shoppers without members or utilizing online services thoughtfullyyour wallet will thank you! Workaround Options for Costco Membership: How to Shop Without OneCostco has become a go-to destination for bulk shopping due to its wide selection of products and competitive prices. However, gaining access to these benefits typically requires a membership upfront. Here are some effective ways to navigate this issue: Shop with a Member: One of the most straightforward tactics is to accompany a friend or family member who holds an active Costco membership. As their guest, you can freely enter the store and shop alongside them, making use of their member pricing. Use the Costco Website. Interestingly, select non-member purchases may be allowed online; however, be prepared for additional fees on certain products. Gift Cards: Another useful workaround involves purchasing within the store without needing an active membership. Items Available at Limited Locations: Certain Costco locations sell products in-store that do not require any membership for purchase. For example, some pharmacies located within Costco premises provide pharmacy services that do not necessitate a card. Tasting Events and Promotions: Occasionally, special events at local Costcos might allow non-members to enter the store temporarily for specific promotions or tasting events. Keep an eye on local announcements about such happenings! Curbside Pickup Services: In some cases, regional stores may offer curbside pickup or delivery services available even for non-members. This option allows shoppers access to additively-shop where they can utilize selected services without needing full access inside the warehouse. While navigating your shopping experience at Costco without having a membership might seem like an uphill task initially, employing these strategies enhances accessibility and ensures that savvy shoppers never miss out on fantastic deals! Whether utilizing personal connections with existing members or leveraging available online options effectively ensures you get what you need from this retail giant. Ultimately, effective planning coupled by shops like Costcowithout necessarily signing up for long-term commitments! Can You Use a Costco Shop Card Without a Membership? Exploring the BasicsWhen it comes to shopping at Costco, many prospective buyers often wonder about the possibilities associated with a Costco Shop Card. This article delves into the essential aspects of utilizing a Shop Card without holding an active membership, providing insights and tips for savvy shoppers. For those unfamiliar, a Costco Shop Card is essentially a prepaid gift card offered by the retailer. It allows users to purchase items within store premises even if they do not have an official membership. Heres how it works and what you need to know: Understanding Membership Requirements A Costco membership typically provides access to exclusive deals and bulk savings across various product categories. Though traditionally required for entry, there are workarounds that enable shoppers to participate in the Costco experience without committing to membership fees. The Role of the Shop Card A Shop Card can be purchased by members and then gifted or shared with non-members. Non-members can use these cards for shopping in-store but cannot add funds or purchase additional cards. Limitations for Non-members and then gifted or shared with non-members and then gifted or shared with non-members can use these cards for shopping in-store but cannot add funds or purchase additional cards. Limitations for Non-members and then gifted or shared with non-members and gi Restrictions\*\*: While entering with a Shop Card is permitted, non-members might still face access limitations in terms of exclusive member-only offers and online shopping options. Benefits of Using a Shop Card Without Membership Cost Savings: Shoppers can take advantage of lower prices on bulk items without investing in an annual membership fee. Gifting Convenience: Members can purchase and provide these cards as gifts, allowing friends or family members who may not shop regularly at Costco to enjoy its benefits. No Commitment Required: For occasional shoppers who may not justify the cost of full membership, the Shop Card serves as an easy entry point into Costcos warehouse offerings. How to Obtain Your First Costco Purchase If youre considering using this mechanism effectively: 1. Acquire your initial Shop Card from someone who is already a member. 2. Visit your local store prepared with your card; remember that youll still enjoy member-only pricing without having paid dues! 3. Keep in mind any restrictions on purchases through cash-based methods since these vary per location. In conclusion, while traditional rules mandate that one must have a membership to enjoy all that Costco has to offer, utilizing a Costco Shop Card presents an opportunity for those looking to explore newfound savings without long-term commitment. Whether its testing the waters before diving into full membership or simply seeking gifting options for friends, understanding how these cards function empowers consumers striving for smarter shopping at Costco Without a Membership that savvy shoppers can employ to enjoy the value offered by this wholesale retail giant. Firstly, utilizing Costcos services without a membership is possible by taking advantage of their online store. Consumers can shop for select products on the website or app and gain access to competitive prices and exclusive offers. While an additional surcharge may apply for non-members in some instances, it still often leads to savings compared to traditional retail prices. Another useful strategy is accompanying a member who holds a membership and shop alongside them. This allows access to all the products and bulk savings available at Costco while building social connections. Additionally, it is beneficial for smart shoppers to consider one-time memberships. Some locations offer limited-time options or promotional deals that allow non-members temporary access for specific purchases or events. Lastly, exploring Costcos gift cards can be an effective method as they are redeemable without a membership. Purchasing these cards from members or online platforms grants shoppers the chance to enjoy everything from groceries to electronics. In conclusion, while a full membership has its advantages at Costco, thoughtful strategies exist for those looking to optimize their shopping experience without committing financially. By leveraging these tips and tricks, consumers can make informed decisions that align with their budgetary constraints while still enjoying excellent value. If you are not one to compromise food quality, but still seek out a good deal the odds are strong that you have a Costco membership. And, if you don't have a Costco membership, you should consider it (even if you need to learn how to shop at Costco without a membership from this article first). Just check out some of the comparative Costco prices that I highlighted previously in my best warehouse deals article. I wrote an entire article comparing Costcos Kirkland dog food & cat food to similar products from other brands, and found prices to be one-third to one-half the price of comparable brands, per pound. Costco gasoline (which cannot be bought without a membership unless you have a Costco Shop Card), is usually about 10% lower than most popular gas stations nearby, in my experience. These are just a few examples of the great value that Costco can provide. Costco prices can commonly be anywhere from 15-50% lower than prices found at Trader Joes, per volume with even larger savings in comparison to other grocery stores. Its not an apples to apples comparison to other grocery stores. Its not an apples to apple some great deals to be had. The Cost of a Costco MembershipTo get access to that kind of pricing theres a cost. A Costco membership fee prices increased by \$5 and \$10, respectively, for the first time in over 7 years in 2024. Those fees are not insignificant. And they just so happen to be how Costco makes a good share of its profits. In fact, Costcos net income comes from its members worldwide. Costcos markups on food pricing are razor thin, which benefits its members. The more food essentials you buy and eat from Costco, the more you benefit (just stay away from most of the other stuff). What if you don't want to see if a membership will be worth your while? It turns out there are a few under-the-radar ways to shop and buy from Costco, without a membership. Also, for those interested, I since have published a list of ways you can shop at Sams Club without a membership clubs). Is there a Free Costco Membership, Guest Pass, or Trial Membership, Clubs is no free Costco Membership, Shopping pass, day pass, trial pass, guest pass, there to encourage you to show it. If youre overly concerned about going in to Costco without a membership card, but know someone who is a member, Costcos guest policy states: Anyone with a card can bring up to two guests to the Warehouse during each visit. Keep in mind that purchasing items is exclusive to Costco members. Thats not entirely true. To buy most goods, you must be a member (with a few big exceptions that Ill cover) or have a member make the purchase on your behalf. Of course, you might not be comfortable asking for that and it could get old quick for the member. There is another way The Costco return policy states on membership fee refunds: Risk-Free 100% Satisfaction Guarantee. On Membership: We will cancel andrefund your membership fee, give it a trial run, and if you feel you are dissatisfied. So, you could pay your membership fee, give it a trial run, and if you feel you are not getting the value from it that youd like ask for a refund. You can do so at a Costco membership desk any time. But, what if you just want to get in the door and walk around to see what Costco has to offer, pricing, and all that good stuff but you dont know a member you are comfortable tagging along with? If you are asked for a Costco membership card, just inform the Costco team member at the door that you are there to buy one of the below items or services and they should let you in. Once through alcohol sales cannot legally be limited to only members in 14 states. Update: find out more on this policy in my Costco alcohol price list post. If youre at a Costco in one of the door greeters and they should let you in, per state law. Leniency around alcohol sales at Costco could be an unofficial national policy and not limited to the states listed above. I would not count on it, but its worth a shot. Having bought alcohol at Costco Pharmacy without a MembershipPrescription drug sales, like alcohol, are highly regulated. And Costco and other membership stores must offer equal access and pricing for prescriptions to all consumers, regardless of membership status. Simply let the door attendant know that you are a non-member who is picking up a prescription. That should get you in the door. In fact, Costco officially confirms this on their website: You don't need to be a Costco member to purchase Costco Pharmacy prescriptions at the Costco Pharmacy are very cheap. They also include pet prescriptions. Our dogs insulin was the cheapest at Costco, and we looked at over a dozen alternatives. Costco even has the cheapest flu shots). And, yes, you can buy immunizations at Costco without insurance plans must now cover flu shots). And, yes, you can buy immunizations at Costco without a membership. Note that immunization and prescription prices at the Costco Pharmacy may be lower for members than they are for non-members. I called Costco and they quoted me 2 different prices for a flu shot, one lower-priced quote for members and a higher price quote for members. Using Costco Optical Services without a membership. However, to buy glasses and/or contacts, you need a Costco membership, according to Costco membership, according to Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership, according to Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most Costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near most costco membership to see an independent doctor of optometry located in or near mo the Costco Food Court without a Membership (YMMV)Your mileage may vary on whether you can still purchase Costco food court items without a membership. Apparently the Costco food court items without a membership (YMMV)Your mileage may vary on whether you can still purchase Costco food court items without a membership. Apparently the Costco food court items without a membership (YMMV)Your mileage may vary on whether you can still purchase Costco food court items without a membership. purchase food from the food court without a membership (just a valid form of payment typically a Visa card, but there are other options). Most food courts are accessible without walking in the front door you can usually access them by walking through the exit, where you are not greeted. And if youre already in the front door for any of the variety of reasons that I highlight in this article, you can access the food court. The deals at the Costco restaurant are very good, but the options are typically limited to hot dogs/sausages, soda, pizza, sundaes, and frozen yogurt. Its not a health low prices on brand-name items is due in large part to our membership program, which is designed to reward members for their loyalty. This excludes Costco member-only items, which require a membership to purchase. The food offering on Costco.com is limited as well, compared to the warehouse. And, I can confirm that I have seen lower prices on a number of items in the warehouse, versus on Costco.com. It seems as though Costco by Non-Members to Shop Card (Gift Card) that they call the Costco Shop Card. With a Costco Shop at Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) that they call the Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) that they call the Costco Shop Card. With a Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) that they call the Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) the Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) that they call the Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) the Costco Shop Card (Gift Card) the Costco Shop Card, any non-member can show the card to get in the door and use it to make a purchase. You can also use a Costco Shop Card to buy gas at Costco cash card is that it can be purchased by a member only. Again, youll have to rely on a member, which makes you a bit of a moocher, and it raises costs for every member. And, once the card is depleted, youll have to get another fresh one from a member, or a reload by a member. The cards wouldnt hurt. I have heard (not confirmed), that the entire purchase does not have to be made with the card. In other words, if you only had \$10 left on a card and had \$150 worth of purchases, you could use the card for \$10 and then use another form of payment for the remainder. Buying Costco Items on Instacart Without a Costco Membership (aka Costco Same Day Delivery) Instacart users can purchase Costco items on Instacart without a Costco membership. Please be aware that Costco prices on Instacart are higher than they are in a Costco Warehouse (theyre going to get those membership fees one way or another!), so you may not save any money over the long-term if you buy more than a few items from Costco on Instacart. Costco has even started a joint website with Instacart on a Costco.com domain called Costco Same Day. The website is run by Instacart (the website states All orders are facilitated by Instacart on a Costco.com login. The pricing policy specifically states: Item prices are marked up higher than your local Costco warehouse. Instacart uses the markup to pay for their delivery services. I actually decided to run the numbers on Costco Same Day prices versus Costco warehouse prices. a 17% to 26% markup on Costco items on Instacart.com versus Costco warehouse prices. Costco Same Day and Instacart may save you some time versus going to the store, but it likely wont save you money. Valid Forms of Payment at Costco While you may get in the door and even be able to purchase items, note that Costco stores do not accept Discover, American Express, or MasterCard credit cards as payment. Accepted forms of payment include: cash, check, debit cards, the previously mentioned Costco Shop Cards, and Visa credit cards (including, but not limited to, the Costco With and Without a Membership Discussion: Ive run the numbers on if a Costco membership and upgrade is worth the cost. For me, the standard membership fee one year. But, Im curious to hear your thoughts. Is the Costco membership fee worth it to you? What are your favorite Costco shopping hacks? Have you found other ways to shop at Costco or stuff you can buy at Costco without a membership? What are your favorite items at Costco, which has announced it is giong to open a store in Eastern Avenue is the second largest retailer in the world and allows members to buy products and food in bulk and cheaper than most supermarkets. It is a revelation to some people are only to shop there if they've been a member of certain professions. But a few years ago the Liverpool Echo was looking into this they spotted a number of articles appearing online stating the wholesale brand is allowing those without a membership to shop there. So who is allowed to shop at Costco? The Echo spoke to Costco to clear up much of this confusion, and it's good news for those who don't have a membership as there are actually ways you can still take advantage of its savings. Whilst the rules for shopping at its stores remains on a member-only basis, online is no longer as strict. Stockers checking the stock at a Costco store A spokesperson for Costco membership is still a requirement to shop in any warehouse. However, you do not need a Costco membership is still a requirement to shop in any warehouse. delivery fee." Delivery fee for non-members is 5% +VAT of the final bill. Costco customers tend to be trade, often bar or shop owners who can benefit from huge savings when buying a large quantity of the same item. But there is also an area of the store which seems to cater for the traditional customer, where you can buy a cooked chicken, cakes and There are still ways to shop without a membership: online, with a gift card, or as a member's guest. The extra charges and hassle of workarounds can quickly add up to more than the annual fee, though. Costco's Netflix-style crackdown on unauthorized membership sharing over the past two years raises a perennial question about how to access the jumbo packs of toilet paper, tubs of salted caramels, 40-pound bags of dog food, and other staples without signing up for a membership. Access to the warehouse club and its bulk-price deals is primarily reserved for card-carrying shoppers with Gold Star, Executive, or Business memberships. These memberships start at \$65 a year and include access for two shoppers who live in the same household (or work for the same business). There are still ways to shop Costco's selection without a Costco members, non-members, non-members can shop through the site's Instacart-powered Same-Day option or Costco's partnership with Uber Eats. The same-day services offer about 2,000 fresh, frozen, grocery, and household items for delivery. The best prices on those platforms are reserved for members only, though. Uber says members will pay 15% to 20% less than non-members. On Instacart, non-members may be assessed a 5% surcharge on some orders. Beyond the fees, pricing online is generally higher than at the warehouse. Costco is upfront about that. Its pricing policy states: "Item prices are marked up higher than your local Costco warehouse. Instacart uses the markup to pay for their delivery service." A 2022 analysis from Insider's Reviews team found that thebest prices on Costco items are found in person. Business Insider also compared online and in-store pricing for a basket of commonly purchased items and found that this is still largely true. For example, on June 18, a 30-roll pack of toilet paper cost \$20.99 in the warehouse. On Instacart, the same pack costs \$24.56 for members and \$25.79 for non-members. A pack of toilet paper costs \$3.57 more online than in the warehouse. The subtotal pictured is pricing as-listed, prior to the 5% surcharge for non-members. Dominick Reuter/Business Insider Other items in the basket included Costco's famous rotisserie chicken, salted caramels, eggs, dog food, bottled water, and coffee beans. The pre-tax total for the seven in warehouse items was \$98.43, compared to \$120.92 for non-members on Instacart. The difference of \$22.49 was made up of \$16.73 in higher pricing and a \$5.76 5% surcharge. The comparison does not include a driver tip or rush fee. The savings mean the \$65 Gold Star membership fee would pay for itself after three trips to a warehouse, and six trips would cover the cost of a \$130 Executive membership. For non-members, when you add the higher listing prices and surcharges, Costco's savings compared to other retailers like Walmart or Amazon might not be as substantial. Related stories 2. Use a Costco gift card, known as a Shop Card, which allows shoppers to access the warehouse to use the funds. The hitch with this approach is that Shop Cards are only available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco's Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco's Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members to purchase and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is available for members and have a minimum value of \$25. Costco Shop card is availa helping friends and family stock up on supplies. However, you might catch some pushback trying to buy \$200 more stuff than your gift card is loaded for It's an easy way to let someone explore the club on their own without the commitment of membership. If they do decide to sign up, the Shop Card funds can be put toward the annual fee.3. Visit the Costco warehouse as the guest of a member costco's policy allows member is a lively the member and the member and the member and the member and the member, not to mention coordinating schedules to make a trip to the warehouse and sort everything out on Venmo afterward. Bottom line: It probably makes sense to just pay the feeGiven the costs and complications of trying to avoid shelling out the \$65 membership fee, it may make more financial sense to just pay the charge, especially for shoppers who expect to make more than a couple of Costco trips a year. As BI's Reviews team found, and BI again confirmed, the prices of bulk-size items can add up quickly. Shaving a few percent off in fees means the breakeven point comes after a few trips. As the company puts it, "rest assured that the cost of membership can be recovered quickly thanks to massive price savings once you start shopping."Either way, the real kicker is even simpler: if you don't think the membership is worth it, you can get a refund. There are so many things I love about Costco. For starters, the \$1.50 hot dog deal and the famous rotisserie chicken. Plus the chance to buy a kayak and a case of avocados at the same time. But, alas, though my love of the warehouse runs deep, I gave up my membership many, many moons ago once I ceased owning a car. (Have you ever tried taking a case of toilet paper and a four-gallon bucket of mayonnaise on the bus?) Then I heard about a Costco gift card hack thats gone viral on TikTok. It supposedly allows anyone to shop at Costco, no membership required. While Costco membership certainly has its benefits, for someone like me that might only shop there once or twice a year, the Costco gift card hack promised to be a game changer. Would I leave Costco gift card hack promised to be a game changer with cheeseburgers and taquitos? Or would I leave Costco gift card hack promised to be a game changer. to this TikTok creator, the key to shopping at Costco members in any amount. vetted.ai/video/7245386117334256942In order to make the Costco members in any amount. vetted.ai/video/7245386117334256942In order to make the Costco members in any amount. to have them purchase a gift card for you online, which can be mailed to your door or sent via email. Another option is for them to purchase a physical gift card for you online, which can be mailed to your door or sent via email. Another option is for them to purchase a physical gift card for you online, which can be mailed to your door or sent via email. Another option is for them to purchase a physical gift card for you online, which can be mailed to your door or sent via email. in two different ways: online and in-store. For my first attempt, I asked my best friend/Costco member to provide me with her Costco.com login info so I could purchase the gift card myself, thus hopefully saving us from the awkward step of transferring cash. Hours after I placed my order, I received an email notification that my order had been cancelled due to incorrect payment and billing information. In order to purchase a Costco Shop Card online, it needs to be paid for with a card belonging to a Costco member. If you have a friend who doesnt mind the extra step, they can purchase a digital gift card on your behalf. Since my initial plan didnt work as well as Id hoped, my bestie and I went to Costco together. After we both loaded up our carts, she checked out first and tacked a \$25 gift card onto her order. Then she handed it to me so I could (hopefully) check out while she went to grab us hot dogs and churros. Even though my gift card was only for \$25, I still loaded up my cart with nearly \$200 of products, because that just the sort of thing that happens at Costco. When the cashier asked to see my membership card I showed her my gift card, bracing for possible rejection. Without a beat she waved her manager over, who cheerfully put a key into the register to help me complete my transaction. When I asked if I had made everyones lives needlessly complicated (I dont wanted) to be a menace!), they assured me there was nothing wrong or illegal about what I was doing. Costcos computer system simply requires a managers login info to process gift cards, and they dont mind helping one bit! After running my gift card through the register, I had a balance of close to \$140 to pay. And it was no problem! The only caveat is that when using gift cards, non-members must pay with either cash or debit cards, not credit. Once I was all paid up, I was good to go and free to enjoy my hot dog in peace. What to Know Before Testing It Yourself the Washington Post/Getty Images If youre going to try the Costco gift card hack yourself, heres what you need to know: Gift cards purchased online must be paid for by members. The value of your gift card does not matter as long as theres some money on it, youre good to shop! You can purchase as much stuff as you like at Costco regardless of your gift card balance. Any balance owed after you use your gift card must be paid with cash or debit card. Non-members are not allowed to reload their gift card. If you anticipate needing to make multiple trips to Costco, have your partner in crime purchase several gift cards for small amounts in one fell swoop. This way you only need to bother them once! We may earn a commission from links on this page. Credit: ZikG / Shutterstock Attention bargain hunters and bulk-buying enthusiasts: Costco seems to be tightening its membership policies. In an update to its website, the company indicated that in the coming months, shoppers will be required to physically scan their cards at the store's entrance and match with the photo that pops up for that card's account. In other words: Gone are the days of borrowing a member's card to check out without buying your own membership. Still, don't bid farewell to bulk buying just yet: There a few more ways to shop the store without committing to an annual membership the price of which will increase by \$5 (to \$65) on September 1. Consider these "creative" solutions that will keep you in the Costco loop, even as they crack down on nonmember shopping. Get a gift cardThe official Costco policy states that anyone can shop at warehouse locations if they present a "Shop Card," also known as a gift card the catch: These cards can be purchased by members, and using a debit or credit card that matches the Costco account name. That means in order to make use of this loophole, you'll need a buddy with a membership who is willing to buy a gift card for you. Don't worry about getting caught using this workaround methodit's perfectly allowed by Costco's policies. According to this Costco customer service FAQs page, "Non-members as well as members may use Costco Shop Cards to shop at any Costco location in the U.S." Once you're in the door, you can use a \$25 gift card to get in the door, and then spend as much as you want. Go with a friendIf the gift card method is too much hassle for you, there are still other ways to shop at Costco as a non-member, the simplest of which is to tag along with your card-carrying Costco buddy, who will be able to get you in the door as a guest. (You might even offer to treat them to a post-shopping snack at the food court as a thank-you.) Shop online (for a fee)Although it's not quite the same as strolling the aisles and buying in bulk, don't forget about the digital realm. Costco.com offers many items for sale to non-members, often with just a small surcharge. It's a great way to snag those Costco-exclusive deals without setting foot in the store. You don't need to be a member to use the pharmacy or Costco OpticalDid you know that Costco's pharmacy, often with just a small surcharge. It's a great way to snag those Costco-exclusive deals without setting foot in the store. You don't need to be a member to use the pharmacy or Costco OpticalDid you know that Costco's pharmacy, often with just a small surcharge. It's a great way to snag those Costco-exclusive deals without setting foot in the store. You don't need to be a member to use the pharmacy or Costco OpticalDid you know that Costco's pharmacy, often with just a small surcharge. It's a great way to snag those Costco-exclusive deals without setting foot in the store. You don't need to be a member to use the pharmacy or Costco OpticalDid you know that Costco Opt optical department, and food court are open to everyone? That's rightyou can still enjoy those famous \$1.50 hot dog and soda combos without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can buy a Costco gift card without a membership card. 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Yes, you absolutely can be a cost of the card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can be a cost of the card without a membership card. Yes, you absolutely can be a cost of the card into the nuances, expose the insider tips, and equip you with everything you need to know about navigating the costco Shop Card is your official key (albeit temporary) to unlocking the warehouse wonderland without committing to a full-blown membership. Think of it as a trial run, a strategic maneuver, or simply a convenient workaround. Its a prepaid card that can be used to purchase almost anything at Costco, both in-store and online. The magic, of course, lies in how you acquire one without already being a member. Who Can Buy a Costco Shop Card? Heres the catch: only Costco members can purchase Costco Shop Cards. This is the chink in the armor, the hurdle you need to cleverly navigate. So, how do you overcome this limitation? The answer is simple: leverage your network. Getting a Costco Shop Card Through a MemberThe most straightforward approach is to ask friend, family member, or colleague who already possesses a Costco membership to purchase a Costco Shop Card for you. This requires a little social capital, a willingness to ask a favor, but its the cleanest and most reliable method. Explain your reasons, offer to reimburse them immediately, and ensure they understand the process. Its a win-win: they get to help someone out, and you get to experience the thrill of the Costco treasure hunt without the annual fee. How Much Can You Load on a Costco Shop Card? Costco Shop Card? Costco without overcommitting. When requesting a card from a member, consider your potential purchases and load accordingly. Remember, any unused balance remains on the card for future shopping trips. Strategic Uses for Your Costco Shop CardOnce youve secured your Costco Shop CardOnce youve secured your costco Shop CardOnce your potential purchases and load accordingly. Remember, any unused balance remains on the card for future shopping trips. Strategic Uses for Your Costco Shop CardOnce your potential purchases and load accordingly. temporary access. Exploring the Costco LandscapeUse your Costco Shop Card to explore the diverse offerings that Costco provides. Walk the aisles, marvel at the sheer volume, and discover the surprising treasures hidden within the warehouse racks. From groceries to electronics, clothing to furniture, Costco offers a wide range of products that can impressed with the deals and product selection, a membership might be a worthwhile investment. Purchasing Specific Big-Ticket ItemsPerhaps youre only interested in a specific big-ticket item, like a new appliance or a set of tires. A Costco Shop Card allows you to make that purchase without the long-term commitment of a membership. Compare prices with other retailers and determine if Costco offers the best deal. The savings on a single, high-value item might justify the effort of obtaining a Costco Shop Card. Online vs. In-Store RedemptionIn-store redemption is straightforward. Simply present your Costco Shop Card at the checkout, and the balance will be applied to your purchase exceeds the cards value, you can supplement with cash, debit card, or another form of payment accepted by Costco. Online Redemption Online redemption requires a few extra steps. Youll need to create a Costco.com account, even without a membership. During checkout, youll enter the Costco Shop Card number and PIN to apply the balance to your order. This process is generally seamless, but its worth familiarizing yourself with it beforehand to avoid any last-minute surprises. Keep in mind that some items may be exclusive to in-store purchase Limitations and Considerations While the Costco Shop Card is a valuable tool, its essential to be aware of its limitations. Reloading the Costco Shop Card is essentially useless. Therefore, plan your purchases carefully and ensure you utilize the full value of the card.Costco Shop Card ExpirationCostco Shop Cards do not expire. This provides flexibility and peace of mind, allowing you to use the card at your leisure without the pressure of a looming expiration Costco Shop Cards do not expire. This provides flexibility and peace of mind, allowing you to use the card at your leisure without the pressure of a looming expiration Costco Shop Cards do not expire. products or services, particularly those related to membership benefits, such as travel packages or certain insurance offerings. Always confirm with Costco Shop Card presents a viable pathway to access the world of Costco without a membership. While acquiring one requires a little strategic maneuvering, the benefits can be significant, allowing you to explore the warehouse, test the membership waters, or purchase strategically, you can unlock the Costco experience and reap the rewards. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)1. Can I use a Costco Shop Card at the gas station? Yes, you can use a Costco Shop Card at the gas stations. This is a particularly attractive option, as Costco Shop Card at the gas stations. This is a particularly attractive option, as Costco Shop Card at the gas stations. This is a particularly attractive option, as Costco Shop Card at the gas stations. Costco food court. Grab a hot dog and soda for an incredibly affordable meal while you shop.3. Can I use a Costco Shop Card to shop online at Costco.com even without a membership. You will need to create an account on their website in order to do so.4. What happens if my purchase is more than the value of the Costco Shop Card? You can pay the remaining balance with a Costco Shop Card. Youll receive a refund to the Costco Shop Card. Can I buy a Costco Shop Card. Youll receive a refund to the Costco Shop Card. Youll receive a refund to the Costco Shop Card. Youll receive a refund to the Costco Shop Card. You can pay the remaining balance with a Costco Shop Car Shop Card with cash? If you are a Costco member, you can buy a Costco Shop Card with cash. If you are not a member, you will need to find a member to buy the card for you with their form of payment. 7. Are there any restrictions on what I can buy with a Costco Shop Card? Most items are available, but some services, like travel packages, might require a membership. Its best to check with Costco Shop Card once the balance is depleted, the card is no longer valid.9. Can I use a Costco Shop Card internationally? Costco Shop Card once the balance is depleted, the card is no longer valid.9. Can I use a Costco Shop Card internationally? Costco Shop Card once the balance is used? No. Cards are typically only valid in the country of purchase. Check with Costco customer service for specific details regarding international usage. 10. How can I check the balance of my Costco Shop Card at any Costco Customer service. 11. Does a Costco Shop Card at any Costco Shop Card. expire?No, Costco Shop Cards do not expire. This provides flexibility in using the card at your convenience.12. Can I use multiple Costco Shop Cards for a single purchase, both in-store and online.

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