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31 MILLION BRITS^[1] SWITCH TO SUPERMARKET BRANDS

- **Almost three out of four (73%) thrifty Brits now opt for supermarket own labels, a figure that has tripled from just 25% in August 2008^[2]**
- **74%^[1] of shoppers now regularly use money off coupons on their weekly trolley dash, compared with only 26% last year^[1]**
- **One in five (20%)^[1] consumers have upped their supermarket savviness by comparing prices online before shopping, this was just 6% in August 2008**
- **15% avoid the temptation of the store altogether by shopping online, up from just 5% last year**
- **It's a good life for 8 million (19%) consumers as they grow their own fruit and vegetables, up by 11% since last Autumn**
- **Price increases are stabilising but 45% of consumers are still finding food is much more expensive than last year and are forced to adopt their own saving tactics**

As food price increases start to slow down, it's not just the supermarkets that are busy battling the pricing war. New research from uSwitch.com reveals that 31 million (73%) shoppers are taking matters into their own hands by opting for supermarket own brand labels in a bid to save money on the weekly shop. This figure has tripled since August 2008 when just a quarter (25%)^[2] of shoppers were ditching premium labels to lighten the financial load of the weekly trolley dash.

Much of this increase can be attributed to supermarkets expanding their own brand products in a bid to stop consumers switching to cheaper chains. This includes the launch of the Waitrose 'Essentials' own label range, Tesco's 'Discounter' range and Sainsbury's 'switch and save campaign' which calculates own brand savings. Not only has this activity secured repeat visits from existing customers, according to the recent TNS Worldpanel report it has also slowed the rapid growth of overseas competitors such as Aldi, Iceland and Lidl over the past few months.

Overall, this research has revealed that nine out of ten (90%^[1]) UK adults now use recession-busting shopping strategies when they do the weekly shop. Money off vouchers have also

reached the top of the shopping list with the number of frugal consumers' regularly using these has also shot up to 74%^[1], compared with 26%^[2] last year. In addition, a fifth of shoppers (20%)^[1] now compare prices online before taking a trip down the aisles, this has more than tripled from just 6% in August 2008.

When it comes to shopping online 6.4 million consumers now claim to avoid the hustle bustle of their local supermarket by carrying out their weekly food shop online. Again, this has tripled from just 5% of consumers in August 2008. In fact, this is becoming so popular with consumers, industry commentators predict that the value of online food sales could hit £8 billion by 2011^[3].

These recessionary cut backs could also have positive lifestyle implications for many savvy shoppers as they revert to the good life. Almost a fifth of consumers have now taken to growing their own fruit and vegetables, up from just 8% in August 2008. This has created a waiting list for allotments across the country amongst those who do not have the option at home. Just this week, Tesco has applied for planning permission to create allotments for rent at its Dobbies Garden Centre - they also plan to sell allotment starter kits.

As a result of 'pinching the pennies' becoming very much the new 'splashing the cash', figures suggest supermarkets may turn out to be one of the few winners in the recession. For example, Morrisons has just surprised the market with an unscheduled trading update indicating full year profits would be £70 million^[4] ahead of expectations. Share prices in Sainsbury's and Tesco have also experienced a rise.

Rumina Hassam, personal finance expert at uSwitch.com, says: "In the face of uncertain economic forecasts, continued volatility in the housing market, and worrying increases in national unemployment, Brits are making savvy cutbacks to their fundamental spending routine to beat the recession at its own game.

"The number of Brits making basic changes to their weekly food shopping patterns has increased dramatically since last year, as the effects of the recession continue to amplify. However, despite the economic outlook remaining uncertain, consumers may find they have the last laugh – as the lessons learnt from the schooling in savviness they are currently experiencing as a result of the recession will remain vital, even long after the economy recovers.

“However, taking on extra hours is not the only way to bolster your income. A simple review of your loans, credit cards, current accounts, energy, insurance and broadband could save almost £1,312 a year – which could be used to pay off more pressing bills.”

Rumina’s 10 thrifty trolley tips:

1. Switch to a credit card from a supermarket. You can earn extra loyalty points and often get 0% on purchases in store for a period of time.
2. Tesco credit card: Make purchases from a range of selected items at Tesco Direct using your Tesco Credit Card, interest free, for a fixed number of months. 5 points for every £4 you spend at Tesco or Tesco.com and 1 point for every £4 you spend elsewhere.
3. Sainsbury’s credit card: Earn 4 points per £1 spent when using card in conjunction with Nectar card in Sainsbury’s store, 2 points per £1 when only using card. Earn 1 point per £5 spent when making any other purchase. Enjoy 0% for the first 12 months on Sainsbury’s shopping.
4. Asda credit card: Quadruple points are earned for the first 3 months and every December when you shop at Asda. Double points are earned everywhere else you use your card for the first 3 months and each and every time you shop at Asda. And you’ll earn single points every time you use your card outside of Asda. Also a 5% discount at ASDA Living stores.
5. Always use your reward/loyalty cards such as Tescos, which allow you to collect points while you shop.
6. Humble pie never tasted so good - switch down a brand and you could save 15% off a family shop over year, potentially saving £800^[5].
7. The late bird gets the worm - switch to shopping at night and you’ll be much more likely to bag a bargain as supermarkets make big reductions on items near their sell-by dates. Generally these reductions start at 7pm.
8. **Don’t shop while hungry.** Eat before you leave home so you won’t be as tempted to buy more than you need.
9. **Shop with a list.** Allow yourself to buy off-list items only if they’re unadvertised specials at prices too low to pass up.
10. **Cook more from scratch.** Pre-packaged items save time, but that convenience comes at a price.

ENDS

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Note to editors

1. All research carried out with the uSwitch.com consumer opinion panel, Spring 2009 amongst a sample of 9,931 UK adults. All figures based on 47,788,000 UK adults according to the ONS.

		Apr-09	Aug-08
Compare prices online before shopping	20%	8,471,136	6%
Shop online instead of going to the supermarket	15%	6,417,528	5%
Buy supermarket own brands instead of premium labels	73%	31,103,617	25%
Shop at local shops instead of going to the supermarket	17%	7,102,064	6%
No longer buy luxuries or treats	53%	22,632,481	19%
Use money off coupons	74%	31,488,669	26%
No longer buy ready meals	30%	12,877,839	10%
Grow your own vegetables / salad/ fruit	19%	8,043,301	8%

2. Research carried out with uSwitch.com consumer opinion panel between 27th August to 3rd September 2008 – sample 2,427 adults.
3. Guardian.co.uk, Online grocery shopping, 13 July 2009.
4. Telegraph.co.uk, Morrisons exceeds expectations with surprise sales update, 21/7/09.
5. MoneySavingExpert.com.

About us:

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