

The Time Use Institute

Grocery Shopping: Who, Where and When

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Who Does the Grocery Shopping, and When Do They Do It?

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On a typical day, 32 million American adults shop at a grocery store – one out of every seven adults nationwide. A new survey provides a wealth of fresh information on the characteristics of these shoppers and of their trips to the store.

The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) asks a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults how they spend their time – minute by minute – over a 24-hour period. Of the 511 detailed activities recorded, one is “grocery shopping.” The estimates presented here are from the Time Use Institute, and most are based on the 38,229 adults responding to the ATUS during 2005, 2006, and 2007. More information on the ATUS is given in the box at the end.

Who Does the Grocery Shopping?

Compared with the overall U.S. adult population, grocery shoppers are a little older and much more likely to be female, as shown in the table on the next page. Women account for nearly two-thirds of all grocery shoppers. On a typical day 17 percent of all women go grocery shopping, compared with only 10 percent of men.

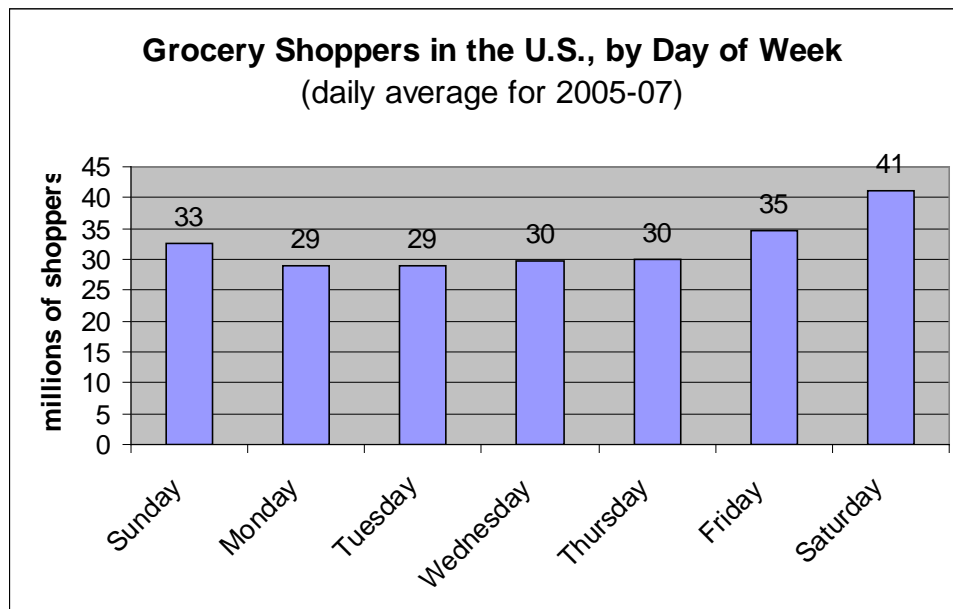
But in other respects – income, race and ethnicity, and even in weight -- grocery shoppers closely resemble the general population.

Grocery Shoppers: Who Are They?

	Grocery Shoppers	All U.S. Adults
Average Age	47	44
% Female	64%	52%
Median Family Income	\$50,525	\$50,395
% Hispanic/Latino	13%	13%
% African American	10%	12%
Average Weight		
men	192 lbs	192 lbs
women	155 lbs	155 lbs

When Do Grocery Shoppers Shop?

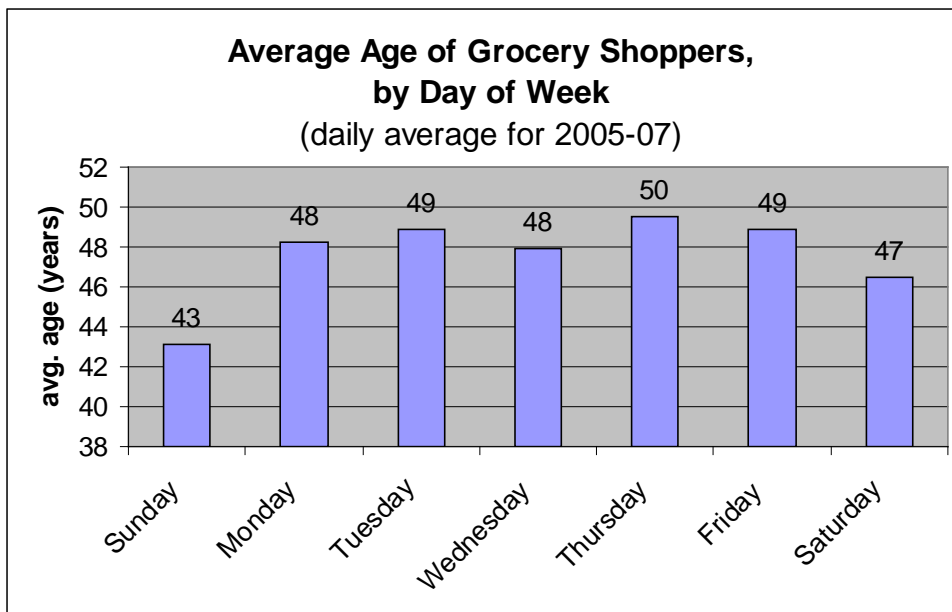
It will be no surprise to grocery store managers to see national documentation that Saturday is the busiest shopping day of the week, averaging 41 million shoppers. The next busiest days are Friday and Sunday, with Mondays and Tuesdays the least busy, averaging 29 million shoppers.



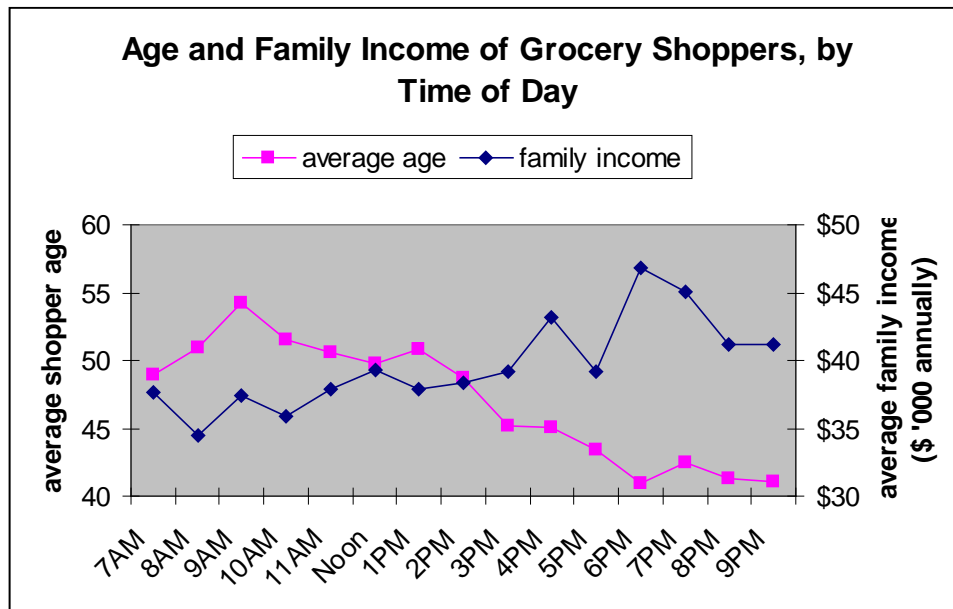
Men, more than women, do their grocery shopping on weekends. Thirty-seven percent of all shopping trips by men come on Saturday or Sunday, compared with only 31 percent of the trips by women.



Shoppers on Sundays are noticeably younger than those on other days of the week. Sunday shoppers average only 43 years, way below the average age of 49 of Thursday shoppers.

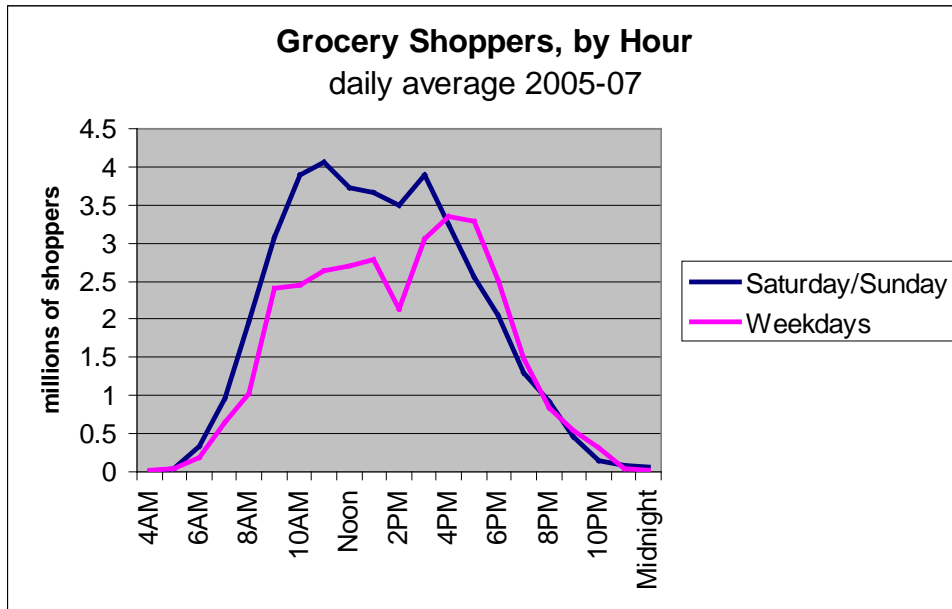


The profile of grocery shoppers also evolves over the course of the day. From mid-morning into the evening, the average age of shoppers declines, while their incomes rise. The average income of customers in stores is highest between 6PM and 8PM.



Peak Shopping Times During the Day

On weekdays, the busiest time at grocery stores is late afternoon. More shoppers arrive at the store between 4PM and 5PM than during any other hour of the day. On weekends, however, people start their errands earlier, with arrivals at grocery stores peaking between 11AM and noon but remaining elevated from mid-morning until late afternoon. On weekends, half of all grocery shopping trips begin before 12:30PM, whereas on weekdays half the shoppers have not arrived until 1:37PM.

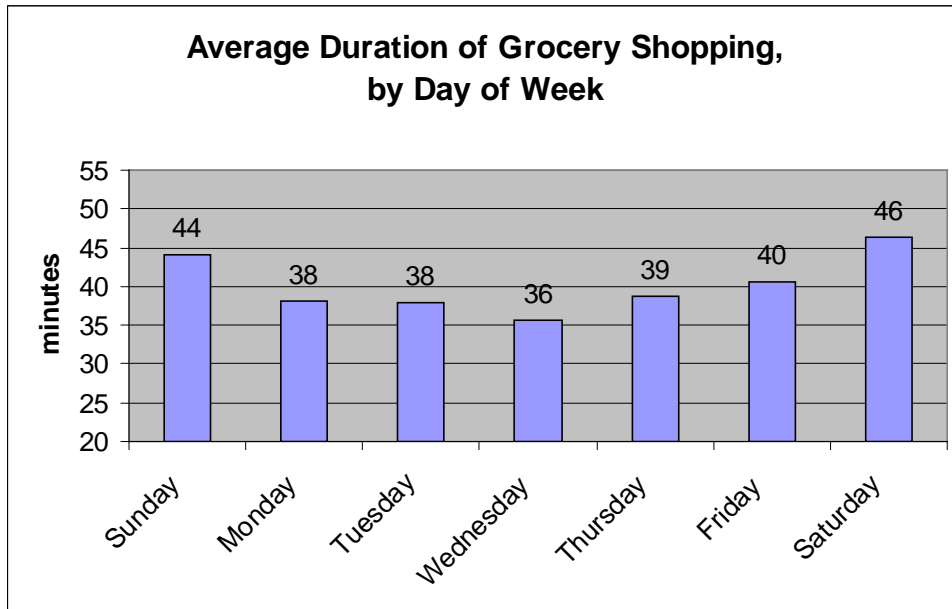


Who Spends the Longest in Grocery Stores?

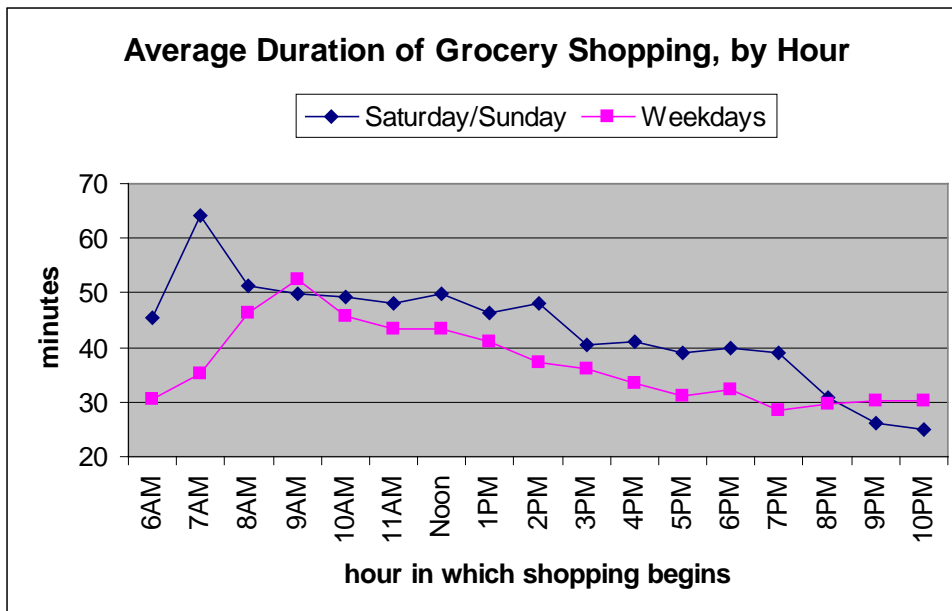
The average time spent grocery shopping – not including time spent getting to and from the store – is 41 minutes. Women spend a bit more time in the store than do men, and younger adults and those with lower income also spend longer than others, although the differences across these market segments are not great.

Average Duration of Grocery Shopping		
	<u>Avg. Minutes Shopping</u>	
<u>Sex</u>	men	39
	women	42
<u>Age</u>	<30	43
	30-54	40
	55+	40
<u>Household Income</u>	<\$50K	43
	\$50K+	39

Not only are Saturday and Sunday the days with the most grocery shoppers, they are also the days when shoppers spend the most time in the store. The average shopping duration on weekends is 45 minutes compared with only 38 minutes on weekdays.

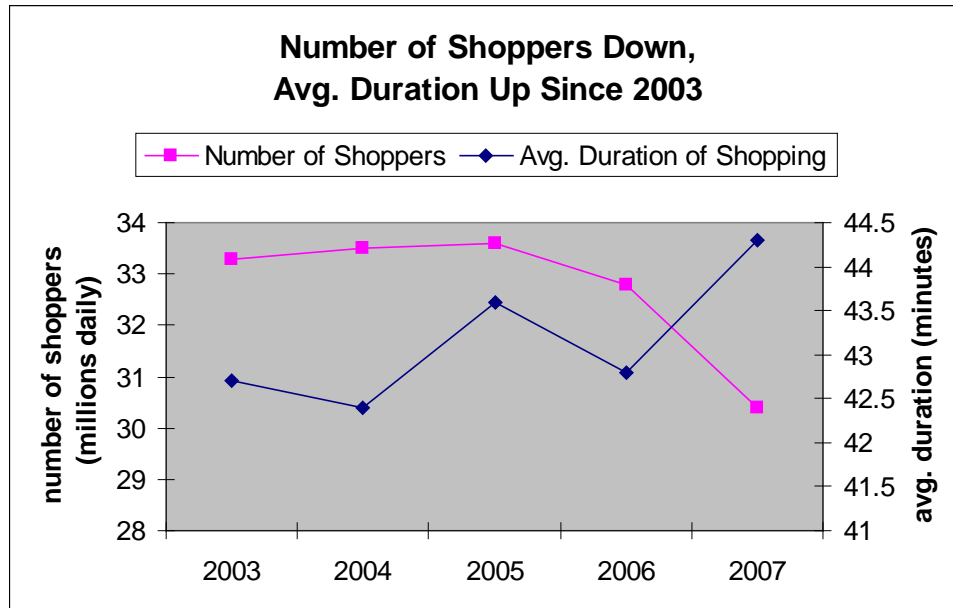


On both weekdays and on the weekend, the longest shopping trips occur in the morning.



Fewer Trips to the Store, but More Time Spent There

Between 2003 and 2007, consumers appear to have reduced the frequency of their trips to the grocery store, but they are spending longer while there. The yearly figures are based on smaller samples and bounce around some. Nonetheless, the number of daily grocery shoppers fell from an estimated 33.3 million in 2003 to 30.4 million in 2007, while the average time spent shopping increased from 42 minutes and 42 seconds to 44 minutes and 18 seconds.



In Conclusion ...

The estimates presented here merely scratch the surface of the insights into consumer behavior available from the American Time Use Survey, the leading source of information on time use in the United States. The Time Use Institute was founded to promote business applications of the ATUS. More information on the Time Use Institute is available at www.timeuseinstitute.org. Its director, Jack Goodman, can be reached at jackgoodman@timeuseinstitute.org.

About the Data

Statistics presented in this report are estimates from the Time Use Institute derived from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS). Fielded annually beginning in 2003, the ATUS collects detailed information on time use over a 24-hour period from a national sample of U.S. adults age 15 and over. The survey is representative of all regions of the country, days of the week, and seasons of the year.

Most of the estimates presented in this report are from the combined 38,229 survey respondents from 2005, 2006, and 2007. Responses from these years are pooled to increase the sample size and the stability of the estimates. Of these respondents, 5,970 reported grocery shopping on the survey day. The American Time Use Survey is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and fielded by the U.S. Census Bureau. More information is available at www.bls.gov/tus