

A New Bedford Market Basket Review



by Ivey
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The new Market Basket grocery store opened up in New Bedford on Coggeshall Street a few weeks ago, a much anticipated addition to the once-blighted Fairhaven Mills area. Easily accessible from the highway and Route 18, this grocery store will be a great anchor for more shops and businesses to come in what is now called Riverside Landing.

I have to admit, I wasn't a fan of the Market Basket at first and here's why: IT WAS PACKED. We're not talking Panera Bread-at-lunch packed. I'm talking the Mall at Christmas packed. I went a few days after the grand opening to check the place out and I'm glad I only had to pick up a few things because it seemed like the entire population of the North End was in the store with me. Over the weeks I've given Market Basket a few more opportunities to impress me and to my surprise, it has... even though its still packed.



I'm a list shopper; I go to the store with a clear vision of what I'm going to leave the store with. This lets me stay within my budget and keeps me from buying everything in the bakery section. Market Basket makes list shopping hard. As you walk into the store, you're greeted by friendly

associates at the door and then about ten feet into the store, you're greeted again by more associates telling you about all the great two-for-one deals. Horizontal rows of sale items block the main aisles, tempting you to buy things you didn't know you needed until now. For me I realized I couldn't pass up Swiss Miss Hot Cocoa for 99 cents.

After I picked up some Swiss Miss I headed to the back of the store for some lunch meat. The deli counter is larger than most other grocery stores in the area, a theme I found again at the seafood section and the bakery. I tried some of the "off-brand" meat that was on sale and it was on par with the top brands I'm used to buying at the other stores for double the price.

A little farther down the back of the store is the seafood section, my favorite stop on the weekly grocery store outing. After finally being able to push through the throng of people to the counter, Market Basket didn't let me down. Their offerings of local and imported fish and shellfish was impressive. Shiny cod, hot pink salmon, clear eyed trout, bagged mussels, steamers, and oysters were all clearly marked with flags from their country of origin. Also, they have ready-made selections for those who need a little help with dinner.

In addition to the great seafood counter, the aisles contain the usual grocery store offerings, as well as a very large ethnic food section. I may be mistaken but Goya must sponsor a whole aisle in this store. I've never seen so many Goya products stacked floor to ceiling. Here I ran into another list killer; exotic looking ethnic foods that might be fun to try out on the kids. There is also a great selection of Kosher foods, Asian, and Indian fare.

As wonderful as Market Basket is, I found that the things that make them great are also their biggest downfall. The associates that greet you at the door, and at the sale items,

also clog the aisles. I was picking up spaghetti sauce and I counted six employees stocking and "fronting" items, effectively creating roadblocks for shoppers. I found this to be true in almost every aisle I went down. Cartloads of boxes waiting to be stocked, price guns forgotten in the sausages, blue-smocked employees everywhere you turn to answer your questions and get in your way. I guess it's better than not being able to find anyone to help and maybe this comes with the newness of the store. Perhaps in a few months things will calm down at Market Basket and the employees will take to stocking the shelves before or after store hours like normal grocery stores.

As for avoiding the crowds of shoppers, I asked one of those nice associates I had tripped over earlier what the best time would be to come shopping. He told me, "8:45pm...right before we close."