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**Thank you,
Costco Connection team**

The Hidden Palace ★ Fighting fatigue ★ Hosting vegans, vegetarians

COSTCO **Connection**

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS

Local flavors

Regional suppliers bring unique items to Costco warehouses **22**

Mike & Jen's Cocoa Mix is a popular treat available in Minnesota Costco warehouses.

DECEMBER 2022



HOME ELECTRONICS

Supplier profile: Sonos

Tech Connection:

Gaming laptops

Buyers' picks

COSTCO Connection *December*

December 2022

Volume 37

Number 12

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audio components
make setting up
a quality sound
system easy—
no matter where
you are.

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NW/BA LA SD

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Regions and seasons

There is no time of the year when we enjoy good food and good company more than during the holidays. That's why this issue features some of our regional suppliers and the great items they bring to your table.

While Costco is known for its selection of brand-name products and the company's Kirkland Signature™ label, Costco warehouses feature a number of locally sourced items that are unique to that part of the country.

Costco has buyers based in each of its eight regions who are tasked with determining the best mix of products for their respective areas. This allows them to respond to regional tastes and preferences, and offer more of what members in those communities like.

Another advantage this offers is that buyers can seek out specialty products that set Costco apart from the competition and give members one more treasure hunt experience as they discover that terrific local beer or artisan cheese or special coffee that comes from their own area.

This is also a way for Costco to support local businesses and communities, so it's a win-win all around!

Meanwhile, be sure to check out the great items that Costco is bringing to all warehouses and Costco.com for you to enjoy this time of year. Whether you need appetizers for a party or ingredients for a family feast, we are working hard to deliver everything possible for all of your special moments with family and friends. And the good food just keeps coming! Be sure to try a recipe from this issue. Whether you're preparing a meal for vegans, vegetarians or omnivores, you'll find a recipe to meet your guests' preferences.

However you choose to celebrate the season, all of us on the Connection staff send wishes that your days will be merry and bright. ■



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Sandy Torrey is Senior Vice President, Corporate Membership, Marketing and Publisher, Costco Connection.

Coming next month Steps to better health—just in time for New Year's resolutions!

Follow us on





COURTESY OF LESLIE PARKER



From the magazine to your mouth

I made this [JUICI Apple Cinnamon Bread from the November 2022 Farm to Table section] today and it was so amazingly good! I really enjoyed this month's *Connection* recipes.

Leslie Parker, Corvallis, Montana

James Patterson cover story

Thank you for a great article about James Patterson ["Writing memories," November 2022]. I love his books and admire the way he collaborates with other authors. Looking forward to reading *Triple Cross*.

Valerie Golembiewski, Tucson, Arizona

Treating Type 2 diabetes

I loved your article about how to reduce or reverse Type 2 diabetes ["A path to thriving," November 2022]. Many think it can only be managed and don't know it can be reversed with proper diet and exercise. Going low-carb and staying away from sugar and high-carb foods is the key in lowering blood glucose.

Alan Peterson, Cypress, California

Discussing disabilities

Thank you for the "Build your business" article on helping customers with disabilities [November 2022].

The comment "70% of disabilities are not visible" leads to a caution: Never, ever, say anything like "Oh, you don't look disabled." You might think you're giving a

TELL US YOUR STORY!

Are you a Costco member and a collector? We want to hear your story for possible inclusion in an upcoming feature. Please send an email to tod.jones@costco.com that briefly describes your collection and include images. Please put "Collector" in the subject line.

compliment that someone is doing well, but you just don't know.

On the other hand, a simple "How may I help you?" is almost always taken well and appreciated.

Dick Dunn, Longmont, Colorado

Connection kudos

I'd have never believed that a "warehouse publication" would be so captivating, issue after issue! For many years now, I've so appreciated the vast variety of content provided in the *Connection*.

Kudos for helping us better understand some of the daily struggles encountered by others, and for the ideas to improve accessibility in the November issue's "Build your business" article. I do hope that many non-business members like myself took (or will take) a minute to peruse those great solutions.

J. Bossio, sent via email

Quick & Easy THE COSTCO WAY



Kirkland Signature Extra Fancy Mixed Nuts Charcuterie Board

Elevate your charcuterie board with baked mixed nuts plus your favorite cheese, fruit and crackers. View this recipe and others at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com). Search: *Quick & Easy* and click "Appetizers."



Digital edition

Access the magazine online each month at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com) (search "Costco Connection").

Talk to us

Do you have a comment about something you read in the *Connection*? Please send a note, including your full name, phone number and address, to:

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connection@costco.com

MAIL

Costco Connection
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Seattle, WA 98124-1088

ADVERTISING AND PRODUCTS

All products advertised are available in our warehouses unless otherwise noted. Ads will indicate whether a product is also available at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com) or only at [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com).

Products are scheduled to be available at the time of the *Connection*'s date of publication. If they are later than the publication month, they are noted as "early month" (1st to 10th), "mid-month" (11th to 21st) or "late month" (22nd to 31st). [Costco.com](https://www.costco.com) carries many of the products available at the warehouses, and offers thousands of additional items. Prices are usually not listed in the magazine because they have not been finalized at the time of printing and may vary from one part of the country to another due to shipping costs. We hope members know to check [Costco](https://www.costco.com) first when comparison shopping. To keep prices low, [Costco](https://www.costco.com) does not offer a telephone service allowing members to call in for prices or product availability.



A season to smile

Gift-giving traditions abound this month. When you walk into a Costco warehouse or browse Costco.com, you'll know you've come to the right place. From gifts for loved ones to food to share, we've got everything to make you smile this season and beyond.

Back story

THE HOLIDAYS ARE a traditional time for giving and exchanging gifts. The reasons are many. For some, it's a religious or historic tradition. For others, it's the magic of recapturing memories of youth and creating new memories

for the next generation. Wrapped up in those reasons are the love and affection we feel for each other, and the chance to express those emotions by surprising and delighting the people in our lives.

HAPPY HANUKKAH!



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The Jewish Festival of Lights

This year, Hanukkah begins at sundown on Sunday, December 18, and ends at nightfall on Monday, December 26. The festival is observed by lighting the candles of a menorah, singing Hanukkah songs, playing dreidel games and eating oil-based foods, such as latkes. Happy Hanukkah to all who celebrate!

GET KIDS READING

Books that matter

With titles like *A Tale of Two Kitties*, *Lord of the Fleas* and *Brawl of the Wild*, author and illustrator Dav Pilkey's *Dog Man* graphic novel series has kept 6- to 9-year-olds howling since the first book was released in 2016. Now they are available in an 11-book box set. Item 1693692 (Warehouses); 1703089 (Costco.com).



WEAR YOUR COSTCO LOVE

Comfy and cozy Costco PJs

'Tis the season for holiday pajamas with this women's Costco print novelty set by Jane and Bleecker. These breathable PJs feature hand-drawn images of favorite Costco items and are perfect for lounging around in this season and beyond. Sizes: XS–3X. Item 1609651. Costco.com only.



COSTCO AUTO PROGRAM

Exclusive savings event for Costco members

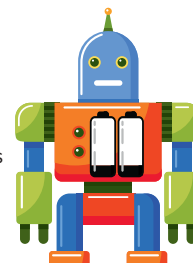
Exclusive savings on popular vehicles from Chevrolet and Volvo are available for Costco members. If you purchase or lease an eligible model, you can combine:

- A Costco-member-only incentive
- Current manufacturer incentives for which you qualify

Find a vehicle at CostcoAuto.com/save or call 1-800-755-2519. This promotion ends January 3, 2023.



Last year, Costco sold enough AA and AAA batteries in the U.S. to power almost 400 million toys.



SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

National Safe Toys and Gifts Month

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (cpsc.gov) wants to help keep you and your family out of harm's way as you celebrate this holiday season. Cpsc.gov offers alerts and information on everything from balloons to small toy parts and more.

LEFT: © GRGROUP / STOCK.ADOBE.COM; ABOVE: © CHIZHOUAO / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

EASY APPETIZERS

Goat Cheese Stars with Pesto and Sun-Blushed Tomatoes

These can be made in a flash and they will disappear equally fast! You can try many different fillings, but these are particularly colorful and festive.

Flour, for the work surface
¾ lb puff pastry, thawed according to package instructions if frozen
3.5 oz fresh goat cheese
¼ cup basil pesto
¼ cup sun-blushed (semi-dried) tomatoes in olive oil, drained and finely diced
Fresh basil sprigs, for garnish

On a lightly floured work surface, unroll the sheet of pastry. Using a 2¾-inch star-shaped cookie cutter, cut out 24 stars. Carefully transfer each star to a cup in a mini-muffin pan, pressing it gently against the bottom and extending the points up the sides to form a tartlet shell. Spoon a generous ½ tsp of the cheese onto the bottom of each tartlet shell. Chill for 20 minutes. While the pastry is chilling, preheat the oven to 400 F.

Bake the pastry until golden and crisp, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and spoon about 1 tsp pesto into 12 of the pastry shells, then divide the tomatoes evenly among the remaining shells. Arrange on a platter, scatter the basil around the stars and serve immediately. Makes 24 stars.

Recipe courtesy of Christmas at the Palace: A Cookbook by Carolyn Robb (Weldon Owen, 2022; not available at Costco)



JOHN KERNICK



SEASON OF SKIN CARE

Perricone MD 7 Days of Beautiful You

Give the gift of skin care this holiday season with Perricone MD's 7 Days of Beautiful You. This skin care set features five full-size and three deluxe-size bestselling face and eye products to help nourish, smooth and moisturize skin. Item 1695959. Costco.com only.



COVER
STORY

Regional appeal



Did you know that not all Costco warehouses carry the same products? In fact, each offers a number of locally sourced regional items. The following pages provide a snapshot of some of the regional suppliers that Costco buyers work with in order to give every shopping experience the treasure hunt quality that members know and love.

by Katie Coleman, Will Fifield, Christina Guerrero, Dan Jones



Nancy Anne Volin
and her pampered
pet, Danny Boy.

T

he small businesses highlighted here—one for each of Costco’s eight U.S. regions—showcase the diversity of our members’ tastes and demographics across the country. What all of these regional suppliers (and Costco) have in common is the desire to support their communities and make products that appeal to our members.

—Katie Coleman

PAMPERED PETS USA

Location San Diego, California

Products Peanut Butter Dog Treats (Item 1689294)

Availability Select Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Southern California warehouses

Nancy Anne Volin, president and founder of Pampered Pets USA, baked her first batch of homemade dog treats nearly 30 years ago—a simple oatmeal-based biscuit with a soft, light, airy texture. She says, “I have chef training, so I came up with a soft, human-grade treat that my family dog would enjoy.”

The feedback from friends and fellow pet lovers was so great that a local pet store started carrying them. In 2008, Volin reached out to Costco and asked about becoming a vendor. “They recommended that I do a [Special Events] roadshow to see how my products sell,” she explains. “The member response was fantastic, and we sold out!”

While Volin would agree that tasty treats are vital to her business, so is their environmental impact. She notes, “We source our packaging from recycled plastic bottles. Our treats are made in an American bakery that’s entirely solar-powered.”

“I love selling at Costco,” Volin says. “Members and their pets love our items, so it’s a wonderful match.”—KC

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

ALMA DE CATTLEYA WINES

Location Rohnert Park, California

Products Alma de Cattleya Sauvignon Blanc 2021 (Item 1176587)

Availability Select Northern California warehouses

Alma de Cattleya is a labor of love for company owner Bibiana González Rave.

Having studied viticulture and oenology in Cognac, France, González Rave worked in six French regions before coming to California's wine country in 2004. "I got fascinated by Sonoma County and knew this is where I wanted to start my own label," she says.

Launched in 2011 with production of a single barrel, González Rave's small business now sells more than 560 barrels (about 168,000 bottles) per year through three different company labels. The Alma de Cattleya label that is now sold in Costco warehouses in California's Bay Area caught the attention of Costco wine buyer Mark Kalkbrenner in 2018.

"Even though my production is small, I really think it's a testament of [Costco's] commitment to bringing in extraordinary wines at a great price point," González Rave says.—*KC*

CHARLESTON COFFEE ROASTERS

Location Charleston, South Carolina

Products Organic Signature Blend whole-bean coffee, 2-pound bag (Item 536961)

Availability Alabama, North and South Carolina, select Florida warehouses, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee

Since Lowell Grosse launched Charleston Coffee Roasters in 2005, the company has slow-roasted carefully selected beans to create what he says is a coffee experience as rich in flavor and character as the city of Charleston itself. "We are passionate about the quality and consistency of every roast so you get a perfect cup of coffee, every time," says Grosse, whose company became a Costco supplier in 2011.

Grosse learned the coffee business through a 17-year career as an importer, traveling to coffee-producing countries, meeting coffee



COURTESY OF CHARLESTON COFFEE ROASTERS

farmers and discovering the intricacies that go into growing quality coffee beans.

His 32-employee company is committed to partnering with farmers who take care of Earth and look after their people. "We only source beans from farmers who practice sustainable farming and pay a fair wage to their workers," Grosse says. The company is also lead sponsor for the Nutritional Care Program at the South Carolina Aquarium, which is located in Charleston and home to 200 sea turtles that are well cared for through local donations to its program.—*Will Fjfield*

Clockwise from top: Bibiana González Rave at her wine facility; Cacique Ranchero Queso Fresco; Dean Packingham and his kids, Mike and Jen; Lowell Grosse at a Costco opening.



CHRIS ANDRE



COURTESY OF CACIQUE FOODS, LLC

CACIQUE FOODS

Location City of Industry, California

Products Ranchero Queso Fresco (Item 1333088)

Availability Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, Southern California, Washington

Gilbert de Cardenas immigrated to the U.S. from Cuba with his wife, Jennie, and children in 1971. A cheesemaker, Gilbert began producing *queso fresco*, which translates to “fresh cheese,” in 1973 and Cacique Foods was born.

His children grew up learning the family business, and his son Gil stepped into the role of CEO when Gilbert and Jennie retired in 2011.

Cacique’s Ranchero Queso Fresco is a mild, buttery cheese made from cow’s milk. “Because of the texture and the flavor, it is so easy to use and versatile,” Gil says. “You can crumble it over salad [or] tacos. It’s a great stuffing, like in enchiladas.”

Next year, Cacique Foods, a Costco supplier since 1992, will celebrate its 50th anniversary. “We’re thrilled that we’re getting to 50. We’re thrilled to [be a supplier for Costco], and we’re really thrilled about how many tables we’re currently being invited to,” says Gil. “Really, it’s the soul of our business.”—Christina Guerrero

MIKE & JEN’S COCOA MIX

Location Duluth, Minnesota

Products Mike & Jen’s Cocoa Mix, 40-ounce bag (Item 1556610)

Availability Minnesota, select Iowa warehouses

In 2012, while preparing hot cocoa for his daughter, Jen, Dean Packingham noticed that the ingredients list on the cocoa mix he had on hand was extensive, with many unfamiliar, complicated names. He had an epiphany: Packingham, who was a meteorologist at the time, was determined to make “the best cocoa mix in the world.”



COURTESY OF MIKE & JEN'S COCOA MIX

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



BELOW AND RIGHT: RYAN BONOS

With the help of his best friend, Amanda Cunningham, Packingham created a cocoa powder with five simple ingredients: whole-milk powder, pure cane sugar, confectioner's sugar, cocoa powder and sea salt.

Packingham began selling Mike & Jen's Cocoa Mix (named for his now-grown children) to the public via a food truck, then local shops. Shawney McMillan, an assistant general manager at the Duluth, Minnesota, Costco, discovered the drink at a coffee-house, and worked with Packingham and Cunningham to bring the cocoa to Costco in 2021. Mike & Jen's can now be found in 13 Costco warehouses.—*Dan Jones*

ROUTE 11 POTATO CHIPS

Location Mount Jackson, Virginia

Products Various potato chips, including Kettle Cooked Lightly Salted (Item 1453050) and a variety pack featuring Lightly Salted, Barbeque, Dill Pickle and Sour Cream & Chive (Item 1587477)

Availability Virginia and select Pennsylvania and Maryland warehouses

"We make a kettle chip that has a nice crunch, but that isn't tooth-breaking hard," says Sarah Cohen, owner of Route 11. "It's got to have the right crunch." Costco buyers who sampled the chips at a small deli near Sterling, Virginia, were impressed with that crunch and reached out to Cohen in 2010.

Route 11 potato chips are made in small batches, kettle-style and seasonally organic, with a variety of flavors.

The business began in 1992 as a two-person operation at a feed store in Middletown, Virginia. As Route 11 grew, Cohen and her business partner, Mike Connelly, invested in a new, state-of-the-art facility in Mount Jackson, Virginia, in 2008.

With just under 50 employees, the company is focused on being as waste-free as possible. Potato peelings and chip rejects provide feed for a local herd of cattle, while the factory's white membrane roof reflects summer heat to reduce energy use. The new facility is also 100% powered by renewable hydroelectricity. The result is a great chip, made responsibly.—*DJ*



"It's got to have the right crunch."

— SARAH COHEN
Owner of Route 11
Potato Chips



COURTESY OF KARBACH BREWING



Clockwise from far left: Amado Lopez seasons Route 11 chips; Frank Dulcich of Pacific Seafood; Karbach's brewery operations and this year's stocking stuffer.

PACIFIC SEAFOOD

Location Clackamas, Oregon

Products Wild Dungeness Crab Meat, 16-ounce tub (Item 30709); Fresh Wild Pacific Cold Water Shrimp, 2-pound container (seasonal, Item 60056)

Availability Washington and Oregon

In 1941, Frank Dulcich Sr. and his son, Dominic, opened Pacific Fish & Oyster, a fish shop and local distribution center in Portland, Oregon, which Dominic still operates. In 1985, Dominic's son, Frank, became CEO of the business, renamed Pacific Seafood. Frank saw the opportunities on the international side and the production side, and "we started growing the business from that point in time," Frank says.

Costco began carrying Pacific Seafood products in 1988. Their Dungeness crab, native to the West Coast, is steamed and shaken from the shell to retain the most flavor. The sweet-tasting shrimp are a

perfect ingredient for salads, chowders and shrimp cocktail, and are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, which verifies sustainable fishing processes.—CG

KARBACH BREWING

Location Houston, Texas

Products Karbach Brewing Stocking Stuffer (Item 1541601)

Availability Texas

Costco members in Texas can buy a fun stocking stuffer this season, but they'd better have very large stockings. The Houston-based Karbach Brewing Company's item at Costco is an 18-pack collection of craft beer—ale, IPA, lager, Irish red and a malt-based cocktail.

According to Texas regional buyer Cecil Lewis, Costco has been working with Karbach, which employs 200 locals, consistently for about six years. "We always look for local suppliers to work with and support," Lewis says.

Karch Bach Brewing was launched in 2011 by beer-industry veterans who wanted their brand to be welcoming to all. "We noticed that the craft beer space here in Texas was becoming a bit of a cool kids club, with its own lingo and not especially friendly to customers unfamiliar with the many beer styles and terms," says David Graham, Karbach's director of marketing. "We wanted more accessible space here, kind of a come-one, come-all kind of brewery."—WF





Hearing is believing

Sonos makes enjoying quality audio anywhere you go a reality

by WILL FIFIELD



Listening to music while I do the dishes after dinner, or enjoying a podcast while I mow the lawn, transforms household chores into a richer, more enjoyable time. Home audio company Sonos makes setting up a quality sound system throughout your home easy by combining resonant, clear speakers and sound-system components, such as amplifiers and turntables, with exceptionally flexible software. With Sonos portable speakers, you can extend the experience to beach outings, camping trips, outdoor chores and more.

Setting up a whole-home sound system that can play audio throughout your home may not sound like an ambitious mission today, but when Sonos launched in 2002,

it was a very expensive proposition that delivered hit-or-miss results.

Sonos founders John MacFarlane, Tom Cullen, Trung Mai and Craig Shelburne, a group of entrepreneurs who had worked together in a successful internet-based business before starting Sonos, foresaw that the internet was going to be the predominant source of music. They believed this presented an opportunity to revolutionize the whole-home audio concept.

"The mission from the very onset was making whole-home sound, which didn't work very well at the time, something that is easy to enjoy," says Nick Millington, Sonos' chief product officer.

“Every part of your life at home can be better if it’s accompanied by great sound and great music.”

— NICK MILLINGTON ★
Sonos’ chief product officer



Left and far right: Sonos Roam portable speaker (Item 1683300); Above: Sonos Beam soundbar (Item 1671991).

He says they also wanted to make it easier to set up and more affordable, so anyone could enjoy quality audio throughout their home. And, instead of being analog and device-dependent, they wanted their system to be digital and smart so it could have access to all the music people were beginning to enjoy through the internet.

The sound of music

“From the beginning, Sonos’ audio philosophy has been to reproduce the artist’s intent,” says Millington. “But making good-sounding speakers is kind of an art in and of itself.”

To get the quality of sound they were after, the company worked with accomplished recording engineers, including Giles Martin of Abbey Roads Studios. “His job is

to essentially listen to records that he’s made, play them on Sonos systems and then sit down with our engineers and tune the hardware and software so that it sounds exactly like what he heard in the studio,” Millington explains. He says that in a world in which so many speakers are trying to get your attention with lots of bass or shrill treble, purity is what makes Sonos stand out.

Many sources, one system

To provide a consistently rich experience, the speakers and software work together to transmit quality audio, whether you stream a podcast, play your favorite music from a smart device or spin tunes from your vinyl collection. You can set up a Sonos system to play the same audio, synchronized throughout your home, or to play different music in different rooms.

“The power of the Sonos products,” Millington says, “is really that it’s a software platform that integrates all of these different services. You might buy Sonos for the sound of the speakers, but what keeps it relevant, as the world of technology moves forward, is that it’s a platform for nearly any service.” He says he’s not aware of any other platform through which you can enjoy Spotify, Apple Music, Apple AirPlay, Bluetooth, Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa.

“Every part of your life at home can be better if it’s accompanied by great sound and great music, whether cooking in the kitchen, playing with the kids or doing your taxes,” Millington says. “Making this easier is what Sonos is laser-focused on.” ■



COMPANY INFO

Name Sonos

CEO Patrick Spence

Employees About 1,700

Headquarters
Santa Barbara, California

Items carried at Costco
Selected Sonos speakers and sound bars. Various item numbers. Warehouses/
Costco.com.

Quote about Costco
“Working with Costco has felt like a natural fit from the beginning. Costco and Sonos share a mutual core value of delivering the best possible experience for our customers. It’s at the center of each and every decision we make.”

—Rick Hulford,
vice president,
Sonos Americas

Mixed signals

Nick Millington, Sonos’ chief product officer, says Sonos has found that connecting music to speakers via Wi-Fi is the best solution for the

home but that Bluetooth is better at connecting when you’re away from your home system. “Connecting an audio source in the home where you typically have broadband connection to

the internet provides a much higher bandwidth connection, so it lets you enjoy more rooms of synchronized music and better audio quality, and it has a larger range,” Millington says.—WF



Let the games begin

Specs to look for in a gaming laptop

by MARC SALTZMAN



MSI GE76 Raider laptop, Item 1693074

COURTESY OF MSI



SEVAG SAGHERIAN

Marc Saltzman is a tech journalist and host of the *Tech It Out* podcast. He answers selected questions in this column and regrets that all questions can't be answered individually.

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COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find a selection of gaming laptops at Costco.com.



For many years, gaming laptops were extremely heavy machines notorious for overheating. Their battery life was measured in minutes rather than hours. How things have changed. Today's gaming laptops are thin, light and powerful, and they can run cool for many hours on a single charge.

The following guidelines can help you pick a great machine for yourself or a loved one this holiday season.

The power plant

The central processing unit (CPU), or processor, is the engine that drives your laptop's performance. As such, it's one of the most important considerations.

I suggest a model with an Intel Core i5 at a minimum; better yet is a Core i7, and even better than that is a Core i9. An AMD Ryzen R7 or R9 is also a strong CPU choice. With both Intel and AMD, the higher the CPU number, the more powerful it is.

The big picture

When it comes to rendering video game visuals, a powerful graphics processing unit

(GPU) is critical. Most games are GPU-dependent, and you can't upgrade these units in laptops. Therefore, it's wise to invest in a good one, such as an NVIDIA GeForce RTX (or GTX at a minimum) or an AMD Radeon RX, out of the gate. Doing so will ensure several years of play. As with CPUs, larger numbers in the GPU name denote better performance.

Short-term memory

Random-access memory (RAM), also called system memory, is a computer's short-term memory. RAM stores the info your laptop is actively using so that it can be accessed quickly. The more programs your system is running, the more memory you'll need. I recommend at least 12 or 16 gigabytes (GB) of RAM, but 32GB is even better. RAM can usually be upgraded in laptops, should you want to add more later.

Finally, also look for a gorgeous wide screen, fast Wi-Fi 6/6e wireless speeds and several ports along the side of the laptop. ■

Making memories

For long-term memory, I suggest a solid-state drive (SSD), as opposed to a hard-disk drive (HDD). SSDs are faster, smaller,

lighter, quieter and more durable, since there are no moving parts. Again, speed is especially important for gamers.

The more storage you have (think 1 terabyte instead

of 512GB), the more apps and files your PC can hold. This is especially important if you will want to install several popular game titles (or if you plan on doing some serious video editing).—MS



Buyers' picks

Product selections from
Costco's buying team



Shawn Kloke

Matt Holmes

Brandi Middleton

Apple Watch Ultra GPS + Cellular

This is the most rugged and capable Apple Watch to date, and it can run for up to 36 hours on a single charge. The 49-millimeter aerospace-grade titanium case is extremely strong and corrosion-resistant. A bigger and brighter Apple Watch display makes it easy to read in a variety of settings, and Night Mode provides better viewing in low-light situations. This watch is capable of so many functions, it would take several pages to describe its full potential. Item 1698422. Warehouses/Costco.com.—Shawn Kloke



Samsung Bespoke 4-Door Refrigerator

The future is now with this 29-cubic-foot French door refrigerator, which features the Family Hub™—a touch screen that lets you see inside your refrigerator, manage your family's calendars, stream music, see who's at the front door and much more. With customizable and changeable door panels that come in a variety of colors and finishes, create a look that fits your style. Other features include a dual ice maker with Ice Bites™ and a Beverage Center™ with water dispenser and an auto-fill pitcher. Item 1644532.

Costco.com only.
—Matt Holmes



AirPods Pro (Second Generation)

Enjoy amazing audio, with clear highs, deep bass and stunning clarity. The earbuds feature active noise cancellation and adaptive transparency mode, which blocks enough noise so you can listen to audio yet allows some external noise so you can be aware of your surroundings. Sweat- and water-resistant, they run for up to six hours with active noise cancellation and up to 30 hours with the MagSafe charging case on. Item 1611928. Warehouses/Costco.com.—Brandi Middleton

Fight fatigue

Changing what you put inside your body may help boost the energy you are able to put out

by SUJA NATARAJAN



COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco carries a wide variety of healthful foods, as well as vitamins, supplements and more, in Costco warehouses and at Costco.com.

Feeling sluggish? According to studies, 42% of Americans start feeling tired as early as noon. Medical conditions, stress, physical exertion and lifestyle factors may cause persistent exhaustion.

Turning to processed foods and energy drinks may provide a temporary burst of energy, but a crash often follows. Instead, a well-balanced diet can provide steady energy throughout the day.

Protein

According to the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, a daily breakfast, especially one rich in protein, provides sustained energy throughout the day.

Good protein sources include poultry, nuts, eggs, cheese and tofu. Andrea D'Ambrosio, a registered dietitian in Ontario, suggests eating protein-rich foods such as lean meat, fish, eggs, beans, legumes, and dairy or dairy alternatives.

Magnesium

Low magnesium levels can deplete energy levels. Magnesium can improve your sleep quality and help you feel more rested and energized.

Leafy green vegetables, beans, nuts, legumes and whole grains are high in magnesium. Since most people get enough magnesium naturally from foods, Virginia-based registered dietitian Kristin Gillespie suggests that individuals with conditions such as diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome or celiac disease consider discussing supplementation with their doctor.

Complex carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are one of the body's primary sources of energy. A mix of complex carbs, protein and healthy fats provides long-lasting energy. Consuming complex carbs with other macronutrients

may relieve symptoms or headaches caused by spiked blood sugar from simple carbohydrates, says Maryland-based registered dietitian, nutritionist and Costco member Sarah Schlichter.

Whole-grain items, like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain cereal and brown rice, are excellent sources of complex carbs. Avoid processed carbs such as white bread, white rice, snacks, sweets, added sugars and pastries, which quickly deplete energy.

B vitamins

Vitamin B₁₂ is crucial for making red blood cells, which deliver oxygen to all parts of your body. A B₁₂ deficiency can cause fatigue and weakness, says Boston-based Dr. William W. Li, physician, scientist and author.

Meat, poultry, fish and dairy products are good sources of vitamin B₁₂. Most healthy adults get adequate B₁₂ from their regular diet. However, vegetarians, vegans and older adults are at increased risk of vitamin B₁₂ deficiency and may want to consider a B₁₂ supplement.

Iron

Iron is an essential element in blood production. We need it to produce hemoglobin, the substance in red blood cells that enables them to carry oxygen. Low levels of iron could result in brain fog, dizziness and weakness.

Seafood, enriched grains, spinach, kidney beans, chickpeas, tofu, lentils and meat are excellent sources of iron. Pair iron-rich foods with vitamin C (think citrus, broccoli

or bell peppers) to enhance iron absorption, says New York-based registered dietitian nutritionist and Costco member Katrina Trisko—for example, lentils and red bell peppers, healthy greens and lemon juice, or oatmeal with blueberries.

CoQ10

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is an antioxidant that assists in generating energy in the cells. The body produces CoQ10, which is abundant in the heart, kidneys, liver and pancreas. Because CoQ10 levels fall with aging, taking CoQ10 supplements may help fight atherosclerosis, heart failure, angina, diabetes and Parkinson's disease, says Li.

Dietary sources of CoQ10 include organ meats, oily fish and whole grains.

Potassium

Potassium is one of the critical macro minerals (minerals required in relatively large quantities by the body) responsible for various functions, including energy production. Low potassium can cause muscle cramps, spasms and low energy levels, says Trisko.

Significant sources of potassium include potatoes, bananas, lentils, beans, milk, yogurt, tomatoes and spinach.

Good nutrition, hydration, sleep and exercise are beneficial approaches for sustained energy. See a doctor if your fatigue persists for two or more weeks and discuss it with them before taking a supplement. ■

Suja Natarajan is a writer based in Virginia.



Can coffee make you tired?

As a stimulant, caffeine boosts energy levels, but it can also make you feel tired. Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors from receiving adenosine (the chemical that regulates the sleep-wake cycle, particularly the initiation of sleep). However, it doesn't affect the production of adenosine molecules. When the caffeine wears off, the buildup of adenosine makes you tired. Furthermore, adding too much sugar to coffee spikes blood glucose levels, with crashes shortly after that, causing a drop in energy. Consume no more than 400 milligrams of caffeine (four or five cups of coffee) per day, and stay hydrated to avoid a caffeine crash.—SN

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Post-lunch slump

The post-lunch slump is a common experience. According to the National Sleep Foundation, the

circadian rhythm drops significantly between 2 and 5 p.m., resulting in a period of decreased alertness called the post-lunch dip effect. Digesting a heavy

lunch can worsen the effect. A brief nap, a brisk walk outside or eating a low-carb breakfast or lunch can help you fight the afternoon crash.—SN

Meatless memories

Entertain with thoughtful vegan and vegetarian recipes

by JANNISE JOHNSON



Mushroom Gravy

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find fruits, vegetables, meat substitutes, pasta, plant-based milks and other vegan ingredients in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery and at Costco.com.

The holidays bring friends and family together to share good times and delicious meals. Those with dietary restrictions, such as vegans and vegetarians, are often overlooked (especially when the star of the table is a turkey or ham) and left wondering what they can eat from holiday spreads or office potlucks. If you are hosting a holiday meal, don't be intimidated when you find out one of your guests has a different diet.

Enter the Veganuary organization, a global nonprofit started in the U.K. in 2014 to encourage people to abstain from meat and animal products for the month of January. According to Wendy Matthews,

U.S. director of Veganuary, hosting vegans and vegetarians doesn't have to be stressful.

"Veganism is often defined by what we don't eat: meat, fish, eggs and dairy, plus some of the animal ingredients that are hidden away in products, such as whey [from milk] and gelatin [from animal bones]," Matthews says. "But really, we should focus on all the great things that vegans do eat. Vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, nuts, pasta—there is a good chance that half the foods you already eat are vegan."

Creating labels for vegan and vegetarian dishes is helpful if you don't want the whole meal to be sans meat, dairy and eggs. Matthews explains that making a dish that's free from animal products is not as complex as

Types of diets

Check with guests on their particular diet. Vegans consume no animal products. The lacto-ovo vegetarian diet excludes

all meat, but includes eggs and dairy products. The ovo-vegetarian diet excludes all animal-based foods except eggs. The lacto-vegetarian diet excludes all meat and eggs, but

includes certain dairy products. The raw vegan diet consists of unprocessed raw plant-based foods. If you have a certain diet, politely inform the host or offer to bring a dish.—JJ

Mushroom Gravy

2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup shallot, finely chopped
16 oz cremini mushrooms, sliced
1½ tsp tamari
2 garlic cloves, minced
1½ Tbsp fresh thyme leaves
1½ tsp rosemary, chopped
¼ cup all-purpose flour
3 cups vegetable broth
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the shallot and cook until soft, about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the mushrooms; cook until soft, stirring occasionally, about 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in the tamari, garlic, thyme and rosemary. Sprinkle the flour over the mushrooms, then stir for 1 minute.

Add the broth and simmer until thickened, whisking often, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 8 servings.

some people would have you believe. The Vegan Society touts itself as the oldest vegan organization in the world. The organization's website (vegansociety.com) has several useful resources, including recipes. Just click the "Lifestyle" tab.

Veganuary.com also has ideas for substitutions and recipes for holiday favorites, such as vegan gravy and stuffed squash. Try mashed potatoes made with vegetable stock or an unsweetened plant-based milk, such as almond, soy or oat. That takes care of the side dishes, but what about the entree? Many vegan and vegetarian meat and cheese substitutes are easily accessible these days. If the host wants to try their culinary hand at making the main dish vegan, why not try a tofu turkey roast or a mushroom Wellington. Many conventional desserts can also be made for vegan guests, Matthews says.

"Did you know that many store-bought pie crusts are accidentally vegan?" she adds. "Just quickly scan the ingredients to make sure they don't contain animal ingredients like lard, butter or whey." ■

Jannise Johnson is a freelance writer in California.

Tahini Cookies

¾ cup smooth pourable tahini
½ cup maple syrup
½ tsp almond extract or 1 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups almond flour
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cardamom
¼ tsp ground ginger
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp sea salt
½ cup pomegranate arils

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk tahini, maple syrup and almond extract until smooth. Add the almond flour, then sprinkle the cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, baking powder and salt evenly over the mixture. Use a spatula or wooden spoon to stir until well combined.

Use a 2-Tbsp cookie scoop to scoop the dough, using your hands to roll it into balls. Place each ball on the baking sheet, about 2 inches apart. Press down to flatten slightly. Sprinkle with pomegranate arils and lightly press. Bake 15 to 17 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. Cool on the sheet 10 minutes, then transfer the cookies to a wire rack to finish cooling. Makes 13 to 16 cookies.

Recipes and photos courtesy of Jeanine Donofrio (loveandlemons.com)



In a stew

Keep warm and cozy with a hearty meal in a bowl

by LAURA LANGSTON



Beef Stew

© NATASHAKITCHEN.COM

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find ingredients for different stews in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.com.

The kitchen smells wonderful when a pot of hearty stew is simmering on the stove. Stews are versatile and flexible, and they're economical too.

Stews date back to prehistoric times. Today, of course, stews are ubiquitous. From Hungarian goulash and Puerto Rican beef *sancocho* to the tagines of North Africa and classic American burgoo, virtually every culture has its own variation.

Stews can be made from beef, pork, chicken, fish, or beans and root vegetables. Stews need a long simmering time to encourage flavors to meld and deepen, and to give the meat and vegetables time to properly cook.

Beef stews are sometimes made with inexpensive stewing meat, often composed of tougher cuts like beef chuck or shoulder. These cuts are rich in collagen, the connective tissue that slowly breaks down during the cooking process, producing meltingly tender meat.

Chicken stews are sometimes made with stewing chickens, but bone-in chicken thighs or bone-in breasts can also be used.

To build flavor, sear the meat in a little oil first. Next, sauté aromatics like onion, garlic

and herbs before adding the liquid (stock, broth, wine or a combination) and scraping up the browned bits on the bottom of the pan. When making a vegetarian stew, starting with the aromatics and gently sautéing until they're golden brown will give you a savory flavor base from which to build.

Adding vegetables to the broth at the same time as your meat results in vegetables that are softer and more integrated into the stew, while adding vegetables later in the cooking process helps them to retain their shape and flavor. In either case, always cut your vegetables to be about the same size so they cook uniformly. Add quick-cooking or frozen vegetables like peas and corn in the last 15 minutes of cooking.

Stew can be refrigerated for several days and reheated as is, or served in a potpie, on pasta or over rice or potatoes. Stew freezes well too. Store it in airtight containers, leaving one-quarter to one-half inch of space to allow for expansion, for up to three months. ■

Laura Langston (lauralangston.com) is an author and writer based in the Pacific Northwest.

Beef Stew

- 6 oz bacon, chopped in ¼-inch wide strips
- 2 lbs beef stew meat (or beef chuck cut into 1-inch pieces)
- 2½ tsp sea salt, or to taste, divided
- 1½ tsp freshly ground black pepper, divided
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 1 lb mushrooms, thick sliced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 carrots, peeled, cut in ½-inch-thick pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth or beef stock
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- 1 lb small potatoes, new potatoes or fingerlings, halved or quartered

Preheat oven to 325 F. In a large ovenproof pot, sauté the bacon over medium heat until it's golden brown and the fat is released. Using a slotted spoon, remove the bacon to a separate bowl.

While the bacon is cooking, place the beef in a large mixing bowl; season with 1½ tsp salt and 1 tsp black pepper. Sprinkle the beef with flour and toss to evenly coat. Carefully transfer the beef in 2 batches into the hot bacon fat. Cook over medium-high heat until the beef is browned (3 minutes per side). Transfer the browned beef to the bacon bowl.

Add the wine to the pot; bring to a boil, scraping the bottom to deglaze the pot. Add the mushrooms; simmer over medium heat about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the carrots, onion and garlic; sauté 4 minutes. Add the tomato paste; sauté another minute. Transfer the veggies to the stew pot.

Add the beef broth, bay leaves, thyme and remaining salt and pepper. Return the beef and bacon to the pot, then add the potatoes. Stir to combine, making sure the potatoes are submerged in the liquid. Cover and cook in oven for 1¾ hours, or until beef is tender. Makes 8 servings.

Tip: Pair the beef stew with fresh bread.

Recipe courtesy of Natasha Kravchuk (natashaskitchen.com)



Slow-Cooked Chicken Vegetable Medley Stew

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 red bell pepper, cored and chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 8 oz fresh mushrooms, quartered
- 1 (14-oz) can fire-roasted tomatoes
- 2 large potatoes, chopped into 1-inch cubes
- 4 cups chicken broth or stock
- 2 chicken breasts, bone in and skin on
- Fresh herbs, including 2 bay leaves, sage and thyme

In a soup pot over medium heat, heat the olive oil and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion softens. Add the bell pepper, carrots and mushrooms; cook until vegetables caramelize. Stir in the tomatoes, potatoes and chicken broth and bring to a boil. Submerge the chicken breasts, skin side down, in the liquid. Add the bay leaves and a sprinkle of fresh sage and thyme. Reduce heat to a simmer, covered, for an hour or until the chicken pulls easily off the bone.

Remove the chicken breasts from the pot, peel off and discard the skin, then shred the meat off the bone. Return the chicken to the pot. Continue to simmer, covered, for an additional 15 minutes before serving. Makes 6 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Alison Randall (homeandplate.com)

Raise a glass

Champagne alternatives for a festive and fun season

by CHRISSY EDROZO



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Chrissy Edrozo is a wine buyer in the San Diego region.

COSTCO CONNECTION

From Kirkland Signature™ Champagne (Item 942108) to Kirkland Signature Prosecco (Item 942740), a wide variety of sparkling wines are available in select Costco warehouses.



You may have noticed that it's difficult to find your favorite brand of bubbly, if you are a Champagne lover, as I am. During the pandemic, Champagne sales increased dramatically. With restaurants closed, consumers were buying more bottles than in years past, and winemakers could not keep up with the demand.

Champagne supply chain issues continue to be a challenge. This shortage continues due to several factors (see “Where’s my Champagne?”).

The good news is that there are other sparkling wines you can choose from. My favorite is crémant. Unlike Champagne, this sparkler can be produced outside the Champagne region of France; it's made in the Loire Valley, Alsace and the Burgundy regions, and its taste profile is the closest to that of Champagne. Crémants are high in acidity, with flavors of citrus, stone fruit and toasty notes. You can also try cava, a sparkling wine from Spain. Cava is dry, with medium acidity and notes of citrus, apple and some nuttiness, which makes it distinctive.

Another popular option is prosecco, which is produced in northeast Italy. Prosecco's taste profile is different from Champagne. It is generally fruitier, with medium acidity and notes of green apple and melon. Similar to Champagne, prosecco can be enjoyed by itself, used for mimosas or mixed to make an Aperol spritz, a classic Italian bitter aperitif.

Sparkling wines are also produced in the U.S. Typically, they come from cooler regions in California. Los Carneros, which straddles Napa and Sonoma counties, is the most common. These sparkling wines are typically dry, with medium to high acidity. You'll often note flavors of citrus, white flower, apple and vanilla.

If you're struggling to find your favorite brand of Champagne, you can always consider one of these alternatives. Who knows? Maybe you'll find your new favorite bottle of bubbly. ■

WHERE'S MY CHAMPAGNE?

In order to be called Champagne, grapes must be grown in the Champagne region of France. Once grapes are picked and made into wine, the minimum age requirement for non-vintage Champagne is 15 months.

Due to these restrictions, coupled with weather and labor issues, when the alcohol industry experienced increased demand during the pandemic, it was impossible for the Champagne region of France to quickly react and produce higher volumes.—CE



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Alex Kanenwisher
Buyer, Books



Dinah Jefferies is known for her engaging historical novels. Her latest, *The Hidden Palace*, is told in two time periods: 1925 and 1944. One plot tells of a rebellious daughter and the other is the story of a woman who asks her daughter to find the mother's sister who disappeared years before.

Jefferies takes readers on an unforgettable journey in this gem about sisters and secrets. It's also the second book in her *Daughters of War* trilogy.

The Hidden Palace (Item 1696734) is available now in most Costco warehouses.



Dinah Jefferies

© SUSIE MACKIE

Setting the scene

How Dinah Jefferies finds stories from a strong sense of place

by ANNIE MAKOFF

British author Dinah Jefferies “loves the way reading takes you to another time and place, to a world you might not know.” Jefferies, the author of this month’s book buyer’s pick, *The Hidden Palace*, adds, “I like to read books set in beautiful locations with tough storylines. I like characters that really work with a story that holds me.”

Those qualities are what Jefferies aims to create with her own books. Her novels are all set in exotic locations—places she’s visited and has been inspired by, including Vietnam, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The characters, she says, emerge from the strong sense of place.

“I want readers to feel they’re standing alongside real and vivid characters, so the setting has to be evocative and compelling,” Jefferies explains.

The Hidden Palace is no exception. Second in the *Daughters of War* trilogy, it’s set in Malta, which Jefferies describes as an “astonishingly beautiful island.” Malta has been invaded many times over the centuries and was strategically important during World War II to both Nazi Germany and the Allies.

As Jefferies explains, the Allies created war rooms in ancient tunnels under the capital city of Valletta. “It is a beautiful city, with these buttery stone buildings with balconies bursting with cascading geraniums,” says Jefferies. “Between June 1940 and October 1942, the islanders and the Allies suffered 3,000 air raids. During that time people hid in caves, cellars and tunnels, so you can just imagine the fear and the stress they must have felt—and the courage they needed to find on a daily basis.”

The resulting book follows the stories of Florence, who is running from war-torn France, and Rosalie, her mother's sister, who has been missing in Malta for more than 20 years. "It's an immersive read, partly about war, families and relationships, but also partly about the impact of uncovering a long-held family secret," says Jefferies. "It's a story with a powerful historical and emotional punch as the two threads, Florence's and Rosalie's stories, weave together. There's trauma, guilt, love and loss, as well as bravery and hope. It's a celebration of the human spirit."

Jefferies, who grew up in Malaysia and lived for many years in Spain and Italy, worked as a waitress, barmaid, teacher and artist before turning to writing. She explains that one day she decided to write a novel—and that was that.

"It was during the 2008 financial crash, and my husband and I were trying to sell our house in Spain so we could return to England. I had a lot of time on my hands, so I thought, 'I'm going to write a novel. What should I write about?' I had not actually considered writing a novel until the day I actually started. I didn't even know if I could do it."

Although the novel she wrote was never published, it helped Jefferies find an agent and an interested publisher. She now has nine published books under her belt.

Speaking to the *Connection* from her home in Gloucestershire, in southwest England, Jefferies shares what else inspires and influences her work. "I like to find an interesting place that really speaks to me, and then the story just emerges," she says. "I read about the history of the place or I might find old reports or newspapers. I start to understand what might have happened, how people might have lived. That's when the magic happens." ■

Annie Makoff is a freelance journalist from Rochester in Kent, England.



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Natalia Hendricks
Assistant Buyer, Books

"These books are a stunning addition to any collector's bookshelf."

—EMILY CLEMENT

Illustrated Harry Potter



The MinaLima editions of *The Sorcerer's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets* (Item 1489735) are available now in most Costco warehouses.

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Costco Connection What sets these two editions apart from other books in the *Harry Potter* series?

Emily Clement The MinaLima editions of the *Harry Potter* books create a truly interactive reading experience. Each book features more than 150 full-color illustrations alongside the unabridged original text, as well as eight exclusive paper-engineered elements highlighting key moments in the story. Readers can unfold Harry's Hogwarts letter, reveal the opening to Diagon Alley, travel by Floo Network and more.

CC What else would you like readers to know about these books?

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FOR SCHEDULES & DESCRIPTIONS

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Mon Chateau Anti-Fatigue Gel Mat This 20" x 42" mat provides cushioned support for spending long periods of time on your feet. Available in several colors. Selection varies by location. Available late December. Item 1645810. [Warehouses/Costco.com](https://www.Warehouses/Costco.com).



Priority Current Low-Maintenance E-Bike

Providing unmatched comfort and power for daily commuters or weekend adventurers, the Priority features a maximum speed of 28 mph, intelligent mid-drive pedal assist and a belt drive that is maintenance-, rust- and grease-free. Sizes and colors may vary. **Costconext.com only.**



Mondetta Ladies' Cozy Shirt This oversize button-up cozy top is soft and great for layering. Colors: green (thyme), purple (berry), blue (grisaille blue), black. Sizes: XS–XXL. Item 1629329. Selections vary by location. **Warehouses/Costco.com.**

Tramontina 12.5" Carbon Steel Wok

Featuring carbon steel construction used by professional chefs and a riveted heavy-gauge steel handle with silicone grip, this wok can handle stir-frying, seared steaks or scrambled eggs and goes from stovetop to oven with ease, up to 350 F. Item 1665845.

Warehouses/Costco.com.



Europe: Anantara Palazzo Naiadi Rome

Immerse yourself in the splendor of ancient Rome in a crescent-shaped 19th-century marble palazzo fronting the Piazza della Repubblica and in front of the Baths of Diocletian. To learn more, visit **CostcoTravel.com.**



World changers

Costco members
find ways to improve
others' lives

LASAGNA WITH LOVE

Rhiannon Menn was living in San Diego when extensive pandemic workplace closures took place.

"Like so many people, at the beginning of the pandemic I was feeling helpless," she recalls. She says that families around her were losing jobs and child care during a time of intense uncertainty. "I love to cook, and so I decided to start making and delivering lasagna with my then 3-year-old daughter for any family nearby that needed a home-cooked meal," Menn says.

What began as a personal project has evolved into a global nonprofit called Lasagna Love (lasagnalove.org), which was launched in 2020. More than 35,000 volunteers help their neighbors by preparing and delivering free home-cooked lasagna and other hearty meals. At just two years since its inception, the organization, which is based in Massachusetts, now operates in all 50 states, nine Canadian provinces and five Australian regions and has fed more than 1 million people. "At the core of our mission is spreading kindness," Menn says.

—Dan Jones

THE GIFT OF LITERACY

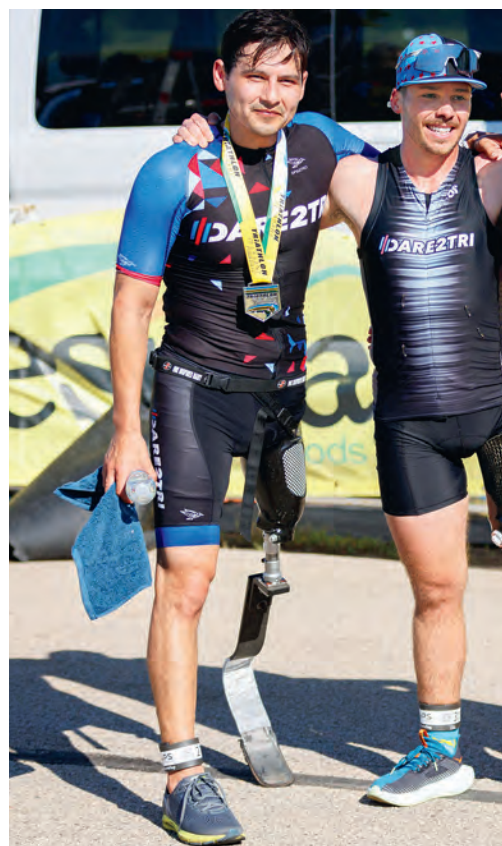
In 2000, Craig Herb left an almost 20-year career at Microsoft with the intention of helping to change the world. When he discovered Room to Read (roomtoread.org), an organization that promotes worldwide literacy, especially among underserved female populations, he knew he had found a way to accomplish this.

"Education has been an important part of our lives," says Herb from his home near Raleigh, North Carolina, explaining that his wife, Brenda, has been a teacher for almost 40 years.

When Room to Read added a will option to its website, the Herbs talked to their two children about their inheritance. "As they were going to college, we told them that we would support their pursuit of higher education," recalls Herb. "From there, hopefully, they'd have the tools to make their own way in the world."



LEFT: © DUYA / STOCK ADOBE.COM; RIGHT: CHRIS ROY COSTA AT PLATED IMAGERY





© ROOM TO READ

Clockwise from top left:

Rhiannon Menn baking with her son, Moseah; a Room to Read student in Cambodia; Dare2tri triathlon participants (organization co-founder Melissa Stockwell is second from right).

Seeing that they've done that freed us to start thinking about how ... we could support [Room to Read]."

Herb's will stipulates that Room to Read gets the first \$1 million off the top and then 35% of what is left afterward. "I can virtually guarantee [that] Room to Read will get quite a bit more than the million," Herb says.—*Steve Fisher*

RIISING ABOVE

With a little support and love, it's amazing what hardships the human spirit can transcend. Dare2tri (dare2tri.org), a Chicago-based nonprofit, helps individuals with physical disabilities and visual impairments rise above the internal and external labels that so often accompany their conditions by helping them get active in sports.

Since it was founded in 2011, Dare2tri, which is funded by donations, has improved the health and quality of life of thousands of participants by providing opportunities to swim, cycle and run.

Before they launched Dare2tri, co-founders Keri Serota, Melissa Stockwell (an above-knee amputee) and Dan Tun participated in endurance events together. "Oftentimes, Melissa was the only one with an amputation in the event," Serota says. "We wanted to make sure that all those who wanted to be active had the opportunity, support, resources and community to do so."

"Seeing an athlete with a disability cross the finish line is transformational," says Serota, Dare2tri's executive director. "We often say the finish line is just the beginning. We know the power of sport and how it affects all aspects of one's life."

—*Will Fifield*

»Be the«
CHANGE
—you wish
to see in the
WORLD



LEFT: © ANDRE WARREN; RIGHT: © ZSUZSANNA / STOCK.ADOBE.COM