

Extreme Coupon Bonanza (Part I)

1. How did I discover Extreme Couponing?
2. Where did I start?
3. Which store do I use the most?

1. How did I discover extreme couponing?

When I first came to this country after marrying my American husband in 2001, I thought that coupons were only for people who lived on fixed incomes and that clipping coupons could probably save me only 50 cents to a dollar. This coupon thing did not interest me at all--I tossed most of the newspaper coupon inserts away and thought they were a nuisance and waste of paper.

But in 2008 I read an online article about a Texan woman who spent only \$800 a year on her groceries for a family of four. This lady was a single mother with three girls and she had successfully achieved her goal of the \$800 budget every year for the past 5 years.

This story intrigued me so much that I started my own quest of extreme couponing. Here is the link to that story if you are interested in reading it:

<http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/consumer&id=6176188>

The original transcript of the chat is here: http://chat.go.com/abclocal/postMessage?event_id=332

2. Where did I start?

CVS and Walgreens were the first places I tried extreme couponing.

CVS's Extracare program

CVS has a customer loyalty program called ExtraCare. You need to go online at the CVS site to register or you can do it at the store. You will get your card in about 1 or 2 weeks after your registration.

The ExtraCare card looks like this



This system rewards you with **Extracare bucks** (ECB) after your purchase. The ECB will be printed on your receipt and can be used on your very next purchase. ECB is just like cash but they do have expiration dates. I take advantage of this system to get a lot of my toiletries free from CVS. From this ECB program, I got at least one year's free supply of toothbrush/ toothpaste and shampoo.

There are a few sites that provide the best information on CVS's Extracare programs:

Hot Coupon World CVS Forum: <http://www.hotcouponworld.com/forums/cvs/>
IheartCVS: <http://iheartcvs.com/>
Southern Savers's CVS section: <http://www.southernsavers.com/category/cvs/>

Walgreens' Register Reward Program

Similar to CVS, Walgreens has its own rewards program called Register Rewards that prints a coupon after you buy select products. You can use this coupon for future purchases. I got 500 rolls of toilet paper from Walgreens for free using the Register Rewards program.

These are some of the sites which provide the best information on Walgreens' Register Rewards Program:

Hot Coupon World Walgreens forum

<http://www.hotcouponworld.com/forums/walgreens/>

Iheartwags: <http://www.iheartwags.com/>

Southern Savers' Walgreens section: <http://www.southernsavers.com/category/walgreens/>

Jenny at Southern Savers.com gives a very good explanation of how the Register Rewards work. You might want to familiarize yourself with it:

<http://www.southernsavers.com/getting-started-guides/guide-to-walgreens/>

3. Which store do I use the most?

Publix!

After I stockpiled about one year's supply of household necessities such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, shampoo, and deodorant at CVS and Walgreens, I thought I was ready to move on to the food side of my grocery needs.

So I started researching Publix. Another misconception that I had (like thinking coupons were for old ladies) was believing that Publix was only for the affluent people and that Save-A-Lot and Walmart were for the less affluent like me but, boy, was I wrong!

One of the greatest things about Publix is its acceptance of competitors' coupons. For instance, Food Lion may have a coupon for "\$5 off \$20 purchase in the meat department" or Target will have a coupon for "75 cents off Breyers ice cream" and Publix will accept these coupons. Some of the competitors' coupons Publix accepts are CVS, Walgreens, Food Lion, Hitchcock, and Target.

Coupon Stacking is when you use Publix store coupons plus manufacturers (MF) coupons plus competitors' coupons. This is how I got a lot of my free stuff.

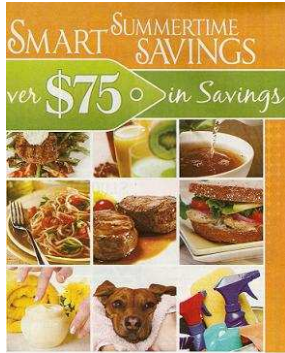
I saved tons of money by stacking coupons when I shopped at Publix. After I learned how to master the art of extreme couponing and taking advantage of Publix' generous policy on competitor coupons, I have hardly spent any money on my groceries.

Of course, it is always better to hold on to your coupons until you see a special discount

on a particular product or buy one/get one free (BOGO). That way your coupon is more valuable than using it on a regular price item.

Another great thing about Publix is that it has its own coupon booklets which you can often find in the turntable rack in the front of the stores. I have collected a number of amazing Publix coupon booklets this year. They are listed on my web site as booklet category: <http://www.seaykopitiam.com/category/booklet/>. You can also find an index of Publix coupon booklets in Hot Coupon World <http://www.hotcouponworld.com/forums/publix/72145-index-publix-coupon-booklets.html>

Here is an example of one of the great coupon booklets I found in Publix this year: **“Smart Summertime Savings”**



Look at the huge list of coupons found inside this booklet. They amounted to over \$75 in savings: (most of these expired at the end of August but you can see what great deals there were.)

- \$1.00 off Two (2) Simply Potatoes any size--Publix coupon
- \$0.75 off One (1) Crystal Farms All Whites or Better'n Eggs--Publix coupon
- \$1.00 On Any Size PureVia—MF coupon
- \$1.00 On Any One (1) Dannon DanActive product--MF Coupon
- \$1.00 On Any One (1) Dannon Activia 4-pack or larger--MF coupon
- \$1.00 On any One (1) 6-pack of Dannon Dan-o-nino--MF Coupon
- \$1.00 On Any One (1) Dannon Danimals Product--MF Coupon
- \$0.55 On any One (1) Breakstone's Butter Product--MF Coupon
- \$1.00 Off Any One (1) Buitoni Riserva item--Publix Coupon
- \$1.00 Off One (1) Apple & Eve Fruitables or 100% juice--Publix coupon
- \$0.75 Off One (1) Pirates Booty 6 pk. Multipack--Publix coupon
- \$1.00 Off Any One (1) Spice Islands Item--MF coupon
- \$0.55 Off One (1) Kikkoman Teriyaki--Publix coupon
- \$1.00 Off Any Two (2) Packages of Hillshire Farm Smoked Sausage--MFcoupon
- \$2.00 Off Any One (1) Package Tennessee Pride 30 Sausage Patties 40oz--Publix coupon

- \$1.00 Off Any One (1) Fresh Express Bagged Salad--Publix coupon
- \$1.00 Off One (1) Sara Lee sweet goods item--MF coupon

\$1.00 Off One (1) Jell-O Gelatin or Pudding snacks 12 pack--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off Two (2) Philadelphia soft cream cheese 8oz.--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off One(1) 8th Continent Soymilk--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any Two (2) Sun-Maid 6 pack item--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Laffy Taffy 48oz. bag--Publix Coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Wonka Mix Ups bag--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Dentyne or Trident gum bottle 60ct.--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any Two (2) Food for Life items--MF coupon
\$0.55 Off Any One (1) Knorr French Onion or Vegetable Soup--MF coupon
\$0.75 Off Any One (1) Bigelow Tea--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Aquafresh Premium Toothpaste 5.6oz./6.0oz.--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Biotene line product--Publix coupon
Buy One (1) Sensodyne toothpaste 4.0oz., Get a Free DenTek floss pick 90ct.--Publix coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) Tylenol or Motrin IB 20ct. or larger--Publix coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) 1-1.5 liter Listerine mouthwash or Any size Whitening Pocketpaks or Pocketmist--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Reach toothbrush or Floss--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Sundown or Spiderman Vitamins--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Disney Children's Vitamins--Publix coupon
\$3.00 Off One (1) Osteo Bi-Flex Advanced Triple Strength 80ct.--Publix coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) Method Product--MF coupon
\$3.00 Off One (1) Pronto Plus Complete Lice Removal System--Publix coupon
\$3.00 Off Any One (1) Citrucel with SmartFiber product or Os-Cal Calcium Supplement Any size--Publix coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Bonine Motion Sickness chewables 16ct.--Publix coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) Centrum product 60ct. or larger--Publix coupon
\$2.00 On any One (1) Energizer Ultimate Lithium or Energizer Advanced Lithium(AAA/AA-4 only) or Energizer MAX(AA-16 only) brand batteries--MF coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) Fur Fighter kit or refill--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Scotch Lint Roller or refill--MF coupon
\$1.50 Off Any One (1) Command product--Mf coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Scotch-Brite sponge 6 pk.--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) O-Cel-O sponge--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Buf-Puf--MF coupon
\$0.55 Off Spic and Span Citrus or Sun Fresh dilutable cleaners--MF coupon
\$1.00 On Biz stain fighter 37.5oz or 25oz 2x liquid--MF coupon
\$1.00 On any One (1) Seventh Generation product--MF coupon
Buy One (1) Shout Trigger spray and get One (1) FREE--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Ziploc item--MF coupon
\$2.00 Off Any One (1) Raid or Off! product--MF coupon
\$1.00Off One (1) bottle of X-14 Mildew Stain Remover—MF coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Carpet Fresh carpet & room odor eliminator--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off Any One (1) Spot Shot product (Aerosol or Trigger)--MF coupon
\$1.00 Off One (1) Dishwasher Magic dishwasher cleaner & disinfectant—MF coupon
\$5.00 Off Any One (1) Mr. Coffee, Oster or Rival small appliance--Publix coupon

\$1.00 Off Any One (1) bag of Rachael Ray Nutrish premium dog food 6lb.--MF coupon

Featured in the Gainesville Sun

The Gainesville Sun newspaper ran a feature about my couponing success and showed all the stuff I got for free--including all that toilet paper from Walgreens! Here is the article: <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20090712/ARTICLES/907121000/1002?Title=Save-big-with-coupons> and the video is here: <http://www.gainesville.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090711/VIDEO/907112000&template=video>

My budget for the year 2009 for my family of three is \$1000 and I am on track to meet that goal. In fact, I think I might even come close to the \$800 budget of that woman in Texas (in the article mentioned above) rather than the \$1000 I budgeted at the beginning of the year. You might be interested in checking out the account of my Frugal Challenge 2009 here: <http://www.seaykopitiam.com/2009-challenge/>

Check out my website <http://www.seaykopitiam.com/> on a regular basis and you will find all kinds of resources and scenarios for maximizing your savings with current coupons and deals! You will also find a list of printable coupons that I have compiled: <http://www.seaykopitiam.com/coupons-resources/>

To Be Continued...

I hope you have enjoyed what I have written learn how to save lots of money!

Jamy Tan

Disclaimer: all information pertaining to this article is to be used with discretion. I am not liable for any usage of the information.