# Survey reveals widespread issue of grocery product substitutions in the UK



A recent survey conducted by consumer watchdog Which? has shed light on the widespread issue of product substitutions experienced by grocery shoppers in the UK. The investigation highlights the confounding nature of these replacements, often leaving customers perplexed by unexpected items in their deliveries.

The survey revealed that approximately 29 per cent of online grocery shoppers reported receiving a substitution during their most recent order. This phenomenon was particularly notable among Asda customers, where nearly half (48 per cent) experienced product replacement. Examples from Asda shoppers included one individual who received bananas instead of pizza, another who found a roasting tin instead of roast potatoes, and yet another who was delivered 'micellar water' face wash in lieu of drinking water.

Sainsbury’s customers also reported a significant level of substitutions, with one-third encountering alternative items in their latest grocery shop. Among the more unusual swaps noted were leeks delivered instead of flowers. Morrisons had a substitution rate of 31 per cent, with shoppers recounting bizarre replacements such as sanitary towels substituting sandwich wraps and fish steaks taking the place of lemon cupcakes.

The survey further detailed other peculiar exchanges over the past year, including mushrooms sent instead of tampons and cans of beer replacing washing powder. It raises concerns about the safety of such substitutions, particularly in instances where dietary restrictions are involved; for example, a customer received regular cheese instead of lactose-free cheese from Tesco.

Speaking about the findings, Reena Sewraz, a money and retail editor at Which?, stated, “If you receive a replacement that you don’t want, you can reject it on arrival or you sometimes can opt out of receiving substitutions altogether. If you do end up with something you won’t use, always contact the supermarket and ask for a refund.”

Responses from the supermarkets addressed the findings. An Asda spokesman reported that data indicated the majority of substitutions were accepted by customers and suggested that overall satisfaction remained high. In a contrasting statement, Morrisons claimed they had no record of the replacement incidents highlighted by Which?. Sainsbury’s expressed regret over the occasional incorrect substitutions, asserting that customer satisfaction scores indicated improvements in their substitution processes over recent years.

The implications of these findings reflect ongoing challenges faced by supermarkets in managing stock levels and fulfilling online orders, leading to a complex relationship between customers and the services they rely on for grocery shopping.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://retail-systems.com/rs/Asda_Dishes_Out_Highest_Rate_Of_Grocery_Substitutions_Finds_Which.php> - This article supports the claim that Asda has a high rate of grocery substitutions, with 56% of customers experiencing this issue. It also mentions bizarre substitutions, such as cans of beer instead of washing powder.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/strangest-supermarket-online-shopping-substitutions-including-sellotape-instead-of-toilet-roll-12842054> - This article highlights unusual substitutions across various supermarkets, including Asda, Sainsbury's, and Morrisons. It also notes that customers with special diets often face issues with inappropriate substitutions.
* <https://www.interlakemecalux.com/logistics-articles/effect-substitutions-online-retailing> - This article discusses the challenges of managing out-of-stock products and the impact of substitutions on customer satisfaction in online grocery retailing. It emphasizes the importance of selecting suitable substitutes to mitigate dissatisfaction.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source article that details the survey findings by Which? regarding product substitutions in UK supermarkets, including specific examples and responses from supermarkets.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This document does not directly relate to the article's content but is included as it was part of the search results. It pertains to legal procedures rather than supermarket substitutions.