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Milk, bread, and ... kitty litter? Here's what else people buy before a snowstorm



BRUCE WEAVER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

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Everybody knows the old staples of milk, bread, and eggs sell out just ahead of storms. But those aren't the only items that fly off the shelves.

Area supermarkets say that other items — such as pet products and booze — are also in high demand before the flakes start to fly.

“As the storm rolls in, customers are picking up all the items you’d expect . . . and some that you might not,” said Katie Roche, spokeswoman for Wegmans.

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Michael Norton, spokesman for Hannaford Supermarkets, said that some “items you might not have considered: Dog and cat food and cat litter are high-volume essentials for pet owners.”

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Comfort food items also tend to sell well.

“Increasingly, ingredients to make a roast, chili, or other slow-cooked dish have become popular ahead of snowstorms,” said Roche Bros. Supermarkets spokeswoman Dena Kowaloff.

Similarly, Norton said, “Soups, pasta, deli meats, and cheeses are high-volume ahead of any winter storm.”

Other potentially comforting items that sell well ahead of snowstorms: junk food, wine, and alcohol, where available, said Kowaloff.

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Store officials said shoppers also stock up on batteries before a snowstorm, particularly if there's believed to be high risk for power outages. Norton said sales of water and ice can also spike when people are worried about losing electricity.

Not surprisingly: "Flashlights, shovels, rock salt are also often on the list," Kowaloff said.

Teresa Edington, spokeswoman for Shaw's and Star Market, said there's a bump in pre-storm sales of fire logs and other emergency-related items.

In some cases, customers appear to be doing "their usual weekly shopping, possibly on a different day and with a few extra essentials," said Roche. "We suspect there's a comfort in knowing that your cupboard and refrigerator are fully stocked just in case the storm lingers or clean-up is slow."

However, three products — milk, bread, and eggs — remain king, according to officials from the four grocery chains, who shared general insights but declined to provide actual sales figures.

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As some people have [noticed](#), those three staples also happen to be key ingredients for making [French toast](#).

So does the spike in sales of milk, bread, and eggs mean that many snowbound New Englanders are actually cooking up slices of the tasty, fluffy breakfast dish?

It's hard to say.

But at least [some](#) people in the [Boston area](#) made [French toast](#) Tuesday morning, according to [photos](#) and messages they posted on social media.

However, grocery store sales figures were inconclusive.

Hannaford's Norton said that could be because some of the products often paired with French toast — such as cinnamon and syrup — are specialty items that many people don't have to buy when a storm is approaching. In many cases, shoppers' pantries at home are already stocked with those ingredients, which don't expire as quickly as milk, bread, or eggs.

Still, at least for Norton, the idea that French-toast making increases during storms makes sense.

It's another "comfort food," he said. And "with kids home from school, French toast can feed the crowd.

We believe that's why pasta sales increase. It's a family meal item."

Do you make French toast on snow days?

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No

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