Trader Joe's Chicago reviewers praise *its staff*; its complaints are about staff and parking

All 6 Chicago stores read rate above the best rival nearby, and 5% of their reviews read give one or two stars, to Whole Foods' 17%, Mariano's 24% and Aldi's 25%. Its staff is praised in 47% of reviews with words, to 19% at Whole Foods, 17% at Mariano's and 13% at Aldi. Its complaints are about the staff and parking (9 and 9 reviews), and it answered 0 of 38 reviews of one to three stars. The opening is Whole Foods' prices (9% of its reviews and 10% of its low ones, to 1% and 0% here), though Aldi is praised for value more often (18% to 14%).

Trader Joe's
against Whole Foods Market, Mariano's, ALDI

1,439 reviews read
Google Maps
dated 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026

512 of the 765 with words in a theme
sorted by a model, counted exactly

November 4, 2026
public reviews only; no reviewer names

THE SHORT VERSION

One or two stars in 5% of reviews read, the fewest of the four chains

47%

of the Trader Joe's reviews with words praise the staff

Whole Foods 19%, Mariano's 17%, Aldi 13%

5%

of the Trader Joe's reviews read give one or two stars

Whole Foods 17%, Mariano's 24%, Aldi 25%

14%

of its reviews with words praise the prices and value

Aldi 18%, Mariano's 8%, Whole Foods 3%

0

owner replies to its 38 one- to three-star reviews read

Whole Foods 31 of 90, Mariano's 0 of 131, Aldi 0 of 42

01

The staff is the praise, at every store read

106 reviews praise it. The lowest share is at 55th St, 17 of 45; the highest at Diversey Pkwy, 12 of 23.

02

0 owner replies, as at Mariano's and Aldi

Trader Joe's answered 0 of 38 reviews of one to three stars and 0 of 412 of four and five: every review read came back with the owner-response field, empty, as did Mariano's and Aldi's. Whole Foods answered 31 of 90 and 210 of 309.

03

2 stores slipped; the chain held

Across the stores read, Trader Joe's went from 4.61 to 4.57 stars over the stores with both windows. 55th St fell from 4.63 to 4.37 and Diversey Pkwy from 4.62 to 4.47; Clybourn Ave rose from 4.62 to 4.81.

Themes count the 765 reviews with words among the 1,439 we read on Google Maps, not of everyone who uses it. A share is of each brand's own reviews read. Themes are a model's sorting; the counts of that sorting are exact.

LOCATION BY LOCATION

All 6 stores read rate above the best rival nearby

Chicago's 6 stores, each beside each rival chain's nearest. Stars are lifetime; new is the last 90 days.

TRADER JOE'S LOCATION	MOST-SAID COMPLAINT	GOOGLE ★, REVIEWS	NEW	NEW ★ (90 DAYS BEFORE)	REPLIES, 1-3★	NEAREST WHOLE FOODS MARKET	NEAREST MARIANO'S	NEAREST ALDI
1147 S Wabash Ave	parking is tight or hard (5 of 42)	**4.6★** · 3,662	54	4.67★ (4.6)	0/6	**4.4★ · 1,895** 38 new, 4.26★ · 1.1 km	**4.2★ · 1,614** 39 new, 4.1★ · 1.0 km	**3.7★ · 98** 18 new, 3.67★ · 3.0 km
44 E Ontario St	shelves are poorly stocked (2 of 46)	**4.6★** · 2,960	50	4.76★	0/6	**4.2★ · 950** 45 new, 3.98★ · 0.4 km	**4.1★ · 763** 30 new, 3.73★ · 1.1 km	**3.7★ · 98** 18 new, 3.67★ · 0.3 km
3745 N Lincoln Ave	parking is tight or hard, employees are rude or unhelpful (2 each of 45)	**4.6★** · 2,824	46	4.52★ (4.59)	0/9	**4.4★ · 2,285** 41 new, 4★ · 1.2 km	**4.0★ · 891** 37 new, 3.86★ · 1.5 km	**4.5★ · 1,620** 11 new, 3.36★ · 1.7 km
667 W Diversey Pkwy HIGHEST RATED	produce or fresh foods are spoiled, employees are rude or unhelpful (2 each of 23)	**4.7★** · 2,136	15	4.47★ (4.62)	0/4	**4.2★ · 1,201** 22 new, 3.91★ · 1.8 km	**4.1★ · 1,507** 37 new, 3.49★ · 0.5 km	**4.5★ · 1,100** 16 new, 3.31★ · 2.4 km
1528 E 55th St	employees are rude or unhelpful (3 of 45)	**4.6★** · 1,807	43	4.37★ (4.63)	0/11	**4.2★ · 2,028** 29 new, 4.59★ · 0.6 km	**4.2★ · 2,406** 81 new, 3.93★ · 3.9 km	**4.2★ · 1,605** 14 new, 4.29★ · 2.8 km
1840 N Clybourn Ave LOWEST RATED	parking is tight or hard (2 of 25)	**4.6★** · 1,371	27	4.81★ (4.62)	0/2	**4.4★ · 1,999** 21 new, 4.57★ · 0.7 km	**4.0★ · 774** 29 new, 3.72★ · 1.0 km	**4.3★ · 657** 5 new, 4.6★ · 2.1 km, 16 read

Google's stars and counts are lifetime. New, new ★ and replies are from the 1,439 newest reviews we read, up to 100 a place: new = last 90 days, + = read stopped short of that; replies = owner replies to 1-3★ reviews. The 765 with words carry the themes.

SIDE BY SIDE

Trader Joe's staff is praised in 47% of its reviews, to Whole Foods' 19%, Mariano's 17% and Aldi's 13%

Each cell is the share of that chain's reviews with words, across its stores read, that say the theme. Sorted by a model. Green is praise, red a complaint.

SHARE OF EACH BRAND'S REVIEWS READ THAT SAY IT · REVIEWS IN BRACKETS

THEMES SORTED BY A MODEL (GEMINI) · COUNTS EXACT

WHAT REVIEWERS SAY	TRADER JOE'S	WHOLE FOODS MARKET	MARIANO'S	ALDI
PRAISE staff are friendly and helpful	47% (106)	19% (41)	17% (42)	13% (11)
PRAISE wide variety and unique selection	18% (40)	13% (27)	10% (24)	13% (11)
PRAISE clean and well organized store	15% (35)	12% (26)	8% (20)	6% (5)
COMPLAINT employees are rude or unhelpful	4% (9)	16% (33)	14% (34)	6% (5)
PRAISE great prices and overall value	14% (32)	3% (6)	8% (19)	18% (15)
COMPLAINT understaffed checkout with long lines	0% (0)	0% (0)	7% (16)	19% (16)
COMPLAINT shelves are poorly stocked	3% (6)	3% (7)	5% (12)	8% (7)
COMPLAINT prices are too expensive	1% (3)	9% (18)	4% (9)	0% (0)
COMPLAINT parking is tight or hard	4% (9)	1% (2)	2% (4)	6% (5)

Other themes: frustrating or missing self checkouts (25); produce or fresh foods are spoiled (24); delicious prepared foods and bakery treats (13); escalators or elevators constantly broken (12). 512 of the 765 reviews are in a theme; of the 253 that are not, 105 are a few words of four- or five-star praise and 58 give one or two stars. Every review is listed in the HTML version.

A model (Gemini) named one set of themes for every brand and marked which each review says (up to three); we count its sorting. Base per brand: Trader Joe's 226 reviews; Whole Foods Market 211 reviews; Mariano's 243 reviews; ALDI 85 reviews.

WHAT TRADER JOE'S REVIEWERS COMPLAIN ABOUT

Trader Joe's complaints: staff and parking, 9 and 9 reviews, then empty shelves

Trader Joe's staff, parking and stock complaints, with each rival's share.

employees are rude or unhelpful

share of reviews, then of low stars: Trader Joe's 4%, 37% · Whole Foods Market 16%, 49% · Mariano's 14%, 31% · ALDI 6%, 16%

“The staff is very unfriendly and rude, I'm not sure if it's just this location or they only like catering for a certain ethnicity of people. There are grocery stores in the area, I would avoid this one given how mean their staff is honestly”

2★ · Trader Joe's, 3745 N Lincoln Ave · Sep 2026

“Very disappointed in my experience here. I was looking for an item and the manager rolled his eyes at me. Multiple staff members were in the way and when I asked politely to move they looked at me with disgust. There were multiple items priced wrong throughout the store. If I could give 9 stars I would.”

1★ · Trader Joe's, 667 W Diversey Pkwy · Sep 2026

parking is tight or hard

share of reviews, then of low stars: Trader Joe's 4%, 11% · Whole Foods Market 1%, 3% · Mariano's 2%, 1% · ALDI 6%, 9%

“Nice store but parking is horrendous.”

4★ · Trader Joe's, 1147 S Wabash Ave · Jun 2026

“The parking spaces in their parking lot are really small, even for compact cars. The genius responsible for that thought that more parking spaces equals more money but failed to realize that people end up taking two spaces or blocking their neighbors in. The same number of cars end up parking in their lot as if the spaces were bigger, but with more bad vibes, door dings and discrimination against people with midsize cars. Really, really, dumb.”

2★ · Trader Joe's, 3745 N Lincoln Ave · Aug 2026

shelves are poorly stocked

share of reviews, then of low stars: Trader Joe's 3%, 21% · Whole Foods Market 3%, 10% · Mariano's 5%, 9% · ALDI 8%, 19%

“The selection was poor compared to the Trader Joe's downtown or in Evanston. Skip it unless there’s no time to go to a better stocked one.”

2★ · Trader Joe's, 3745 N Lincoln Ave · Jul 2026

“out of chocolate milk every day”

1★ · Trader Joe's, 1528 E 55th St · Oct 2026

The themes here hold 12 of Trader Joe's 19 one- and two-star reviews with words; 1 is in other themes and 6 in no theme. Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names; each quote is an example, the share beside the theme the evidence.

WHAT THE RIVALS' REVIEWERS SAY

Where rivals' reviewers complain: Whole Foods' prices, Aldi's checkout lines

Whole Foods' reviews call it expensive (9% of its reviews and 10% of its low ones, to 1% and 0% here). Aldi's low reviews name long lines and too few cashiers (44%, to 0% here). Aldi is praised for value more often than Trader Joe's (18% to 14%).

prices are too expensive

share of reviews, then of low stars: Trader Joe's 1%, 0% · Whole Foods Market 9%, 10% · Mariano's 4%, 5% · ALDI 0%, 0%

“The dynamic pricing 0/5 The tiramisu isn't quite right 2/5 Did I mention the prices? 0/5”

2★ · Whole Foods Market, 3 W Chicago Ave · Jun 2026

“Over priced but I like some of the food. I was only there to return an amazon package.”

3★ · Whole Foods Market, 1101 S Canal St Ste 107 · Jul 2026

understaffed checkout with long lines

share of reviews, then of low stars: Trader Joe's 0%, 0% · Whole Foods Market 0%, 0% · Mariano's 7%, 13% · ALDI 19%, 44%

“Lines are always super long they need more cashiers”

1★ · ALDI, 30 W Huron St · Oct 2026

“Never more than 1-2 people max working the registers. Can watch an entire game of thrones episode in the time it takes to check out”

1★ · ALDI, 30 W Huron St · Oct 2026

Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names. Each quote is one review: an example of its theme; the shares beside the theme are the evidence.

YOUR BEST AND LOWEST LOCATION

Staff is the top praise at both Diversey Pkwy and Clybourn Ave; Diversey's reviews also praise a clean store

Diversey Pkwy (4.7) and Clybourn Ave (4.6), the highest- and lowest-rated stores read, by theme. Every store read rates 4.6 or higher. Small reads: a store's count is an example.

TOP AND LOWEST RATED OF THE LOCATIONS READ, BY THEME SORTED BY A MODEL

SHARE OF REVIEWS WITH WORDS	667 W DIVERSEY PKWY (23)	1840 N CLYBOURN AVE (25)	RIVAL PLACES (539)
staff are friendly and helpful	52% (12)	52% (13)	17% (94)
clean and well organized store	30% (7)	12% (3)	10% (51)
wide variety and unique selection	22% (5)	8% (2)	12% (62)
great prices and overall value	13% (3)	8% (2)	7% (40)
employees are rude or unhelpful	9% (2)	4% (1)	13% (72)

staff are friendly and helpful

Trader Joe's 47% · Whole Foods Market 19% · Mariano's 17% · ALDI 13%

> "Very clean store with friendly, helpful staff"
>
> 5★ · Trader Joe's, 667 W Diversey Pkwy · Sep 2026

> "Super kind staff. Always busy on weekends but weekdays are great"
>
> 5★ · Trader Joe's, 667 W Diversey Pkwy · Jun 2026

Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names. Each quote is one review: an example of its theme; the shares beside the theme are the evidence.

THEIR WORDS, AND THREE MOVES

Three things to do: thank staff reviews, value near Whole Foods, restocking on the checklist

Phrases shoppers repeat, with how many are Trader Joe's, and three lines to use: in owner replies, in local ads, and on a shift checklist.

PHRASES 4+ REVIEWS WROTE · REVIEWS, TRADER JOE'S OF THEM

- customer service 46 Trader Joe's 10
- well stocked 21 Trader Joe's 7
- great selection 17 Trader Joe's 4
- friendly staff 14 Trader Joe's 6
- reasonable prices 8 Trader Joe's 6
- free parking 8 Trader Joe's 3
- good prices 8 Trader Joe's 2
- clean store 7 Trader Joe's 3

Counted, not chosen by a model: runs of 2 to 4 words that 4 or more of the reviews we read wrote, names left out; 8 of the 40 counted.

OWNER REPLIES ON GOOGLE AT EVERY STORE READ · STAFF ARE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL

Thank the reviews that praise the staff

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“Very clean store with friendly, helpful staff”

106 reviews praise the staff, with 0 replies on four and five stars; Whole Foods answered 210 of 309, Mariano's 0, Aldi 0.

From reviews: #137 (Trader Joe's), #146 (Trader Joe's)

LOCAL ADS AROUND THE STORES READ, EACH NEAR A WHOLE FOODS · GREAT PRICES AND OVERALL VALUE

Near Whole Foods, put value first

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“Good prices and selection”

Whole Foods' low reviews call it expensive (10% to 0% here); value praise is 14% here, 3% at Whole Foods, 8% at Mariano's and 18% at Aldi.

From reviews: #47 (Trader Joe's), #25 (Trader Joe's)

SHIFT CHECKLIST AT EVERY STORE READ · CLEAN AND WELL ORGANIZED STORE

Put restocking on the shift checklist

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“Staff is great and always well stocked”

6 reviews find shelves empty; in the low reviews that is 21% here, to 10% at Whole Foods, 9% at Mariano's and 19% at Aldi.

From reviews: #148 (Trader Joe's), #146 (Trader Joe's)

Each line takes a run of 3 or more words from the first review named; the others are on the same subject (#n = its number in the HTML list). Built on reviewers' words, with a few of our own where a reply needs them: match it to Trader Joe's own voice before using it.

HOW WE READ IT

What we read, how it was sorted, and what it cannot tell you

What was asked. “traderjoes.com”: we read it as Trader Joe's (grocery store). The rivals were picked for this sample.

The reviews. Per place, Google's own rating, count and star split from a Google Maps search, and its newest reviews, up to 100 from the last 180 days, in the language each was written. 6 of the 14 Trader Joe's locations Google Maps listed for Chicago, IL were read, the ones inside the city of Chicago; not read: Trader Joe's, 1426 E Golf Rd; Trader Joe's, 14924 LaGrange Rd; Trader Joe's, 1211 Chicago Ave and others; each rival place is the nearest of that chain to a location, within 8 km. Owner replies (the owner's response Google returns with each review) to the 1-3★ and the 4-5★ reviews read: Trader Joe's 0 of 38 and 0 of 412; Whole Foods Market 31 of 90 and 210 of 309; Mariano's 0 of 131 and 0 of 328; ALDI 0 of 42 and 0 of 89. Reviewer names and owners' replies are not kept, only whether a reply exists.

Dates. Trader Joe's on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; Whole Foods Market on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; Mariano's on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; ALDI on Google Maps 9 May 2026 to 1 Nov 2026; read November 4, 2026.

The themes. A model (Gemini) named one set of themes from a sample of the reviews, added themes for reviews it left out, then read each of the 765 reviews and marked the themes it says, up to three; a second pass reread each against its theme and kept only those that say it. 512 of the 765 reviews are in a theme. The counts are exact tallies of that sorting; the sorting is a reading, not a measurement.

The quotes. Every quote is one review, stored as written and shown whole. No reviewer names. Reviews that name an account, carry a link, or name or describe a private person are counted but never quoted (61 left out for naming a person).

What it cannot tell you. Google reviews come from people who chose to write one; 47% of those we read give stars and no words, so themes rest on the ones with words. Google removes some reviews and can't show visits. A share is of the reviews with words we read, not of customers.

The evidence. The HTML version of this report lists every review we read, by theme, with a link to the place on Google Maps.