

How to outsmart the supermarket shrinkflation hitting your groceries

Two popular chocolate bars highlight how consumers are getting less bang for their buck, and the trend is accelerating.

By [ANTHONY KEANE](#)



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A Snickers bar no longer satisfies anywhere near as much as it used to.

It is one of several popular products that have shrunk in size but surged in price in recent years as [food manufacturers combat rising prices](#) and stretched consumers.

Known as “shrinkflation”, it’s a persistent problem that leaves many consumers oblivious to the fact they are paying more for a product even if the shelf price hasn’t technically moved. The smaller packet size, however, means the unit price has shot up.

An analysis by The Australian of hundreds of supermarket prices since 2021 has found [shrinkflation](#) across breakfast cereals, biscuits, yoghurt and dishwashing liquids.

Meanwhile, consumers on social media platforms have called out peanut butter, jams, chips, coffee and children’s snacks for shrinking in size over the past five years.

Queensland Consumers Association spokesman Ian Jarratt said the government needed to step in to make it much clearer for shoppers to know when they were paying more for a product.

“The federal government should get a move on and tell us what it’s going to do about strengthening the unit price code and also taking some steps to help people notice when shrinkflation has occurred,” Mr Jarratt said.

“They announced last year that they were going to do something, and they’ve had consultation on it, and we’ve heard nothing.

“The simplest thing is for them to require the supermarkets to have some sort of sticker or sign on shelf labels to show when shrinkflation has occurred.”

Sizes down but prices up

Product	Oct 2021 size and price	Oct 2026 size and price
Snickers bar	50g for \$2	44g for \$3
Mars bar	53g for \$2	47g for \$3
Uncle Toby's Cheerios	580g for \$6.30	560g for \$7.50
Kellogg's Coco Pops	650g for \$7.50	535g for \$9
Kellogg's Special K	535g for \$7.65	500g for \$9
Arnott's Tina wafers	250g for \$2.99	200g for \$4
Fairy dishwashing liquid	800ml for \$8	750ml for \$11
Gippsland Dairy Twist yogurt	720g for \$7.50	700g for \$8.20
Malteser's box of chocolates	400g for \$12	360g for \$15.50
Cadbury Roses chocolates	450g for \$16	380g for \$20

[Chocolate is one of the biggest culprits.](#) Cocoa prices more than quadrupled between 2021 and 2024. They have since settled lower, but remain twice as high as they were five years ago.

A Snickers bar, which still carries the “Snickers satisfies” slogan in a current ad campaign, retails for \$3 and weighs 44g, down from 56g in October 2021, when it cost \$2, The Australian’s analysis found.

Its stablemate, the Mars bar, has had a double bout of shrinkage in less than two decades, dropping from 53g to 47g since 2021. But back in 2009, a Mars Bar weighed 60g.

A recent survey by Finder.com.au revealed that almost three-quarters of respondents had noticed shrinkflation in the past year.



Mars Bars have slimmed down dramatically over the decades. Source: Facebook

How to beat supermarket shrinkflation

Finder spokeswoman Sarah Megginson said [cost-of-living pressures](#) had made people sharper at scrutinising shopping bills and spotting when companies reduced product sizes.

“It’s a more subtle way for businesses to claw back rising costs, because most shoppers are watching the price tag, not the fine print on the label,” Ms Megginson said.

Check the unit price

“The best defence against ‘shrinkflation’ is checking the unit price, not just the shelf price.

“Comparing the cost per 100g or 100ml lets you see exactly what you’re paying for a product, rather than being guided by a familiar box or a price you remember from last time.”

Mr Jarratt also said [using unit pricing](#) was the best way to spot shrinking sizes.

“If I know I pay 25c per hundred sheets for my toilet paper, then if it changes I know, but not everybody does that,” he said.

“If you know the unit price you can spot the difference.”

Stick to a budget and ignore gimmicks

MyBudget founder and director Tammy Bartonsaid consumers should stick to a budget, set spending caps for food and household staples to be able to spot when prices rise, buy in bulk where possible and avoid getting caught up in marketing jargon such as “new look” or “easier to hold”.

“I’m always a bit wary of new packaging or redesigns,” Ms Barton said.

“Manufacturers often use a brand or package refresh as an opportunity to reduce packaging.”

Ms Barton said “the immense amount of pressure” on household budgets was causing consumers to pay closer attention to pricing and products.

“We work with thousands of everyday households daily, with our money coaches regularly hearing that people are feeling that their grocery budget just isn’t stretching as far as what it used to, even when buying the exact same items,” she said.

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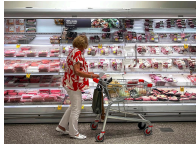
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Anthony Keane writes about personal finance for News Corp Australia mastheads, focusing on investment, superannuation, retirement, debt, saving and consumer advice. He has been a personal finance and business writer or editor for more than 20 years, and also received a Graduate Diploma in Financial Planning.

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