

CALEB MONK

12.9.2025

MPS IN UX DESIGN

DESIGN RESEARCH: DISCOVERY

# ALDI Customer Experience Research Report

**This research report is to present findings from our recent study regarding the current grocery shopping experience ALDI offers and discuss discovered opportunities for the ALDI grocery shopping experience**

OBJECTIVE

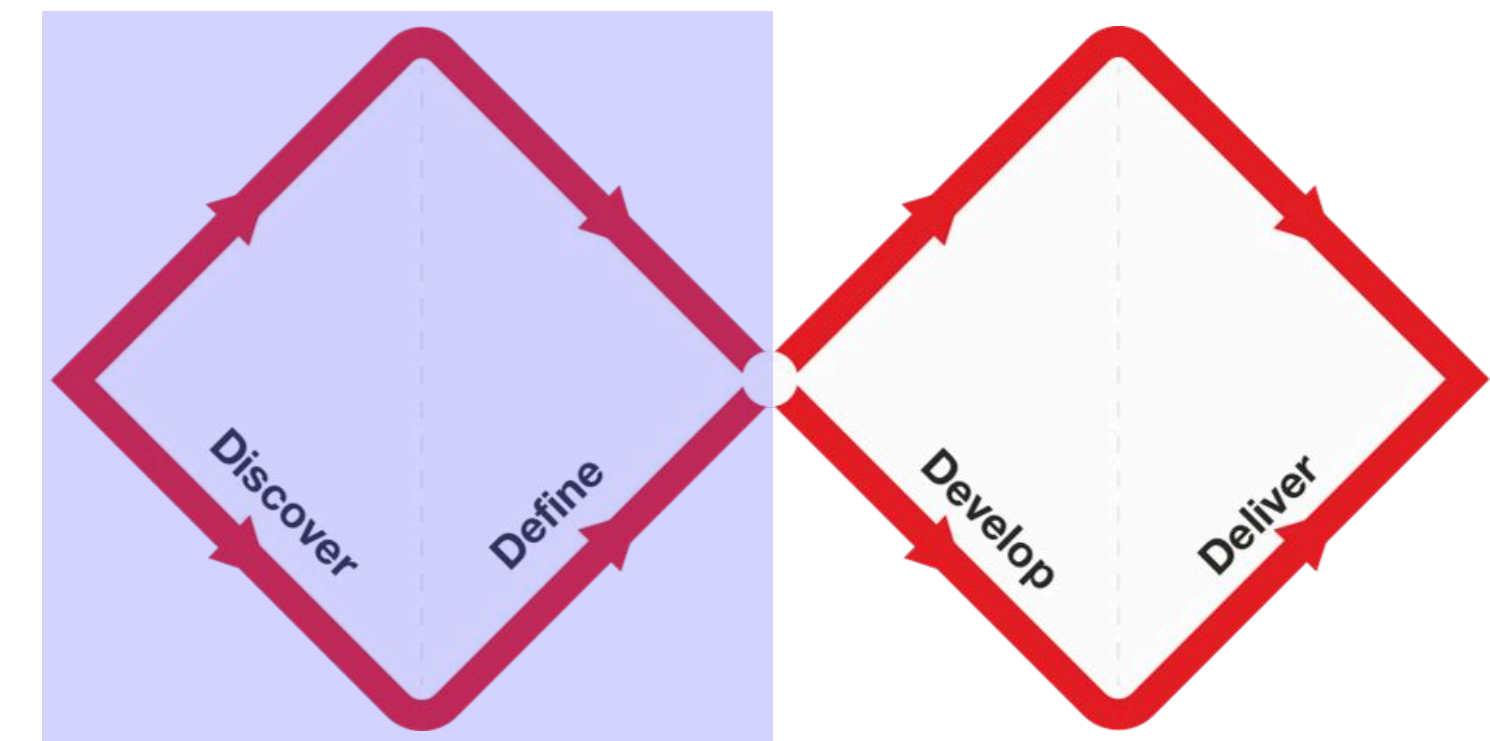
Our objective is to identify the core pain points of ALDI shoppers and discover potential opportunities to enhance the ALDI shopping experience

---

What are individuals buying habits and common activities?

---

How are individuals acquiring their groceries (in-store, curbside pickup, delivery)?



---

How are individuals navigating the physical store?

## METHODOLOGY

### Timeline

---

# 7

**weeks**

The research took approximately 7 weeks and findings will be/were presented on December 9, 2025

### Panel size

---

# 4

**participants**

All participants were the primary grocery shoppers for their household and grocery shopped at least once within the last three months. Participants were all previously familiar with ALDI stores.

### Methodology

---

# 6

**phases**

Before recruitment, secondary research was performed about the current shopping experiences ALDI offers. Information was gathered using In-depth Interviews (IDI's) and cooperative shadow sessions. Insights were derived through affinity diagramming, coding, persona creation, journey mapping, and task analysis.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Aisles

Even shoppers who dislike grocery shopping still tend to browse. ALDI's aisles had pain points for all participants

How can ALDI make their aisles more comfortable for customers and employees?

### Selection

All participants had issues finding items they needed during their shadow sessions, whether ALDI carried the item or not

How can ALDI make their customers more aware of the available items and locations in the store?

### Checkout

All participants experienced similar pain points that impeded their experience during the checkout process

How can ALDI offer a more streamlined checkout experience?

TOPIC

# Personas

With four participants, two clear personas revealed themselves: The Browser & The Efficient Shopper



## Cassandra Walter

### “The Browser”

- 18-29
- Hamilton, OH
- Enjoys grocery shopping
- Frequent ALDI shopper

## Bio

Cassandra is the primary grocery shopper for her household. She enjoys grocery shopping; ALDI is her primary grocer and she likes the brand. Even though she usually has a list, she takes her time and likes to browse through the aisles, searching for good deals and grabbing her favorite seasonal items. She always enjoys her shopping trips but often has a tough time finding the items she loves.

Prepared

Reserved

Easily overwhelmed

## Needs

- Space to browse freely
- Must go to other grocery stores to get other necessary items
- Wide organized aisles
- Lower grocery costs than competitors

## Motivations

- Exclusive seasonal items
- Significant other's item preferences
- Sustainability
- Grocery costs

## Pain Points

- Crowded aisles
- Other customers interrupting her shopping experience
- Local ALDI missing self-checkout
- Dislikes bagging her own groceries
- Not being able to find favorite or specific items

# Cassandra Walter Shopping Journey

Cassandra shows up to ALDI excited and ready to browse through the aisles. However, she is easily overwhelmed by crowds so ALDI's tight aisles naturally cause issues for her.

ALDI is Cassandra's primary grocery store, but always goes to two

Journey steps	Arrives at ALDI	Grocery Shopping	ALDI Finds Aisle	Checkout	Leaves ALDI
<b>User actions</b>	Rents grocery cart by door for 25 cents	Walks around store looking for items on her list and browsing aisles Avoids crowded aisles and others	Looks at every item on the shelves Looks for items to "catch her eye"	Browses items around checkout for last chance purchases Waits in line for next available cashier	Walks grocery cart back to cart station by store entrance Bags groceries in reusable bags at car
<b>Feelings and thoughts</b>	Excited Looking forward to browsing the aisles	Enjoys browsing the aisles Anxious Overwhelmed	Enjoys browsing the aisle Curious about what is on the ALDI Finds shelves this time	Anxious Wonders what items she could've missed	Wonders what items she could've missed Even if she hits some pain points she still enjoyed her visit
<b>Opportunities</b>		How can ALDI make their aisles more comfortable for customers and employees?	How can ALDI make their aisles more comfortable for customers and employees? How can ALDI make their customers more aware of the available items and locations in the store?	How can ALDI offer a more streamlined checkout experience?	
<b>Pain points</b>		Employees blocking walking paths and shelves Other customers blocking aisles or shelves	May or may not have seasonal/favorite item available at the time Employees blocking walking paths and shelves Other customers blocking aisles or shelves	Can easily get crowded by other customers overwhelming her	Can potentially encounter another customer at the cart station, having to wait on them





## Helen Miller

### “The Efficient Shopper”

- 56+
- Columbus, OH
- Dislikes grocery shopping
- ALDI is a secondary grocery store

## Bio

Helen Miller does not like grocery shopping but is the primary grocery shopper for her household. Because she dislikes grocery shopping, she primarily does curbside pickup at another grocery store (not ALDI). She'll occasionally go in the grocery store if she wants to browse that day, but still prefers quick trips. She enjoys ALDI's unique social atmosphere and finding deals and seasonal items in the ALDI Finds aisle, they are often missing her essentials.

Methodical

Calm Under Pressure

Selective

## Needs

- Brand name and other specific items
- Curbside pickup
- Quick trips

## Motivations

- Wide selection of items available
- Lower costs than competitors
- Significant other's item preferences

## Pain Points

- Local ALDI missing self-checkout
- Dislikes having to search for the items she is looking for
- Dislikes going to more than one grocery store for her needs
- Walking carts back to the cart station in inclement weather
- Dislikes paying for paper bags

# Helen Walter Shopping Journey

Helen shows up to ALDI annoyed that she has to enter the grocery store or pay additional fees for curbside pickup. She quickly walks through the grocery store, takes the walking path of least resistance checking items off her list, and only browsing the ALDI Find's aisle.

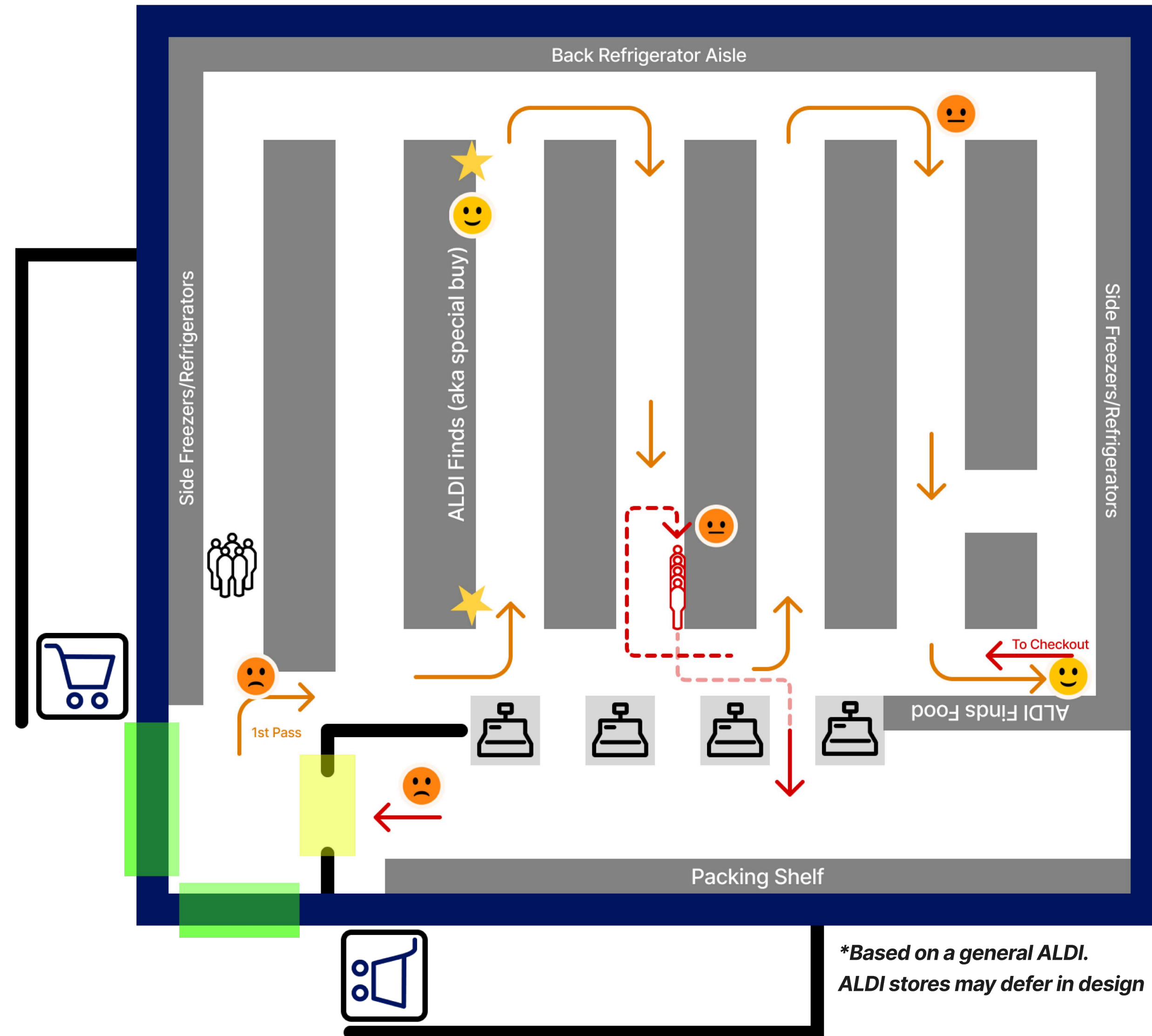
## ALDI is Helen's secondary grocery store and loves curbside pickup

Journey steps	Arrives at ALDI	Grocery Shopping	ALDI Finds Aisle	Checkout	Leaves ALDI
<b>User actions</b>	Goes straight into the store and efficiently starts shopping	Walks around store looking for items on her list Looks for the fastest walking paths with minimal other customers	Browses quickly at the ALDI Finds Aisle for items to catch her eye	Waits in line for next available cashier	Bags groceries in reusable bags at car
<b>Feelings and thoughts</b> 😊 😊 😐 😠 😡	Annoyed Does not wish to enter the grocery store	Annoyed Doesn't wish to spend a lot of time shopping	Curious about what is on the ALDI Finds shelves this time	Doesn't want to pay for paper grocery bags Wants to leave the grocery store quickly	Annoyed Annoyed
<b>Opportunities</b>	How can ALDI offer curbside pickup without altering the experience?	How can ALDI make their customers more aware of the available items and locations in the store? How can ALDI make their items easier for customers to acquire without altering the experience?	How can ALDI make their customers more aware of the available items in the store?	How can ALDI offer a more streamlined checkout experience?	How can ALDI offer more of the "essentials"?
<b>Pain points</b>	Wants to utilize curbside pickup but doesn't want to pay additional fees	Can't find certain essential items on her list Can't find favorite brand name items Has to search through boxes to find specific items	Item looking for is in a different location than usual Lots of people browsing the ALDI Finds aisle The selection in the ALDI Finds aisle varies week by week	Must wait for a cashier, impeding efficiency	Didn't get all necessary items needed and must go to another grocery store

# Helen Miller Typical Store Visit Visualized

Helen already wants a quick visit and isn't afraid to skip aisles if there's obstacles. She enjoys browsing the ALDI Find's aisle, but her trip quickly becomes a nuisance again when she has to search through boxes for items and wait in a lengthy line for checkout in a tight aisle. On the bright side, she was able to find some of her favorite brand name items in the ALDI Find's Food section.

Helen Miller In-Store Walking Path\*



Icons adapted from:  
"Cart" by Adrien Coquet, from Noun Project (CC BY 3.0), modified by Caleb Monk  
"Cashier" by Pictogramma, from Noun Project (CC BY 3.0), modified by Caleb Monk  
"Crowd" by diyah farida, from Noun Project (CC BY 3.0), modified by Caleb Monk

TOPIC

# Insights

The Aisles. The Selection. The Checkout.

# The elephant in the aisle

ALDI is very good at efficiency and streamlining the process for their customers. However, in the aisles these key values are getting hindered by employees and customers alike for both shopper archetypes. This was one of the largest pain points of the research and should be further evaluated. How can ALDI make their aisles more comfortable for customers and employees?

“A lot of people don’t know this but as a former ALDI employee, ALDI runs like a well-oiled machine...” However, [the aisles] are “just as bad working in them, if not worse.”

**Missy Schmidt**

Former ALDI Employee

# “I hope they have it”

For our browser's like Cassandra, they often have favorite items that ALDI only has for a limited time or seasonally. For our efficient shopper's like Helen, they are looking to grab their essentials as quickly as they can. Both types of shoppers had issues finding items both in and out of stock. How can ALDI make their customers more aware of the available items and their locations in the store?

“The challenge for me with Aldi is that they're very select in what they carry, and they also vary their inventory a lot, and so some if you find something that you really like, you can't be guaranteed when you go back, I'll still be carrying it.”

**Cathy Thompson**

# Four ALDIs. One Problem.

Each shadow session was performed at each participants local ALDI and four different ALDI stores were visited. None of the ALDIs (even newer) had self checkout and all participants faced similar issues in their checkout process. Further evaluating the efficiency and flow of the ALDI checkout process is recommended. How can ALDI offer a more streamlined checkout experience?

Q: Do you feel like if your local ALDI had self checkout you would go there more?

“I think so, maybe.”

Linda Nicholson

# References

- Hanington, B., & Martin, B. (2019). Universal methods of design, expanded and revised: 125 ways to research complex problems, develop innovative ideas, and design effective solutions. Rockport Publishers.
- Sanders, E. B.-N., & Stappers, P. J. (2012). Convivial toolbox: Generative research for the front end of design. BIS.
- ALDI. (n.d.). ALDI grocery stores – Quality food. Everyday low prices. Retrieved December 9, 2025, from <https://www.aldi.us/>
- ALDI International Services GmbH & Co. oHG. (2025). ALDI USA [Mobile app]. Apple App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/aldi-usa/id429396645>