

LOCAL NEWS

Famously price-conscious German supermarket chain Aldi opens store next month in Gardena

Discount grocery store chain Aldi opens in Gardena next month in a former Smart & Final on Redondo Beach Blvd. Photo by Nick Green, Daily Breeze Oct. 9, 2018.

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Aldi, the discount German grocery store chain that asks customers to bag their own groceries and rent shopping carts for a quarter to cut costs, [opens its second South Bay location Nov. 1](#) in a former Gardena Smart & Final.

It's part of an aggressive \$3.4 billion push by the company to expand to 2,500 stores nationwide within four years, resulting in 25,000 new jobs. That will make Aldi the third largest grocery store operator in the U.S., the company said.

"We pioneered a grocery model built around value, convenience, quality and selection and now Aldi is one of America's favorite and fastest growing retailers," said CEO Jason Hart. "We're growing at a time when other retailers are struggling."

The Southern California market has seen such chains as [British-owned Fresh & Easy](#), Haggen's and Albertson's either go out of business, pull out of the region or sharply reduce store counts.

Aldi has more than 1,800 stores in 35 states, including one in Inglewood.

Gardena's Aldi location at 1550 W. Redondo Beach Blvd. will have the open ceilings, natural lighting and compact design that are the hallmark of the company's stores.

"Aldi stores look and feel different and that's by design," said Tom Cindel, Moreno Valley Division Group director of operations and logistics. "Our shopping experience was created to make life easier for our customers."

Taking a page out of the Trader Joe's playbook, which is actually a sister company, Aldi "sells random items on purpose" like Dutch ovens around Thanksgiving and has a "streamlined selection" of brands and items such as peanut butter with an emphasis on private labels.

It also limits store hours to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

The company announced in August it will remodel existing stores in the U.S. market by the end of next year and overhaul the products with an emphasis on fresh, organic and vegetarian items, increasing its selection by about 40 percent.

"The continued success of our store expansion and remodel initiatives has given us the opportunity to carefully select and introduce new products that satisfy our customers' increasing preferences for fresh items, including organic meats, salad bowls, sliced fruits and gourmet cheeses," Hart said.

All this helps keep overhead low and prices attractive to savvy shoppers the no frills chain hopes to lure from Walmart, Amazon and other discounters.

A typical Aldi store has 15-20 employees and those working more than 25 hours a week receive full health benefits. The company says its wages are higher than other retailers in the market.

Aldi's explosive double-digit growth over the last few years and reputation for very low prices saw it named 2018 Supermarket of the Year by trade publication Supermarket News.

Aldi opens its 20,000-square-foot Gardena location with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 8:15 a.m. Nov. 1 The first 100 customers will also receive a "golden ticket" that include store gift certificates, food products and an opportunity to participate in a 90-second grocery grab

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