



Buying Cooperatively – An Introduction to Food Buying Groups

What is Suma ?

Suma is a workers' co-op, a radical business owned and managed by its workers since 1977. We supply the finest in vegetarian, natural foods (including fairly traded and organic ranges) and eco-products. We deliver over 6,500 different products to customers throughout the UK on a weekly basis. We can offer you a new way of shopping.

At Suma we have benefited from the openness, equality and democracy of co-operation and we would like to encourage other groups to join the co-operative movement.

Why set up a Food Buying Group?

Setting up your own Suma food buying group (often referred to as food co-op) is a fantastic way of getting high quality organic, vegetarian wholefoods and household staples at wholesale prices, delivered to your door by one of our friendly Suma drivers.

Buying groups allow families, work colleagues, friends, neighbours or social organisations (e.g. Women's Institutes) to club together and gain access to wholesome foods at wholesale prices. Our customers find ordering this way more convenient and cost-effective than regular trips to the supermarket. Many people also find that organising or being part of a food group can be a rewarding social experience, bringing their community closer together.

Why buy from Suma?

Free delivery direct to your door – we offer free delivery to the majority of the UK mainland on orders over £250. Delivery charges apply on orders below £250 and in outlying areas. Call us on 01422 313861 for more information.

Outstanding customer service – we offer the highest levels of customer service from our sales team down to our friendly and communicative drivers. We pride ourselves on having the highest levels of stock availability in the industry and have over 30 years of trusted experience in supplying buying groups. If any items are out of stock we will endeavour to contact you to suggest alternative items.

Large product range – we stock more than 6,500 products from brown rice and orange juice to toilet rolls and wine. We are always looking to innovate and recently launched our own eco-cleaning product range – Ecoleaf.

I'm interested! What's the next step?

- Contact the new business team on **01422 313861** or **newbusiness@suma.coop**. They can provide you with pricelists, answer any questions you may have and give you access to our online ordering website.
- Think about who could be involved in your group and distribute information and price lists so they can think about what they could order.
- Consider placing an advert in the local paper, putting up posters or asking your neighbours if they want to join your group.
- It's often easier to share information, documents, price lists, links and communicate with group members via email.
- Once you've got enough people in your group set up an account and start ordering!

How do I set up an account?

Step 1 - Call the Suma New Business Team on 01422 313861

Step 2 - We need your delivery address, contact details (including a landline number)

Step 3 - Please also tell us if there are any access problems with the delivery address – bearing in mind our trucks are roughly the size of a double-decker bus (and often as full!!)

Step 4 - Payment is either cheque on delivery to our driver, or we can take payment with a Debit Card.

Step 5 - You will then be given an account number and registered for online ordering (if required). You can now place your first order!

How do I place our order?

There are several convenient ways of placing your Suma order:

Online – www.sumawholesale.coop

You need your account number, along with a password (this is usually done when you open your account, or you can call 01422 313845 to register for this). You can shop with us 24hrs a day.

Email – sales@suma.coop

You may wish to send your order to us on an Excel spreadsheet. make sure we have your account number, codes and quantities.

Fax – 01422 313869

Please use black ink on one of our Order Forms (free of charge code NF132).

Phone – 01422 313848

Call the Suma sales team from Monday to Friday open 8am - 5pm. This is the best way to get up to date information on exclusive weekly deals and stock information.

Running Your Food Co-op

We have put together a few hints and tips to enable you to run your food co-op as efficiently as possible.

- Have the product codes ready, and the amount of cases that you require. So 1 x VF550, for instance, would get you one CASE (i.e. 12 cans) of Suma organic baked beans.
- Let us know when you place your orders if you want separate invoicing for each of your food group's members – it makes it easier to work out who owes what in your group.
- It's worth contacting the Suma transport team (01422 313856) prior to your delivery. They can provide you with your delivery driver's phone number who will in turn be able to provide you with an ETA for your delivery (so you know when to put the kettle on!).
- Part of our offering to food group's is allowing full cases of certain products to be split. This allows you to try new products and satisfy individual members of your group. Please discuss this with whoever takes your order as some more delicate products are 'unsplitable'. Use the term SINGLES to denote an individual item rather than a CASE.
- When you set up your account you will be advised on the most likely day of delivery and provided with an ordering deadline for your next scheduled delivery. This is normally midday on the day before your delivery vehicle leaves our depot. You can add items to the order up to 3pm on the same day.
- Each group would benefit from one person taking charge of the account, as a coordinator, to sort out payments, take the delivery etc.
- If you wish to purchase alcohol, we require proof of age which can be done face to face by one of our drivers or by faxing a copy of your passport or driving licence. We will then provide you with a password to order alcohol.
- You will be notified when placing your order online or over the phone, if a product may be out of stock and we can discuss an alternative product. If you have placed your order online we will send you an email itemising any items likely to be out of stock. This is sent immediately after you place your order so it's worth checking your Inbox.

More Information

Online information – www.suma.coop/foodgroups

Our portal for new and existing food groups contains information and help documents on starting and running a food group. It also includes a section on frequently asked questions (FAQs) and we are looking to include a forum in the near future to allow food groups to share information.

Sustain – www.foodcoops.org

Sustain provide support for food groups under their Making Local Food Work scheme. They have help documents and a food group search tool, enabling people to look for existing groups within the area.

Soil Association – www.soilassociation.org

The Soil Association certify and support organic farming within the UK. They may be able to provide support, training and advice on funding to new food groups under their community supported agriculture scheme.

Co-operatives UK – www.cooperatives-uk.coop

Co-operatives UK is an organisation that supports co-operative enterprises within the UK. They may be able to provide advice on starting up and growing your co-operative.

Full Terms & Conditions are as published in the Suma catalogue or are available [online](#).

Happy Shopping!

