

Waitrose rated worst online supermarket for fresh groceries – but who came out on top?

The upmarket supermarket Waitrose has been rated the worst major online retailer for grocery freshness.

The quality and longevity of fresh produce from UK grocers was investigated by consumer specialists at Which?.

The research saw the country's biggest chain [Tesco](#) perform the strongest.

Which? deployed a team of 12 undercover shoppers who ordered more than 1,000 groceries from six major supermarket chains to examine the freshness of their food and drink produce.

The same 16 perishable grocery items were ordered by each shopper from each of the online supermarkets.

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It totalled the number of full hours remaining from the time of delivery to midnight on the use-by date for every item and calculated an average time per supermarket.

Tesco came top of the table for freshness, with the average shelf life of its items totalling at 11 days.

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The supermarket giant showed the expected shelf life of perishable items on its website and had no instances of damaged packaging or gone off food by the time of delivery, unlike some rivals.

Tesco was closely followed by [Asda](#), which averaged at 10.5 days of shelf life on its products on all grocery items – although one pack of bacon was delivered on its use-by date.

Online-only Ocado was just behind Asda, with an average life of 10.4 days for products.

[Waitrose](#), whose online business launched last year after it ended a partnership with Ocado, was bottom of the table with items averaging a shelf life of 8.6 days.

The supermarket also delivered two packets of beef that seemed to have gone off, despite being within their use-by dates.

Waitrose said: “We always train our Partners to pick products with the longest best-before date for online deliveries – we’re sorry this fell short of our high standards and are committed to making this better for our customers.

“From time to time we sometimes shorten the date codes on certain fresh produce to ensure it’s at optimum quality – so this may also have been a factor behind the results.”