

I was an Ikea opening-weekend shopping warrior. Here is my advice to you, Fishers

[Domenica Bongiovanni](#) Updated 4:15 p.m. ET Oct. 14, 2017

I am a person who loves being in the thick of big things that are happening.

The personality trait explains my choice of career, my penchant for buying last-minute Christmas gifts at the mall — yes, the mall — and my aspiration to join the throngs of humanity at Ikea on opening weekend.

I was blessed with the opportunity to fulfill the latter desire when the Swedish furniture and household accessory giant opened one of its eye-popping yellow and blue buildings in 2014 in Merriam, Kan., a suburb of my hometown of Kansas City, Mo. I had [read the entire novel-length Ikea catalog](#), and I was bursting with curiosity to see what all the hoopla was about.

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So I convinced my mom to accompany me shortly after the initial wave of crazy had ratcheted down a notch. I assume Mom acquiesced because she also was curious about Ikea but mostly because she loves me.

Now, three years later, I find myself near yet another IKEA about to open. For this, I offer my thanks to God and the best observations from Mom and me — two battle-tested warriors of the inaugural weekend.

Fellow Hoosiers, you're about to have a lot of fun. [The new store opens at 9 a.m. Wednesday.](#)



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Couches in the under-installation Ikea, in Fishers, which is slated to have its grand opening on Oct. 11, Fishers, Tuesday, Aug. 29, 2017. (Photo: Robert Scheer/IndyStar)

1. MAKE TIME FOR OGLING THE KITCHENS.

Remember when inexpensive reusable storage containers, like GladWare, hit grocery stores? My mom used to stand in front of the wall of containers, with one hand on the shopping cart and the other on her hip, imagining all the ways she could organize our pantry. I remember this because I was the kid waiting for her to follow me to the cookie aisle.

Mom expressed the same joy upon seeing Ikea's kitchen showrooms. Everything was arranged so that she felt like she could just start cooking. (I wouldn't have complained if she did.)

The white, stainless steel and dark wood cabinets were clean and lovely. The pots and pans inside them were set up to be easily accessible, so you didn't have to do yoga to grab the Dutch oven you use once every three months. The drawers had impressive organizational systems that kept the gravy ladle from being shoved to the back where no one can find it.

And the stacks of Mason jars and spice racks? We could have stared at those for a long time.

2. IF YOU BUY BIG STUFF AND LOAD IT INTO YOUR CAR, EXPECT AN AUDIENCE.

I don't have to tell you that the line to get into the store will be long. You already know this.

While in line we were able to watch people who had bought large pieces of furniture problem-solve ways to cram the boxes into their vehicles.

For those of us who hadn't yet been inside the store, this was an opportunity to see what we could purchase. And to people-watch.

So if you're going to buy something, you might as well go big and make a

show of stuffing it into your car. The other shoppers will thank you.

3. GRAB A MAP WHEN YOU WALK IN.

Ikea is good about posting signs and arrows to direct you around the store. And the opening days will have so much foot traffic that the line winding you through dining sets, kitchens and kids' rooms will be about four people wide, so it's hard to get lost.

That said, Mom and I still managed to do just that.

We split up when we got to the rooms that were packed with smaller accessories, such as bowls, curtains and picture frames, and became absorbed. What can I say? Turning cool light fixtures on and off can easily lead you astray.

Please don't judge us.



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It's huge! Ikea building takes shape in Fishers

4. IF YOU PLAN TO BUY, THEN BE ORGANIZED ABOUT IT.

Unlike the department stores we're used to in the U.S., Ikea really only has one main path through the displays. You can, of course, break off of and walk around the stuff, but you'll want to find your way back to the main path to leave.

The main sections are organized into showrooms, and even tiny houses, that mimic real life (now that's a marketing strategy!). You grab what you want from the marketplace and self-serve warehouse at the end of the trek. For some items, you need an Ikea staffer to get them for you.

This means you'll need to check the number on the tag on the item you want in the showroom so you know where to actually obtain it. Organize yourself accordingly because Ikea is retail-overload and you won't remember everything. Trust us.

5. ENJOY YOURSELF.

This should be easy, but those of us who are seasoned retail shoppers know we must remind ourselves of it.

So take in the multigenerational experience of shopping at Ikea. The store's stripped-down minimalistic style reminded Mom of the furniture she saw in the 1960s, and — just as she was tickled that I loved the same type of flared jeans she once wore — she enjoyed seeing me nerd out over couches and chairs.

And at some point, sit down and have some pie in their cafe. Not only is it delicious, but you'll have walked around so much that you won't feel any guilt from the calories.

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