



GUIDE

Medjool Buying Guide: Is Jumbo Worth It? (5 Packs Tested)

Author · Hassen Moumen **Updated** · September 26, 2026 **Read time** · ~6 min

IN THIS GUIDE

- 01 The five-pack experiment
- 02 How to judge quality in 30 seconds
- 03 Size grades, decoded
- 04 Pitted vs. unpitted: I weighed the pits
- 05 Organic vs. conventional: what my receipts say
- 06 What's a fair price?
- 07 Storage in one paragraph
- 08 Frequently asked questions

By **Hassen Moumen** · Founder & Editor · Reviewed September 2026

The Jumbo bin was \$11.99 a pound. The Large bin beside it – same farm, same packer, same shelf – was \$7.99. I stood in my grocery store doing phone-calculator math like a responsible adult, bought both, and over the following two weeks bought three more [Medjool](#) packs from different stores to settle the question properly: is Jumbo worth double the price per ounce?

Short version: no. Long version below, with receipts.

QUICK ANSWER

Buy Medjool by comparing price per ounce across sellers, inspect for moist glossy skin and even p how you plan to eat them.

The five-pack experiment

Late 2025, five packs, one kitchen table, one notebook. Same tasting protocol for each: eaten plain at room temp, then bent in half to check flexibility, then cut open to check the flesh around the pit.

Pack	Grade	Price	\$/oz	Texture (1–10)	Notes
Natural Delights (Kroger)	Large	\$7.49 / 1 lb	\$0.47	8	Glossy, springy, the benchmark
Trader Joe's Organic	Large/Med mix	\$5.49 / 12 oz	\$0.46	7	Slightly dry at the tips
365 (Whole Foods)	Medium	\$6.99 / 12 oz	\$0.58	7	Consistent, small-ish
Natural Delights (Costco)	Large	\$12.99 / 2 lb	\$0.41	8	Cheapest per ounce, period
Middle East market, bulk	Jumbo	\$11.99 / 1 lb	\$0.75	9	Genuinely the best one

Two findings I didn't expect:

1. **The Jumbo tax is real.** \$0.75/oz vs \$0.47/oz is a 60% premium for size alone. The Jumbo fruit tasted better – plumper, wetter – but when I chopped both into a batch of energy balls a week later, nobody could tell which batch came from which bin.

2. **Texture tracked freshness, not price.** The TJ's pack at \$0.46 ate better than the 365 pack at \$0.58. What predicted quality wasn't the store or the sticker – it was how recently the pack had been filled and shipped. Which leads to the part of this guide that will actually save you money:
-

How to judge quality in 30 seconds

After handling five packs in a week, here's the checklist I now run on every bag before it goes in the cart:

- **Skin:** slight sheen is good – that's natural sugars migrating to the surface. Fine wrinkles are normal. Cracked, flaky, or split skin means the fruit lost moisture somewhere in its journey; skip it.
 - **Flex test:** press a date through the bag. It should give like your earlobe and spring back. If it feels like your knuckle, it's old stock.
 - **The white dust:** not mold. Sugar crystals, completely harmless. Full explanation and the smell test for actual spoilage are in our [date storage guide](#).
 - **Turnover:** flip the bag and find the pack date if there is one. A "medium" grade from three weeks ago beats a "jumbo" grade from eight months ago every time. My market's bulk Jumbos moved fast – that's why they were good.
-

Size grades, decoded

First, the boring-but-important part: [USDA grade standards for dates](#) exist and are about defects, maturity, and color, not size. The size names you see on packages – Jumbo, Large, Medium, Small – are industry convention, and the counts shift a bit between packers. Roughly, per pound:

Grade	Approx. count per lb	What it's for
Jumbo	~15 or fewer	Display trays, impressing people
Large	~16-20	Everything. This is the sweet spot.
Medium	~21-25	Snacking, stuffing, cheaper per oz

Grade	Approx. count per lb	What it's for
Small	26+	Chopping, blending, paste

One size note: a Jumbo Medjool runs 30+ grams – bigger than a golf ball. When a recipe says “12 dates,” the author almost certainly means Large or Medium. Measure by weight, not count, or your “12 dates” adds 100 extra grams of sugar.

Pitted vs. unpitted: I weighed the pits

Five pits out of a 12 oz box: 1.1 oz. That’s 9% of the weight you’re paying date prices for – and date prices aren’t cheap.

- **Unpitted:** looks better, stores slightly better (intact skin holds moisture), and costs you ~9% in phantom weight. Buy these for a display tray or a gift box.
- **Pitted:** everything else. Snacking, stuffing, baking, blending. I no longer buy unpitted except for guests, and even that’s debatable.

The full price-per-ounce math – including why the printed weight lies to you on unpitted bags – is my favorite rabbit hole: [price-per-ounce methodology](#).

Organic vs. conventional: what my receipts say

The organic premium ran \$1.00-1.50/lb across my five packs. My verdict after this experiment: spend that money on freshness, not the organic sticker. Dates have thick skins and low residue concerns relative to soft-skinned fruit; the quality difference I measured came from pack dates and handling, not growing method. If organic matters to your household, fine – but don’t pay it and then grab the oldest bag on the shelf. That’s the actual mistake I see. For the fuller case on organic vs conventional, see our [Are Organic Dates Worth It?](#) guide.

What's a fair price?

As of late 2025, my area (prices vary by region – treat these as bands, not gospel):

- **Under \$0.45/oz** – stock up. This was the Costco pack. I bought a second.
- **\$0.45-0.65/oz** – normal retail. Fine for a single bag.
- **Over \$0.75/oz** – either Jumbo, a fancy gift-grade pack, or you're being overcharged. All three exist. Check which one you're holding.

And before anyone asks – yes, I've also bought the \$30+ boutique Medjool box. It was beautiful. It was not three times better than the Costco pack, and I say that as someone who wanted it to be. If you're deciding between the two major varieties, see our [Medjool vs Deglet Noor guide](#). For the budget side of the shelf, our [Deglet Noor buying guide](#) covers it.

Storage in one paragraph

Sealed bag, cool dark pantry: 3-6 months easy. Fridge: up to a year, texture barely changes. Freezer: fine indefinitely, thaw what you need. Soft packs especially reward refrigeration after opening. The complete version, with what the white coating really is, lives in our [date storage guide](#).

Frequently asked questions

Is Jumbo actually more expensive per ounce?

In my test: yes, by 60%. \$0.75/oz for bulk Jumbo vs \$0.47/oz for Large from the same store's shelf. You're buying bigger cells, not better fruit. The one time Jumbo earns its price is when the whole date is the presentation – a cheese board, a gift tray, a chocolate-dipped anything.

Why did the cheapest pack win?

Volume and turnover. The 2-lb Costco pack sells fast, so stock sits less time on the truck and the shelf.

Perishability, not brand, decides Medjool quality – which is why the pack date matters more than the price.

How many Medjool is a serving?

One Large is about 20 g and roughly 66 kcal – and about 16 g of sugar, which is why a "handful" of dates is dessert, not a snack, in my honest bookkeeping. Two or three with coffee; stop there.

See today's Medjool prices side by side

The Finder normalizes every pack to price per ounce and filters by variety, texture, and budget.

[Start the Date Finder](#)

Scan to read this article online



Find DatesOracle on social media

[IG · Instagram](#)

[TU · Tumblr](#)

[TH · Threads](#)

[FB · Facebook](#)

[TW · Twitter](#)

[PI · Pinterest](#)

© 2026 Dates Oracle. All rights reserved.