

Filling the Pantry: Unwrapping Food Packaging History

Heritage
Week 2026

Buy-Low Shopping Bag

2007.001.001



Artifact

Buy-Low Foods opened its first location on Arbutus Street in Vancouver, BC, in 1966.

This reusable shopping bag represents an environmental 'innovation', first appearing in the late 1980s and early 1990s, predating the widespread movement against plastic bags that gained momentum through the 1990s and 2000s.

ca. late 1980's
to mid-1990's

History

During the 1970s and 1980s, packaging design evolved in response to environmental concerns, global politics, and the expanding supermarket industry. Recycling symbols and biodegradable claims appeared on products, though these often served more as marketing tools than genuine environmental improvements. This phenomenon is known as 'greenwashing'.

Virtual Exhibit by the Mission Museum