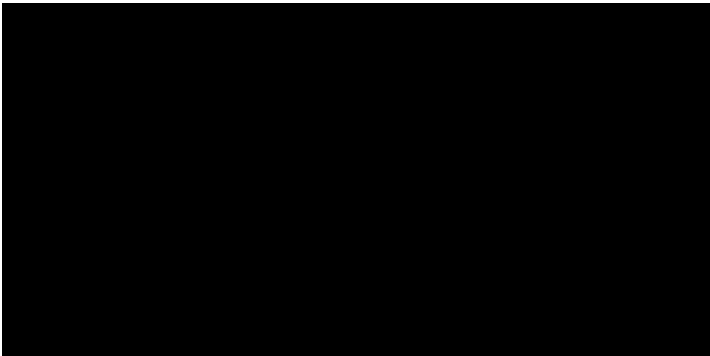


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Amazon's 'No Line, No Checkout' Grocery Stores Are Still In Beta



Ronald Holden, CONTRIBUTOR
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Not Your Father's Rum & Cola



The first Amazon Go store at Amazon's corporate

[+]

Amazon still hasn't opened its cashier-less convenience store in downtown Seattle, Amazon Go, to the public. And its two drive-up stations for AmazonFresh grocery pickup, just north and just south of the downtown core, are also still limited to Amazon employees participating in beta testing, according to a company spokeswoman.

Bloomberg posted a [speculative article](#) last week that suggested the stores were already open, and represented the vanguard of a new Amazon initiative to crack the \$800 billion global food business. "As I'm sure you are aware, we don't comment on rumors or speculations," wrote PR rep Pia Arthur in an email.

Last week, Amazon did trademark the slogan "No Lines. No Checkout. (No, Seriously.)" In the UK, Brexit or no Brexit, the line will be "No Queue. No Checkout. (No, Seriously.)"

Bloomberg's UK reporters have been following rumors of Amazon's pending leap across the Atlantic with great interest, ever since AmazonFresh launched in the UK last year. British supermarket

And, as my colleague Walter Loeb [reported last week](#), Lidl, which operates 10,000 stores around Europe, is also making a major move into North America this summer.

Brick & mortar grocery stores represent an entirely new world for Amazon, which rose to prominence as an online retailer. But the internet requires logistics while groceries require brick & mortar. The AmazonFresh delivery service is a piece of cake by comparison, with workers at a central commissary loading perishable items into bright green totes lined with insulation and filled with refrigerated gel-packs. The average grocery store carries tens of thousands of SKUs (stock-keeping units) that get tracked when their bar codes are scanned at checkout. Keeping track of more than 20 units at a time has, so far, proved more than Amazon's data systems can handle.

Ronald Holden is a Seattle-based food writer. His latest book is [Forking Seattle](#).

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