

The Procrastinator's Guide to Holiday Savings

For many of us, November and December kick off a season of celebrating, family, feasting, and yes…spending. The holidays are a chance to make memories, but this can also be a time of financial stress—especially if you wait until the last minute to make plans. And let's be honest: with high interest rates and student loan payments resuming, many of us are justified in our reticence to spend. Here are a few savings strategies to help you save this season.

TRAVEL

Comparison Shop: Last minute flight or hotel plans? Compare discount sites (like Hopper and Kayak) against airline and hotel sites which may offer promotional discounts if you book direct. You can also compare the cost of one-way tickets, which can be cheaper than round-trip fare.

Flexible Dates & Times: Flying a day earlier or later can significantly reduce the cost of your tickets. Likewise, pay attention to departure times. Early morning or red-eye takeoffs (versus afternoon flights) can trim as much as $100-$200 per ticket.

Alternate Airports: When searching for holiday flights, be sure to include other airports within your filter parameters. Sometimes flying into or out of a smaller airport (even on one leg of the trip) can reduce your total checkout cost.

Bundle Deals: Do you need a rental car or hotel in addition to your flight? Many travel sites offer discounted rates if you book everything together—this one-stop-shop approach also saves you planning time.

Reward Points: If you have accumulated frequent flyer miles or credit card reward points, now is the time to cash in on them. They can trim your travel expenses or even cover the cost of a flight.

GIFTING

DIY Gifts: Thoughtful gifts don't require a big budget or expert crafting – a video tribute, photo book, or curated snack basket for the sweet tooth, coffee lover, or home baker in your life are just a few ideas.

Abundance Swap: Many of us have something in our home that we don't use – an appliance collecting dust or something you were gifted twice. Host a party where your friends or family bring a quality item they'd be happy to swap.

The Gift of Time: The holidays are an especially busy time, and caregiving is often a steep hourly expense. Instead of buying gifts, offer cost-free babysitting or pet sitting to someone who could benefit from a date night or weekend away from home.

Opt for an Outing: Gifts aren't the only way to connect during the holidays. Suggest a group experience you can enjoy together.

Whether it's a holiday performance, snow tubing, or a festive exhibit, experiences are so often what make a season memorable.

FEASTING

Potluck Dinners: Host a potluck dinner where each guest brings a dish to share. This not only reduces the cost and pressure of cooking for a large group but also makes the meal more diverse. You might even walk away with a favorite new recipe!

Dessert or Appetizers Only: If you're tight on funds this season – and still want to enjoy coming together for a meal – host a dessert or appetizer-only gathering where everyone brings something on the smaller side.

Skip the Smorgasbord: The holidays are a hard time for so many households living paycheck-to-paycheck or living without a paycheck at all. You don't need a big budget to make a meaningful impact. In lieu of a lavish meal, donate to your local food bank in your area and encourage others to join you.

HOLIDAY HELPERS

If holiday spending has you feeling stressed, reach out! Our partner GreenPath can help you pay down debt, create a sustainable budget, and connect to free financial courses designed to build a healthy financial foundation year-round.

The Path to Financial Wellness Starts Here

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No matter what your goals may be, our partners at GreenPath can help you take control of your day-to-day financial choices to create more opportunities for achieving your dreams.



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