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# Saving Money: 50 Tips for College Students

Thursday, 14 May 2009

Featured Tip: Save hundreds by renting your textbooks

Being a college student usually means living and surviving on a cheap budget. Some of you may be pretty good at pinching your pennies and getting by, while others take out student loans and get themselves further into debt. Either way, all of us could use some additional advice and ideas on stretching our dollar just a bit further.

Check out these 50 ideas on ways to save money:

## FOOD & DRINK

- Learn how to cook your own meals, it's healthier and you'll save money.
- Don't get a meal plan, the cafeteria food isn't usually that great anyways.
- Bring your own snacks/water to class instead of buying them on campus. Stay away from vending machines.
- Bring your own lunch to school. If you do it right, you can usually make it a healthier lunch than what is offered in the cafeteria.
- If you have a meal plan, actually use it.
- Eat Ramen Noodles.
- Don't get soda when you go out to eat.
- Don't go to Starbucks.
- Buy food in bulk. Get a Costco card with your roommates and get bulk discounts.
- Find events on campus that offer free food for attending. Follow those "Free Pizza" signs!

## HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

- Have a roommate (so you can split expenses).
- Shop at Walmart, Dollar Stores, and thrift stores.
- Shop at garage sales on the weekends for any household items you may need.
- Put on more layers of clothing instead of turning up the heat.
- Buy generic brand items.

## TEXTBOOKS

- Buy used textbooks.
- Buy textbooks online. Maybe even consider buying the e-book version of the textbook.
- Check the library for your required books, you may get lucky!
- Sell back your textbooks.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Use public transportation. Being a college student, you can usually ride for free or at a reduced rate.
- Don't bring a car. They are a huge expense and cost a lot in insurance and gas. Instead, use ZipCar.
- Ride your bike. Except for commuter students, no one needs a car on campus for daily use.
- Live close to campus and use the campus shuttles to save on gas.

## ENTERTAINMENT

- Instead of hitting the clubs, try and find house parties.
- Keep an eye out for free activities on campus. Most college campuses have free entertainment almost every night. For example: some colleges have a weekly movie night that is free to all students.
- Borrow movies from the library. The library has a large collection of movies for students to check out.

## COLLEGE EXPENSES

- Fill out the FAFSA every year.
- Take a look at your college bill. Certain fees are optional. If you won't be using your college's fitness center, remove the fee.
- Depending on dorm prices, it may be cheaper just to get an apartment. (See: Most Expensive College Dorms)
- Don't buy anything from the school's bookstore. Some of the prices they charge are outrageous.
- Go to a community college and get your core classes completed, then transfer to a 4-year college for required classes for your degree. Make sure all your credits will transfer.
- Do not use student loans for anything that is not school related. It's tempting to rack up your credit and loans, knowing you'll eventually pay it back. However, you have no idea how the economy will look when you graduate and you don't want to be in massive debt while job searching.
- Test out of classes. For a small fee you can usually take a test to fulfill certain class requirements. Think of the cost you'll save on tuition.
- Finish in three years if you can.
- Apply for financial aid early.
- Get good grades so you qualify for certain (typically merit-based) grants and scholarships.
- Work as a Resident Advisor and get free room and board.
- Take as many credits as allowed every term.
- Research your school for scholarships. That means taking a look at the website, contacting the admissions office, scholarship office, and faculty to see what's available. Use every resource you have to get the big scholarships while keeping your eyes open for smaller, but still substantial ones. Look for scholarships in the area of your major. Most professional organizations will have scholarships to encourage students to stay in that field.
- Take advantage of student services. There are plenty of free programs that assist you while going to school. From health care to transportation, there are many different ways to save money.
- Take advantage of things that are already paid for, such as on-campus meals and library services.
- Get a job first and have your employer pay for your schooling.
- Don't go to these colleges.

## MONEY TIPS

- Only buy what you need. Don't buy on impulse.

- Don't get a credit card. It's not necessary and you'll end up paying a high interest rate.
- If you do decide to keep a credit card on hand, pay for things with cash as much as you can. Don't run up credit card bills for trivial things.
- Open up a savings account that earns interest.
- Keep track of everything you spend. It really helps to know what you have coming in and going out. Use Mint.com to manage your finances.
- Take advantage of student discounts.
- Not only should you try to save money, but you should also try to make money! Get a campus job. There are several jobs that have very little responsibility, believe it or not, and many times you can do your homework during this time. There are typically many jobs available on campus and most are pretty flexible with your class schedule.

Other Resources:

[Frugal Law Student's 180 Money Saving Tips](#)

[Tired of Ramen Noodles? 27 Penny Pinching Survival Tips For College](#)

[Clever Dude's 12 Tips for Saving Money in College](#)

[118 Ways to Save in College](#)

[40 Money Tips for College Students](#)