



MANAGE YOUR HOLIDAY SPENDING

*Timely holiday tips and
budgeting spreadsheet to help
you spend wisely during the
holiday season.*



HOLIDAY SPENDING TIPS

It's that time of year when stores display holiday decorations, increase inventory, and gear up for the onset of holiday shoppers. But before starting your seasonal shopping, take stock of how much money you have available for holiday spending.

Ideally, you've planned and budgeted for the holidays all year long. If you started last January by developing an annual budget, figuring out how much you wanted to save by the end of the year, and then setting it aside on a monthly basis, you'd be ready to head to the mall.

If not, you can still avoid stress and strain by following these tips on holiday money management.



Taking control of your holiday spending helps you avoid seasonal stress, and allows you to enjoy this time of year with family and friends.

* **SAVE IN ADVANCE.**

It sounds simple – and it is – you must discipline yourself to save a few dollars from each paycheck during the year. If you aren't disciplined enough to save regularly on your own, consider joining an interest-paying holiday savings club at your bank or credit union.

* **MOONLIGHT.**

A great way to earn extra spending money in time for the holidays is to take on a part-time job for a couple months or working overtime. Even better, work a little extra here and there throughout the year, saving most, if not all, for holiday expenses.

* **DRAW NAMES.**

If your list of family and friends is long, suggest this approach to gift giving.

* **CONSIDER ON-LINE OR CATALOG SHOPPING.**

Many find that catalog or on-line shopping helps them stick to a budget since they're not seduced by the million choices available in stores. However, shipping charges will need to be included in your budget. An added advantage is shopping from home and avoiding crowds.

* **ALLOW TIME FOR PLANNING AND COMPARISON SHOPPING.**

Keep your budget in mind and shop carefully to get the best selection and price.

* **BORROW WISELY.**

Credit cards and loans are frequently used to make up for the lack of holiday cash. Both allow you to repay the amount owed over a period of time, although you pay for this advantage in finance charges. Remember to budget for the credit card and/or loan payments you'll have to make.

* **BUDGET FOR PURCHASES.**

Use the attached holiday budget chart to keep track of who's on your shopping list, how much you've budgeted, gift ideas, and estimated expenses.

* **TAKE ADVANTAGES OF SEASONAL BARGAINS.**

Many stores begin their year-end sales during the holiday season. Be alert for bargains, especially if bad weather causes sales to be slow.

Holiday Spending Plan

Amount available
in your budget for
the holidays

\$

| GIFT RECIPIENTS | GIFT CHOICES | SIZES | COLORS | STORES | ESTIMATED COST | PRICE PAID | |
|---|------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----------------|----------------------|----|
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ | |
| <p align="center">INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE HOLIDAY SPENDING PLAN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the total dollar amount available in your budget for holiday spending. Prepare a list of gift recipients and set a budgeted amount for each person's gift. List possible gift choices along with appropriate size, color, and stores carrying items. List miscellaneous expenses (decorations, cards, etc.) and set a budgeted amount. List the estimated cost for each gift choice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the estimated cost for each gift choice against the budgeted amount. Consider another choice if the estimated cost is greater than the budgeted amount. List the price paid against the budgeted amount. Total the price paid amounts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the price paid amounts total against the total amount available for your holiday spending. | | | | | BUDGETED | MISCELLANEOUS | |
| | | | | | \$ | Decorations | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Tree | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Menorah | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Kinara | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Candles | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Cards | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Stamps | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Gift Wrap | \$ |
| | | | | | \$ | Entertainment | \$ |
| \$ | Donations | \$ | | | | | |
| \$ | Travel | \$ | | | | | |
| | | | | | TOTAL | \$ | |

Holiday Spending Plan

Amount available
in your budget for
the holidays

| |
|----|
| \$ |
|----|

| GIFT RECIPIENTS | GIFT CHOICES | SIZES | COLORS | STORES | ESTIMATED COST | PRICE PAID |
|-----------------|--------------|-------|--------|--------|----------------|------------|
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
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| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| NAME | 1. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| BUDGET AMOUNT | 2. | | | | \$ | \$ |
| \$ _____ | 3. | | | | \$ | \$ |

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| TOTAL | \$ | \$ |
|--------------|----|----|



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Ten Tips to Protect Your Credit Card During the Holiday Season

- 1) Limit the number of cards you carry on shopping trips —**
Bring only those that you'll actually use.
- 2) Keep an eye on your card —**
Make sure you get it back promptly after each use.
- 3) Conceal your card while waiting to pay for purchases —**
Someone in line behind you might try to memorize or copy your account number.
- 4) Put your card in a secure place —**
When the cashier returns it to you, don't absent mindedly stick your card in a coat pocket or someplace else where it can easily fall out.
- 5) Treat receipts carefully —**
Check them to see if your account number is hidden (with Xs) except for the last four digits. If the full number is visible on a receipt, don't leave it lying around. When your billing statements arrive, compare them with holiday receipts to help spot any unauthorized charges.
- 6) Be especially selective when shopping online —**
Shop with companies you know and stick to secure Web sites. Look for a locked padlock, an unbroken key or a lock icon (displayed at the bottom or on the status bar of the screen) to determine if a Web site uses security software.
- 7) Don't give out your account number unless you initiate the transaction —**
Watch out for any phone, Internet or mail solicitations that ask you for this information.
- 8) Fill in blanks on receipts —**
When dining out, draw a line through any blank spaces on the receipt (i.e. tip/gratuity space if you leave a cash tip) and total the amounts before signing.
- 9) Don't lend your credit card to anyone —**
That includes family members.
- 10) Sign your card on the back —**
This should be done when a new or replacement card arrives in the mail.