

15 Everyday Discounts for Retirees

It's no surprise that living without a steady income is tough, and millions of retirees know the feeling. Social Security doesn't come close to meeting all your financial needs, and you may not have saved enough to live the lifestyle you want. Alleviate some of the burden by taking advantage of these opportunities for everyday savings. They'll provide a little more freedom (and fun) during your golden years.

1. Groceries The average retired couple spends \$283 a month on food at home, which isn't much, but there are still ways to cut back. In addition to clipping coupons, slash your budget by shopping on scheduled senior discount days. For example, Fred Meyer provides 10% off for shoppers over age 55 on the first Tuesday of every month; other chains provide similar deals. Talk to your local grocery-store managers about the senior benefits they offer.

2. Dining Out You don't need to rely on the early bird special to save on fine dining. There are hundreds of restaurants that welcome seniors with daily deals, which can help you cut back on miscellaneous spending. Check out the 2017 list of senior discounts in restaurants, which includes everything from fast food to sit-down Italian fare.

3. Entertainment The days of full-priced fun are over, thanks to the AARP. Members get access to discounted rates at places like Regal Entertainment Group movie theaters, premium RV sites and campgrounds, and even Las Vegas shows. Ask about senior rates if you don't see them advertised. Entertainment is better with money in the bank.

4. Cars By his or her 76th birthday, according to a Polk research study, the

average American will have owned nine cars. This means that you'll probably buy at least one vehicle during retirement. Taking on an installment loan without a working income can be daunting, but AARP's auto-dealer network provides real-time online quotes and discounts on new and used cars. It also offers deductible and repair reimbursements. As with any car purchase, it's a good idea to review the Kelley Blue Book value and negotiate the price aggressively. That said, buying a car on a retirement budget could be easier than you think.

5. Auto Registration Shave even more off your annual auto budget by cashing in on registration discounts and waivers. For example, in Pennsylvania, retirees who receive Social Security or other retirement benefits need pay only a \$10 processing fee for vehicle registration. To learn the rules in your state, check out the National Conference of State Legislatures' full list of vehicle-registration fees and senior discounts.

6. Public Transit Retired city-dwellers have the benefit of access to public transportation, and the prices usually get better with age. For instance, the Chicago Transit Authority, which includes train and bus lines in the city and suburbs, provides free rides for Illinois residents over 65 who are currently enrolled in the Illinois Department on Aging's Benefit Access Program. Refer to your city's transportation office to take advantage of similar community perks.

7. Travel Retirees spend more on travel than any other age group, to the tune of \$11,077 a year. Although the majority of senior travelers preferred familiar locations, a 2016 Merrill Lynch study found that Italy, Australia, England,

Ireland, and France were also at the top of their wish lists. You don't need to drain your bank account to make it happen; in fact, an AARP membership can secure you a weeklong trip from Seattle to Rome for \$1,237 per person, including airfare and accommodations at a four-star hotel. If you're feeling frugal, check out all-inclusive deals that offer dining, activities, and car access in addition to airfare and hotel stays. Travel sites like **Priceline.com** list senior-specific rates. You can also contact hotels and airlines directly to ask about senior discounts not available online.

8. Cellphone Service Staying connected is important, and senior rates are available for nearly every type of cell plan. For customers age 65 and over, **AT&T** offers a monthly plan for \$29.99 that includes 200 "anytime" minutes and 500 night and weekend minutes. For unlimited talk, text, and data, **T-Mobile US** offers customers age 55 and over a no-contract plan for \$50 a month.

9. Internet A 2014 Pew Research survey found that only 47% of seniors over age 65 had Internet access. If cost is an issue, sign up for FreedomPop.com's free internet service and hot-spot router. For a one-time activation fee of \$19.99, the company provides 500 MB of free data a month, which will get you about 21 hours of web-browsing time. It also offers service plans for as low as \$9.99 a month for 1 GB of data.

10. Medication Saving money on medication is surprisingly easy, thanks to AARP's discount program, which will help you "save an average of 61% on FDA-approved generic, brand name, or specialty drugs, not covered by your current prescription insurance or Medicare Part D plan." If you're not a member, check out individual pharmacy discounts in your local area.

11. Education The cost of college is staggering in the U.S. unless you're retired. State universities and community

colleges regularly provide tuition waivers for senior citizens to attend classes, and even to earn degrees. For instance, Indiana waives 50% of tuition costs for retired residents age 60 and over, up to 9 credit hours per semester. Choose a public college or university, and talk to the bursar's office about state benefits for seniors.

12. Clothing The next time you're shopping for threads, whip out your driver's license. You'll find deals at hundreds of stores, including 10% off at Banana Republic (age 62+), and 15% off at Kohl's (Wednesdays, age 60 and up).

13. Home repairs Major home repairs can cripple your retirement budget, but you may be eligible for state and federal assistance. On the federal level, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides home-repair loans up to \$20,000 and home-repair grants up to \$7,500 for low-income seniors in the same age bracket. Read about the USDA's Very Low-Income Housing Repair Program to learn if you qualify. To learn about local assistance programs, contact your state's office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

14. Insurance Protecting yourself is easier with senior insurance discounts. AARP partners with insurance companies to offer discounted rates on life, health, home, and auto coverage. Shop around and don't forget to take advantage of your membership benefits.

15. Taxes The Internal Revenue Service provides special rules and tax credits for seniors and retirees, including additional deductions for medical expenses, and tax credits for the elderly and disabled. Your senior status could also exempt you from paying taxes on property, Social Security benefits, and retirement-account income. Talk to an accountant about the best ways to save. Living on a retirement budget can be challenging, but there are ways to ease the burden. Take advantage of these savings as they come.



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