

# How to Create a Monthly Spending Tracker on Google Sheets

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With a simple expense tracker built with Google Sheets, you can track your expenses and make sure you don't overspend.

## What should your spending tracker include?

Tracking your spending can seem like a daunting task if you've never done it before, but keeping things simple will help you get started. Start by creating two sheets in your spreadsheet—one to record your expenses and another to summarize and visualize them.

The first worksheet must have at least the following 5 columns:

1. **Location** : The store you visited
2. **Category** : The type of item you purchased
3. **Amount** : The total amount you paid in that transaction
4. **Date** : the date you made the purchase
5. **Month** : The month the purchase date is in - this column will be used to generate the summary.

You may want to go deeper and track each individual item, but doing so will add time to the process and you may lose interest. If you tend to forget what you bought at a store, add a column for quick, general notes or just to keep track of your receipts.

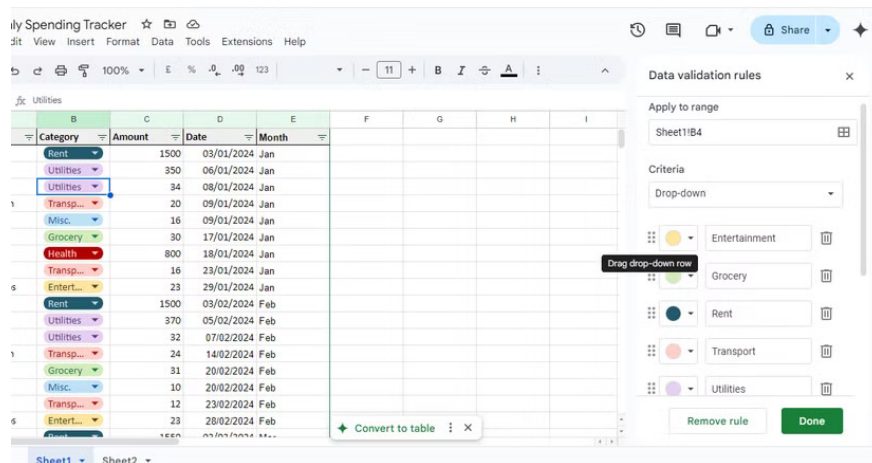
## Create color-coded drop-down menus for spending categories in Google Sheets

Place	Category	Amount	Date	Month
House	Rent	1500	03/01/2024	Jan
Electricity	Utilities	350	06/01/2024	Jan
Water	Utilities	34	08/01/2024	Jan
Gas station	Entertainment	0	09/01/2024	Jan
Amazon	Grocery	6	09/01/2024	Jan
Walmart	Grocery	0	17/01/2024	Jan
Hospital	Rent	0	18/01/2024	Jan
Uber	Transport	6	23/01/2024	Jan
Netflix subs	Transport	3	29/01/2024	Jan
House	Utilities	0	03/02/2024	Feb
Electricity	Misc	0	05/02/2024	Feb
Water	Misc	2	07/02/2024	Feb
Gas station	Health	4	14/02/2024	Feb
Walmart	Misc	1	20/02/2024	Feb
Amazon	Misc	10	20/02/2024	Feb
Uber	Transport	13	23/02/2024	Feb

You can use the drop-down list in Google Sheets to add categories to your transactions. Doing this will allow you to quickly select an option with just a few clicks, instead of having to type it in manually each time. It also helps keep your input consistent, so you can easily find and sort it later.

You can follow these steps:

1. Highlight the **Category** column . Hold **CMD** or **CTRL** , uncheck the header cell.
2. Right-click with your mouse or trackpad. Or, go to **Insert** in the top menu. Click **Dropdown** . This will open the sidebar.
3. Enter the categories you want to include in the text field. Click **Add another item** to create additional options, or you can press **Enter** or **Return** on your keyboard.
4. Color code your categories using the drop-down menu to the left of the text field and press **Done** .



Then, if you want to go back and edit or add to the drop-down list, you can find the menu again by right-clicking on one of the cells and selecting **Dropdown** again . You can also access it through the **Data** menu at the top of the screen, where you select **Data validation** . Now, you will find a list of rules, and you can select the rule you want to use.

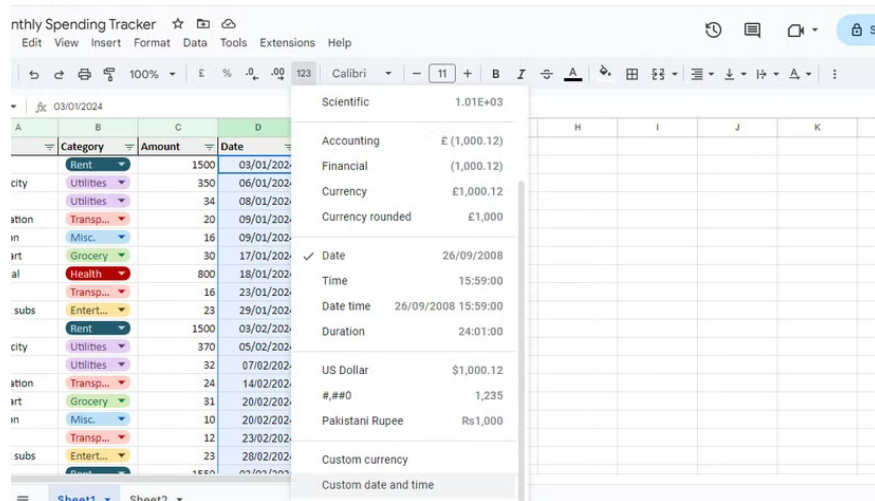
## Tracking tool format

If you want to keep the date and currency formatting consistent in every cell in your Google Sheets, here's how to do it:

## Date format

If you're using a date column and want to keep things consistent, you can add specific formatting to your cells. To do this:

1. Select the entire column by the letter at the top.
2. In your toolbar, click **More formats** - its symbol is **123** .
3. Select **Date** - next to it is an example of how the date will display.

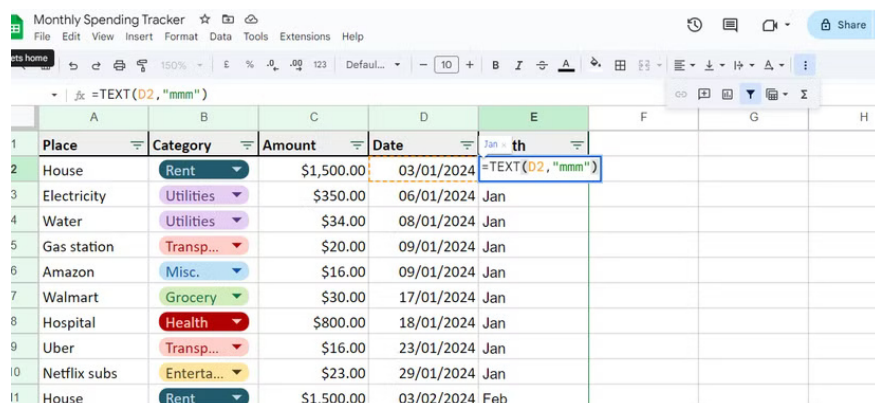


Alternatively, you can do this by going to the **Format** menu at the top and under **Number** , select **Date** or **Custom date and time** .

## Month format

Instead of entering the month every time you enter any transaction, it is better to use the TEXT function to automatically extract and display the month name from the purchase date. To do this, go to the first row in the Month column and enter the following:

```
=TEXT(tham chi?u c?a ô ch?a ngày t??ng ?ng, "mmm")
```



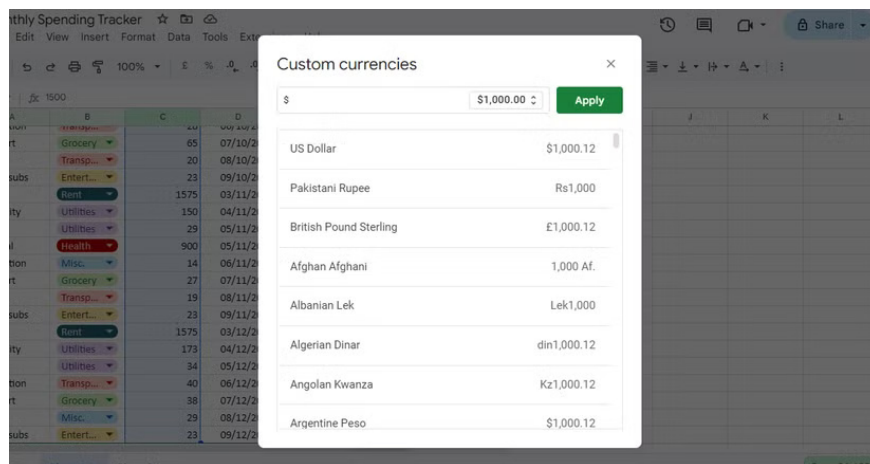
So if the date is in cell D2, the formula would look like this:

```
=TEXT(D2, "mmm")
```

This will return the first three letters of the month in the Month column. Once applied to the first cell, you can highlight the first cell and drag down to apply to other cells in the column.

## Currency format

To add currency formatting to an amount column, select the entire column > **More formats** and click the dollar sign (\$) on the toolbar. You can also find the option in the **Format** menu under **Number**. Here, you can choose **Currency**, **Currency rounded**, and **Custom currency**.



Custom currencies allow you to toggle how decimals and symbols are displayed, specify the type of dollars you're using, or choose a different currency entirely.

## Create cost summary using functions

Once you've created a worksheet to record your expenses, switch to a new worksheet to summarize your expenses.

From cells B1 to M1, enter the first three letters of each month's name. Column N will be used for the total categories. Similarly, from the second cell of column A, start entering the expense categories.

Make sure to include the same categories as in the drop-down list of the first sheet. Once all the categories are entered, the next cell in the column will be used for the Monthly total.

Now that you have the basic structure, it's time to use the SUMIFS function to fill in the summary. This function will sum the selected range if multiple conditions are met.

In cell B2, enter the formula

```
=SUMIFS(Ph?m vi c?t Amount c?a trang tính ??u tiên, Ph?m vi c?t Category c?a trang tính ??u tiên, A2, Ph?m vi c?t Month c?a trang tính ??u tiên, B1).
```

Next, make all cell references absolute by selecting the cell reference and pressing **F4** . Next, remove the \$ sign that appears before 2 (in A2) and **B** (in B1).

Category/Month	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Rent								1575
Utilities			374	520	480	432	408	411
Grocery			51	27	37	38	30	28
Transport			66	18	35	38	37	19
Entertainment	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
Health	800	0	0	0	500	0	0	0
Misc.	16	10	0	13	26	0	0	4
Monthly Total	2789	2002	2057	2077	2664	2125	2106	2077

In the example, the function would look like this:

`=SUMIFS(Sheet2!$C$2:$C$100, Sheet2!$B$2:$B$100, $A2, Sheet2!$E$2:$E$100, B$1)`

After entering the formula, select cell B2 and drag down to the last cell before the Monthly total row. Then, select the entire range from cell **B2** to the last cell before the Monthly total and drag right until column **M** .

Next, in column **N2** , enter the formula `=SUM(B2:M2)` and drag down. Similarly, use the SUM function in Monthly total to add up the expenses of all categories incurred in a particular month.

Category/Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Category Total
Rent	1500	1500	1550	1550	1550	1550	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	18650
Utilities	384	402	425	374	520	480	432	408	411	308	179	207	4530
Grocery	30	31	49	51	27	37	38	30	28	65	27	38	451
Transport	36	36	10	66	18	35	38	37	19	48	19	40	402
Entertainment	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	276
Health	800	0	0	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	900	0	2200
Misc.	16	10	0	13	26	0	0	4	8	0	14	29	120
Monthly Total	2789	2002	2057	2077	2664	2125	2106	2077	2064	2019	2737	1912	26629

Now, whenever you add expenses to the first sheet, Google Sheets will continue to add them to the relevant month and category in the summary. Plus, you can see how much you spend each month and how much you spent on a particular category for the year.

## Visualize costs with pie charts and sparklines

To better understand your spending habits, you can visualize your expenses using Google Sheets.

First, add a sparkline to see how your spending on a specific category changes each month. In cell O2, enter the formula below:

`=SPARKLINE(B2:M2)`

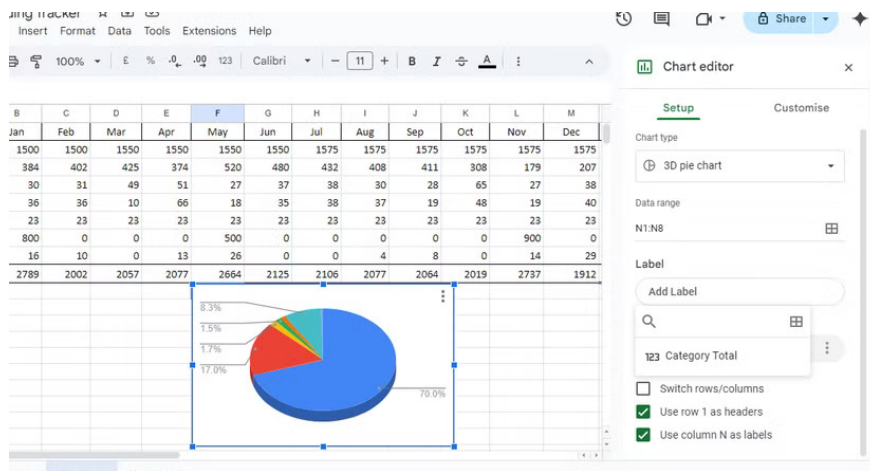
Then scroll down to the last category. You can also customize the appearance of the sparkline.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Category Total	Trend
1	550	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	1575	18650	=SPARKLINE(B2:M2)
2	480	432	408	411	308	179	207	4530						
3	37	38	30	28	65	27	38	451						
4	35	38	37	19	48	19	40	402						
5	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	276						
6	0	0	0	0	0	900	0	2200						
7	0	0	4	8	0	14	29	120						
8	125	2106	2077	2064	2019	2737	1912	26629						

Next, add a pie chart to see a breakdown by category of total costs. To do this, select **Insert > Chart**. This will add a new chart and open the chart editor in the sidebar.

From the chart type drop-down list, select **Pie chart** or **3D Pie chart**. In **Data range**, add the range **N1:N8** (or whatever your last cell is). Then, click **Add label** and the 4 squares icon to select the data range for the label.

Here, enter the range **A1:A8**. Sheets will now display a pie chart showing your cost breakdown.

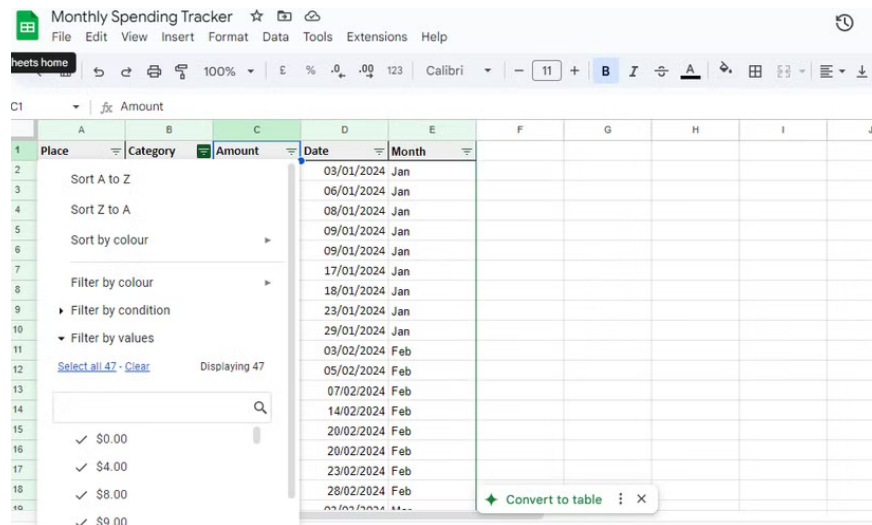


## Use filters to view spending categories

If you want to sort or hide transactions, you can add filters to your Google Sheets. To do this, select the column you want to sort and click the **Create a filter** icon in the toolbar. Three lines will appear next to the column header.

Click on the three lines and you will see a list of options. In the category columns, you can use **Filter by value** to quickly display a category, use the checkbox below the title to select and deselect them by name.

You can also use **Sort A to Z** in the amount column to view your transactions from least expensive to most expensive, or **Sort Z to A** to sort in reverse.



With this simple expense tracker, you can keep a good track of your spending. Plus, unlike templates you download from the internet, if something goes wrong with your spreadsheet, you'll know exactly how to fix it.

You can use the Google Sheets app on your phone to easily enter transactions on the go. That way, you don't have to deal with everything at the end of the month. Better yet, you can create a spreadsheet to plan your spending in advance.

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