

# How to Reduce Entertainment Expenses

Spending money on movies, TV, and special events can cost you a surprising amount over time. The average family spends around thousands per year on entertainment, a number that can be greatly reduced by budgeting. <https://www.valuepenguin...>

Method 1 of 3:

## Budgeting At-Home Entertainment Expenses



**Purchase a cable alternative.** The first step to reducing at-home entertainment costs is ditching cable TV. Instead, choose an online streaming service. Subscribing to one of these companies can give you access to hundreds of movies, TV, and original content for usually lower cost per month. Review your most recent cable bills and find a streaming service with a lower monthly fee.<sup>[2]</sup>

1. Popular video streaming services include: Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, and Acorn TV.<sup>[3]</sup>
2. If you're attached to a certain channel, look for a service that allows you to stream specific channels online (like Sling TV, CBS All Access, HBO Now, or Select TV).

2.



**Listen to music via streaming services.** Instead of purchasing every song you listen to, try a music streaming service. Most services operate as an online library filled with songs that users can hear without downloading. Although these services often have an ad-free subscription for a low cost, many also offer free options.<sup>[4]</sup>

1. Try well-known streaming services like: Pandora, Apple Music, Soundcloud, Spotify, Slacker, and iHeartRadio.<sup>[5]</sup>
2. Test out a free trial before purchasing a subscription.

3.



**Acquire a library card.** Whether you're a bookworm or a casual reader, a library card can save you hundreds on at-home entertainment. Books (paper, audio, or electronic), movies, magazines, newspapers, and music are all available for free or a minimal annual fee. Some libraries even rent out video games or hobby supplies (like cooking tools or board games).<sup>[6]</sup>

1. Libraries also offer free community events like children's read-alongs, book clubs, personal development workshops, or holiday celebrations.

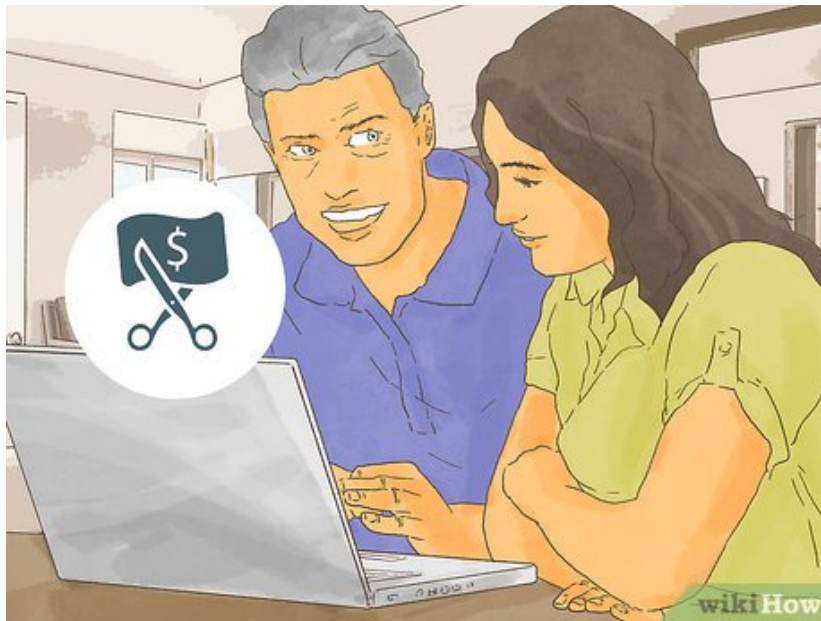
4.



**Rent video games instead of buying them.** You don't have to shell out your paycheck to get the latest game release; opt for a game rental service to play at a reduced cost. This option is especially ideal if you tend not to replay games and want to avoid reselling for less than the game is worth.<sup>[7]</sup>

1. Some services (like Redbox) offer games for a minimal daily fee while others (like Gamefly) operate on a monthly subscription model like movie streaming services.

5.



**Split entertainment memberships with your loved ones.** Share the cost of a music, movie, or video game subscription with a friend or a roommate. If your immediate relatives are interested, some services offer family discounts at a reduced fee.<sup>[8]</sup>

1. Many services (like Netflix) allow users to add multiple users without spending more money.<sup>[9]</sup>

Method 2 of 3:

## Accessing Local Low-Budget Entertainment



**Check out student, senior, or other discounts.** Many entertainment venues offer special offers for seniors, students, certain club members (like the AAA or AARP) and members of the military. Ask about discount options to see if you qualify for any options.<sup>[10]</sup>

1. Talk to your high school or university to learn about student deals offered by local retailers, movie theaters, attractions, or restaurants.
2. Keep government-issued or student IDs on hand in case you need proof of identification.



**Choose matinees over evening movies.** Going to movies at less-popular times (like Monday afternoons instead of Saturday nights) can save you as much as half the ticket's cost. If you can wait, avoid seeing

movies until they hit the discount theaters to save even more.<sup>[11]</sup>

1. Buy your tickets online to receive additional pricing deals or snack coupons.

3.



**Watch for free community events.** Start reading your local newsletters or searching online to catch free city events. Attend free lectures, holiday festivals, concerts, and performances for free or a small cost.<sup>[12]</sup>

1. Areas near universities or high schools often have low-cost plays, concerts, and sporting events open to the public.

4.



**Watch for discount days or happy hours.** Some museums, recreation centers, and other public attractions have yearly free or reduced-fee days for the community. Other places (like swimming pools, bowling alleys, or restaurants) have "happy hours" where their prices are reduced daily or weekly during an allotted time. Keep tabs on places you frequent often and ask about upcoming discount opportunities.

5.



**Buy season passes to your favorite places.** If you or your family frequent your city's zoo, aquarium, museum, or amusement park, buy a season pass. Many season passes cost the amount of visiting two or three times. You might save a bundle each year by paying a little more up front.<sup>[13]</sup>

6.



**Volunteer at special events.** Volunteering is a fun, meaningful way to serve your community while obtaining free admissions to plays, concerts, or festivals. Theater and music productions often bring on volunteers to usher people in or set-up/break sets afterwards. Contact the venue and ask about volunteering opportunities before you buy your ticket.<sup>[14]</sup>

Method 3 of 3:

## Spending Less on Vacation Entertainment

1.



**Travel during your destination's off-season.** Vacationing during the off-season can help you avoid seasonal tourist traps and save money on attractions. Without a large flow of travelers coming in, some entertainment venues might reduce their admissions costs. You'll see more of the city's culture while saving money along the way.<sup>[15]</sup>

2.



**Buy event or plane tickets several months in advance.** Some companies offer as much as 20% discounts for people who purchase tickets in advance. Once you've scheduled your vacation, check how far in advance you can purchase plane or attraction tickets and whether you qualify for discounts.<sup>[16]</sup>

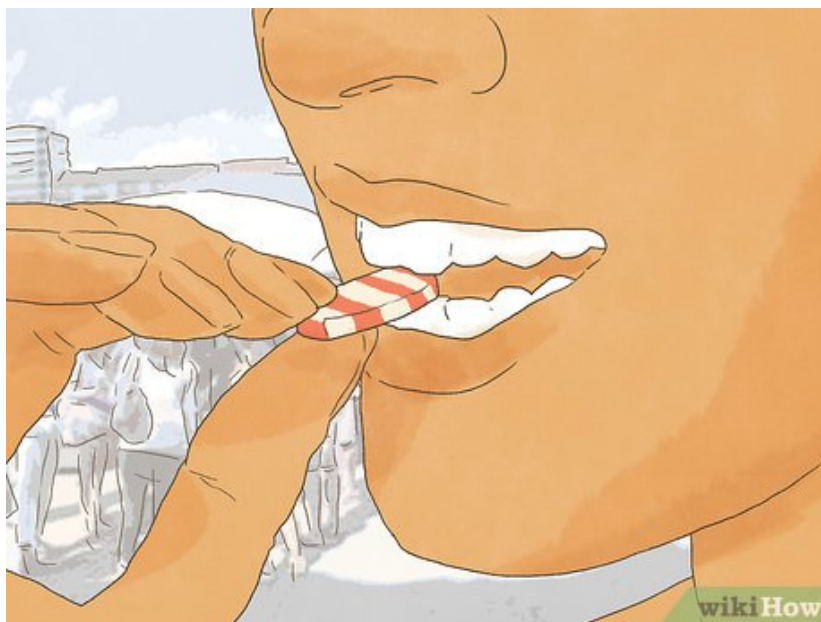
3.



**Purchase group deals online.** Look for entertainment deals in the city you're traveling to online. Coupon websites often have group deals available for popular entertainment options. Searching for group deals may help you find cheap entertainment options that you hadn't considered before.

1. Popular group deal websites include: Groupon, LivingSocial, TravelZoo, and Local Flavor.<sup>[17]</sup>
2. Some vacation apps (like Foursquare or Scoutmob) let vacationers know about city discounts and occasionally offer coupons.<sup>[18]</sup>

4.



**Pack plenty of water and snacks.** Tourist attractions might escalate the price of food and drinks, so take food with you to save money. Choose snacks that will be easy to eat while walking around or participating in the attraction. Always ask the venue about their policies on bringing outside food in beforehand to avoid throwing anything away.<sup>[19]</sup>

5.



**Spend time vacationing outdoors.** Don't forget to spend time outside while traveling, especially since many nature-related activities are free. Check out nearby trails, go on a run or bike ride, or ask locals what their favorite outdoor activities are.<sup>[20]</sup>

1. Rent a campsite to save money on lodging.

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