

Live Well on Less: The American Dream...on a Shoestring

Trace the word "frugality" back to its Latin roots and you may be surprised to learn that it does not mean being cheap. It means enjoying the virtue of getting good value from everything you have in life.

The key to frugality is to consciously reduce expenses so you can use your time, money and energy most effectively.



10 Money-Saving Principles

1. **Don't go shopping unless you really need something.** For many Americans shopping has become a pastime, if not an addiction.
2. **Live within your means.** Buy only what you can afford. Wait until you have enough money to pay cash. This will save your interest charges and provide a waiting period during which you may decide you can do perfectly well without the item.
3. **Take care of what you have.** That includes your health and your possessions.
4. **Don't throw out anything if it is still usable.** That means even if it's useful for a purpose other than what it was originally intended for.
5. **Do it yourself.** Rather than paying other people, learn to do your own taxes...replace broken glass...repair your roof...and perform other vital tasks. If the job is too big, learn enough about it to choose the right person-and make sure he/she does it effectively and economically.
6. **Plan ahead.** Buy what you need at your convenience and at a lower price than you would have to pay in an emergency. Be aware of when you are likely to run out of household items...when your tires are becoming worn...the prices of items so you can recognize a bargain when it comes along.
7. **Research your purchases so you buy the items most appropriate for your purposes.** Example: Buy one pot that can serve multiple uses rather than single task pots. For long-term use, look for durability and quality. Cheap products end up costing more because they wear out rapidly.
8. **Hunt for bargains.** Before buying, comparison-shop. When you are in the store, ask if there is a discount for seniors or for paying cash. Don't be afraid to bargain.
9. **Buy second hand.** If you haven't yet explored thrift stores and garage sales, start doing so now. You may be surprised at the high quality and low prices.
10. **Don't try to impress other people.** Satisfy your own needs, not your expectations of what others will think. Odds are, people around you are so busy trying to impress you that they probably won't notice what you are doing. The best impression you can give them over the years will be how much you have managed to save.

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