

## HOLIDAY SHOPPING ONLINE

As shoppers, we're all looking for good deals. Here's where to find them on the Web.

At Get Me A Deal ([www.getmeadeal.com](http://www.getmeadeal.com)), you tell them the product you want and within 24 hours, they make sure that you get the lowest price and best deal available on the Internet for it. They notify you by email if they can find a good deal. In the process of locating each deal, their shoppers check store rating information from consumer resources like Bizrate, in-stock status of the product, zip code-specific shipping costs, sales tax info, and they check to see if there are any Internet coupons or manufacturer rebates available that might lower the your cost even further. At NexTag ([www.nextag.com](http://www.nextag.com)), you can haggle with several e-tailers at a time where you say what you're willing to pay for a product and then merchants vie for your business. Two similar 'reverse auction' sites are Mygeek.com and Respond.com. BargainDog ([www.bargaindog.com](http://www.bargaindog.com)) sends its members a free personalized e-mail newsletter keeping them updated on the best sales at the best shopping websites. Tell them what types of products interest you - everything from apparel to software - and BargainDog will sniff out the best deals in those categories from hundreds of their affiliated shopping web sites and notify you whenever you want. At Markdown.com ([www.markdown.com](http://www.markdown.com)) you can sign up for their free Markdown Alerts that bring you information about deals on products you're interested in.

InShop ([www.inshop.com](http://www.inshop.com)) gives you the scoop on fashion, shopping and sale events; showing you where to find hot items fast; and offering articles that make your shopping life easier and offers the most up-to-date word on sale and promotional events in your area. The Daily Shopper ([www.dailyshopper.com](http://www.dailyshopper.com)) will tell you what's on sale in your local stores. You browse for items of interest, add them to your computerized shopping list, print out your list, and head out to the stores. Or, if the stores involved have web sites, you can click to buy the items online. Register with the Deal Detective, and you'll get e-mail about sales that fit your wallet. ShoppingList.com is another online guide to offline sales and cover a wide range of stores and products across the U.S.

At Buyer City ([www.buyercity.com](http://www.buyercity.com)), you can place a free ad for a product or service, include the price you are willing to pay, and wait for the merchant's replies to roll in. Another way for merchants and shoppers to get together for deals is at Total Deals ([www.totaldeals.com](http://www.totaldeals.com)). Their unique web site provides a meeting place for online merchants who wish to run promotional limited-time offers and shoppers who are looking for great deals They provide the ability for merchants to "test" price levels, ad content and discount levels against a targeted group of online consumers like you.

There are many sites that offer lists of coupon codes and discounts from many popular web stores. You can really save a bundle by taking advantage of the deals at these sites. My favorite site is [www.mycoupons.com](http://www.mycoupons.com). I check the "Look What I Found" board daily for the best bargain hunting tips.

Other sites to visit to find the very best prices are [www.flamingoworld.com](http://www.flamingoworld.com), [www.dealprovider.com](http://www.dealprovider.com), [www.bizrate.com](http://www.bizrate.com), [www.dealnews.com](http://www.dealnews.com), [www.dealcatcher.com](http://www.dealcatcher.com), [www.couponcraze.com](http://www.couponcraze.com), and [www.amazingbargains.com](http://www.amazingbargains.com),

Another great way for saving money is by signing up with the various rebate sites. This way you can use the online coupons PLUS get money back! Two of the best are Dash and eBates. Each one has listings for various merchants with eBates having the most listings. Your best way to compare while you are shopping is to print out a list of the merchants covered by each site and see which has the best rebate in the cases where more than one lists the same merchant. Each rebate service has its own procedure for qualifying for a rebate through them. Be sure to pay attention to the rules when you sign up! In every case, you must enter the store through the rebate site.

Finally, it is important to be careful when shopping online and practice some safety precautions. Here are some tips:

**Know who you're dealing with.** If you've never heard of the seller, check on its location and reputation with the Better Business Bureau or the state attorney general's office.

**Protect your privacy.** Provide personal information only if you know who's collecting it, why, and how it's going to be used.

**Guard your passwords.** Use different passwords when you're making a purchase than you use to log on to your computer or network.

**Pay the safest way.** A credit card offers the most consumer protections. Order only on a secure server. Look for an unbroken key or padlock at the bottom of the browser window to ensure your transmission is protected. Buy only from Web vendors that protect your financial information when you order online.

**Check shipping and handling fees.** Don't forget to factor these into the cost of the order, and to choose the delivery option that best meets your needs.

**Track your purchases.** Keep printouts of the web pages with details about the transaction, including return policies if you're not satisfied.

Now ....Have fun and get shopping!

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