



BY JIM MILLER

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One of the great perks of growing older in the U.S. is the many discounts that are available to boomers and seniors. If you don't mind admitting your age, here are some tips and tools to help you find them.

Always Ask

The first thing to know is that not all businesses advertise them, but many give senior discounts just for asking, so don't ever be shy to ask. You also need to know that while some discounts are available as soon as you turn 50, many others may not kick in until you turn 55, 60, 62 or 65.

Search Online

Because senior discounts are constantly changing and can vary greatly depending on where you live and the time of the year, the internet is one of your best resources for locating them.

To get started, go to SeniorDiscounts.com, a massive website that lists more than 250,000 discounts on a wide variety of products and services like airlines, car rentals, travel, recreation, local transportation, shopping, restaurants, hotels, state and national parks, medical services, pharmacies, museums, and more.

You can search for discounts by city and state or ZIP code, or by the category you're interested in, for free. Or, for \$13, you can become a premium member and get additional, select discounts.

Another great website for locating 50-and-older discounts is Sciddy.com. Launched in 2011, this site also lets you search for free by city, state or ZIP code, as well as by business or category.

Join a Club

Another good avenue to senior discounts is through membership organizations like AARP, which offers its 50-and-older members a wide variety of discounts through affiliate businesses (see discounts.aarp.org). Annual AARP membership fees are \$16, or less if you join for multiple years.

If, however, you're not a fan of AARP, there are other alternative organizations you can join that also provide discounts, such as The Seniors Coalition or the American Seniors Association. Or, for federal workers, there's the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.

Types of Discounts

Here's a brief rundown of some of the different types of discounts you can expect to find.

Supermarkets: Some locally owned grocery stores offer senior discount programs, as do some chains. You'll need to ask!

Retailers: Many thrift stores and certain retailers like Kohl's, Dressbarn and Ross Stores, offer a break to seniors on a certain day each week.

Travel: Southwest Airlines provide by far the best senior fares in the U.S. to passengers 65 and older, while Amtrak offers a 15-percent discount and Greyhound offers 5 percent off to travelers over 62. And, most hotels in the U.S. offer senior discounts, usually ranging from 10 to 30 percent.

Car Services: If you're renting a car, most car rental companies provide discounts to customers who belong to organizations like AARP. And, some Jiffy Lube and Midas service centers offer discounts to seniors for auto repair and maintenance.

Restaurants: Senior savings are common at restaurants and fast-food establishments, ranging from free coffee, to drinks, to discounts off your total order. Chains known for their senior discounts include McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King, Applebee's, Arby's, Chili's and Friendly's.

Entertainment: Most movie theaters, plays, ballets, symphonies, museums, zoos and aquariums provide reduced admission to seniors over 60 or 65. And, seniors over 62 are eligible to get the "America the Beautiful — Senior Pass" for \$10, which provides a lifetime of free access into all national parks and federal recreational lands.

Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior."

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