

Mother's Day On A Budget

Along with the blossoming flowers, the blazing sunshine and the tinkling bell of the ice cream truck come ideas and plans for celebrating Mother's Day.

Our moms are always there for us, as a sounding board, a virtual treasure trove of advice and to dote on us when we need a little pampering. Mother's Day, then, is when we show them how much we appreciate all they do for us throughout the year.

However, between purchasing the perfect gift, buying mom flowers and dining out, Mother's Day costs can quickly add up to a small fortune. How do you keep within a reasonable budget while still showing mom how much she means to you?

Fortunately, with just a bit of forethought and careful planning, you can save big while still celebrating Mother's Day in style. Here's how:

1.) Frugal flowers

Nothing says "I love you" quite like a vibrantly colored bouquet, but those beautiful blossoms can cost a bundle. Start your savings on mom's flowers by doing some of the work yourself. Instead of relying on the florist to provide the perfect base for the bouquet, bring your own basket from home. Alternatively, you can pick up a cheap but pretty vase at a craft or thrift store, adding a strand of ribbon to customize it to mom's style.

Also, consider shopping your local grocery store or sidewalk stand before visiting a florist. You might find significant savings – such as a bouquet for as little as \$10 – by cutting out the middleman.

Lastly, if you're shopping at a floral shop, be sure to call first to find out when their flowers are delivered so you get the freshest of the bunch.

2.) Gift it right

More difficult than dreaming up the perfect gift for mom is scraping together the money for it. Solve both problems by getting creative. Mom would love something you personally crafted, like a decorated framed photo of a shared memorable moment, or a scrapbook of your best childhood memories. You can even make your mom a playlist of songs that both of you love.

If you'd rather purchase a gift than create one yourself, remember to shop early so you don't feel pressured into buying something you can't afford. Also, don't forget to carefully mine coupon sites like RetailMeNot, Coupons.com and Couponcabin to see if you can snag a deal.

Remember, gifts that show effort and thought matter a lot more than how much you spend.



3.) Dining out (or in) for less

Of course, celebrating Mom's special day won't be complete without sharing a wonderful meal together. But restaurants can be expensive, so don't book reservations without carefully considering if they're absolutely necessary.

Maybe Mom would enjoy a home-cooked meal more than an evening out. You can whip up her favorite foods, set the table with long candlesticks, your finest dishes and best silverware, and enjoy a deluxe, sumptuous dinner at home.

Or throw together a family barbecue. Load the car with Frisbees, balls and kites, pack up a cooler and stake out a corner at the local park. Then, get the grill fired up for a delectable dinner that's fun to prepare and even more fun to eat!

If you've got your heart set on taking mom out to a restaurant, shop around for the best Mother's Day deals. It's worth making a few phone calls and checking out sites like Groupon or LivingSocial before making reservations.

Once you're at the restaurant, save money by checking the left side of the menu first. Restaurants usually put their pricier dishes on the right side of the menu since that's where most people's gazes automatically land. Also, consider sharing a few bigger portions instead of ordering individual plates for every diner. Lastly, be sure to wait a bit between courses so you don't end up with a table full of leftovers that you're too stuffed to eat.

4.) Plan ahead

It's never too early to start saving, and it's not too early to start thinking about next year's Mother's Day. While you obviously can't buy mom flowers that far ahead of time, shop the post-Mother's-Day sales for fantastic deals on greeting cards, wrapping paper and gifts for mom.

It isn't that hard to save on Mother's Day expenses. And it's worth it. After all, no one will be happier to see you saving money than dear sweet mom!

SOURCES*:

<http://www.grandparents.com/money-and-work/saving-and-investing/monday-money-savers-mothers-day>

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