



FOR RELEASE: November 16, 2022

CONTACT: Edgar Dworsky

PHONE: 617-666-5958

Release online at <http://www.consumerworld.org/pubs/shopprs22.pdf>

Consumer version at <http://www.consumerworld.org/pages/shoptips.htm>

TOP 10 TIPS TO BAG A BARGAIN DURING BLACK FRIDAY MONTH ***Expect Earlier Sales, Higher Prices, Lackluster Doorbusters***



(Boston) – Hunting for the best Black Friday deals this year is going to be a month-long challenge for shoppers because of inflation and sales being spread out over weeks rather than being concentrated around Thanksgiving. “To be honest, retailers are taking the fun out of the mad frenzy that used to occur on a single day -- Black Friday itself,” explained Consumer World founder Edgar Dworsky, who has been tracking Black Friday promotions for decades. “Knowing when is the right time is to snatch that great deal is now almost impossible.”

Historically, prices on Black Friday itself are some of the lowest of the year. Now sellers are dividing their Black Friday deals into multiple smaller events throughout November, charging higher prices because of inflation, and keeping the real November 25th bargains secret as long as possible. Many sales will start online before they do at brick and mortar locations, and “club” members like those with Walmart+ will get access ahead of the general public, adding to consumer frustration. So shoppers are advised to keep doing their homework by comparing products and prices, but to strike early if a deal looks good.

Consumer World offers these holiday shopping tips to help bag the best bargains:(available online at <http://www.consumerworld.org/pages/shoptips.htm>):

1. Read the Ads: Preview the Black Friday sale circulars now at blackfriday.gottadeal.com. And to make price comparisons easier, you can also get a list there of sale items by category, such as all HDTVs or laptops. Leaked copies of retailers’ ads are very late again this year so thorough planning is harder. Late shoppers may miss out on deals promoted earlier in the month. Also, get on retailers’ email lists, and check their websites and social media to hear about additional “hidden” bargains and deals.

2. Evaluate the Deals: Not all Black Friday advertised items are the best deals. To separate the ho-hum deals from the good ones, use a pricing tool, such as the Price Checker in Consumer World or camelcamelcamel.com (to compare today’s price for an item to what was charged over the past year at Amazon and other sellers). Don’t be swayed by large percent-off discounts from list prices that no one really pays. If shopping online, find out the total price including shipping and tax (if any). Lastly, be careful about buying from unfamiliar online sellers who promote too-good-to-be-true prices.

3. Research the Right Product: A low price on a lousy product is no bargain. Check websites where professionals evaluate products, such as Consumer Reports, Wirecutter.com, Rtings.com (TVs and electronics), PCMag.com (computers), best/worst toy lists, etc. Check the user reviews posted after most product descriptions at Amazon.com, BestBuy.com, Walmart.com, and other retailers.

4. Save with "Triple Plays": To save the most, combine the primary ways to save: buy items at a good sale price, use percent-off/dollars-off coupons offered by some stores to lower that price even more, and look for items that also have a cash back rebate. Kohl’s tends to have many bonus offers.

5. The Early Bird Gets the (Lackluster) Doorbusters: Find out which day the sales begin online and shop at the beginning of the sale because quantities are very limited, and no rainchecks will be given generally. The same advice applies in-store so be there when the doors open. Opening hours vary because most stores are closed on Thanksgiving this year. Expect early morning 5 am-type openings on Black Friday itself if you choose to venture out rather than shop online.

Look for deals at prices like these in November (check ads for start and end dates):

- **Walmart:** Instant Pot 6-qt.: \$50 (reg. \$79.99)[was Nov. 9];
- **Kohl's:** Small appliances: \$4.99 and \$13.49 after 15% off coupon and \$12 rebate.
- **Macy's:** Deeply discounted luggage sets; Men's boots: \$29.99; Ladies' boots: \$19.99; 20% off coupon (not for specials/bonus buys).
- **J.C. Penney:** Various small appliances: \$12.99-\$19.99 after \$10 rebate.
- **Home Depot:** Genie belt drive garage door opener: \$98 (reg. \$198) but was \$78 last year; Sherpa throws \$9.88. Ends Nov. 23rd.
- **BJ's Wholesale Club:** Select retail/restaurant gift cards: 10-20% off (Nov. 15 – 28).
- **Costco:** Panasonic 1.3 cu. ft. countertop microwave, 1200 watts: \$119.99 (\$40 off).
- **Best Buy:** ???
- **Target:** Apple AirPods 2nd Gen.: \$89.99 (was Nov. 4); Hoover Power Scrub Carpet Shampooer: \$99.99 (reg. 219.99)(was Nov. 4);
- **Old Navy:** 50% off everything in the store (anticipated sale).
- **Also look for:** Google Nest Mini: \$18-\$19.99; Ninja blender/food processor/bullet jars(BL770): \$99.99 at Target, Best Buy, Macy's, Amazon; Discounted restaurant/retail gift cards at drug chains; HDTVs.

6. Beat the Early Birds: Expect some major chains to run Black Friday sales all week starting Sunday or Monday of Thanksgiving week through Black Friday. Some Black Friday sale prices are available now, will start soon, or have ended already. For example, the first part of Walmart's sale event is already over. The second part begins today in stores, and the final part starts online Monday, Nov. 21 at 7 p.m. ET and in-store days later on Friday, Nov. 25 at 6 a.m.. Walmart+ members (\$98/yr) get a seven-hour head start for online sales likely frustrating non-members seeking the hottest items. Target is dropping new sale items every Sunday in November. Home Depot's Black Friday Savings sale runs November 3-23. For other stores, double-check dates/times to determine when each sale begins and whether any particular items are online, in-store, or both. To efficiently check which stores still have hot electronic items in stock, visit HotStock.io. Procrastinators can expect huge sales on Cyber Monday, November 28.

7. Check the Return Policy: Before buying, find out the store's return policy and if return shipping is free for online orders. Many stores have extended their return deadlines into January.

8. Get a Gift Receipt: Make returns easier for gift recipients by asking the store for a gift receipt and include it in the gift box. Without a receipt, a refund may be denied outright, or may be limited to only an equal exchange, or to a merchandise credit for the lowest price the item has sold for in the recent past.

9. Use the Right Credit Card: Certain credit cards offer valuable free benefits. For example, don't be pressured into buying a service contract when you can get up to an extra year of warranty coverage free just by using some better credit cards. Some cards also offer a return protection guarantee (they will refund the purchase price within 90 days if the store will not), or offer a sale price guarantee (they will give you back the difference if an item goes on sale within 60 days of purchase). Be warned, however, that many cards have dropped these benefits, so double-check with your issuer.

10. Save More with Price-Match Guarantees: Stores generally will not honor price matches from Black Friday through Cyber Monday but will after that period. Keep checking the prices of items you bought and you may be entitled to get back some money if the seller or a competitor offers a lower price before Christmas. For example, if Target lowers its prices by December 24, you can get back the difference for items purchased there as early as October 6. Best Buy's policy applies during the return period for select items sold by key online or local competitors.

Consumer World[®], launched in 1995, is a leading public service consumer resource guide. **Edgar Dworsky**, an avid bargain hunter, is the founder of Consumer World, editor of **MousePrint.org** – an educational site devoted to exposing the fine print loopholes in advertising, and a former Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

###