

Black
Friday





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History of Black Friday

Nowadays, we associate the term Black Friday with massive sales that occur after Thanksgiving, but it wasn't always like that. Initially, these words were associated with one of the darkest days in the financial market.

This date, in 1869, saw a financial panic erupt as investors began driving up gold prices, leading to a market crash. As time went on, Black Friday

became a phrase used to describe any unfortunate circumstance or unfavorable situation. Employers later connected Black Friday to the day after Thanksgiving, according to news reports, since they were displeased with the high number of employees taking the day off.

A NEW TERM

In the 1950s, police in Philadelphia began associating the term with the chaotic holiday shopping crowd. Two reporters from the Philadelphia Inquirer have also claimed credit for this shift. Still, some retailers weren't necessarily happy with the association with a Wall Street meltdown. There were attempts to advertise this day as

“Big Friday,” but the idea never gained traction.

Eventually, Black Friday became the accepted name for the shopping day after Thanksgiving. The popularity of these sales and the accompanying crowds grew in the 1970s and '80s, evolving into an annual shopping tradition. Today, Black Friday is understood to symbolize the moment when stores hope to transition from operating at a loss (or being “in the red”) to turning a profit for the year.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

Black Friday has a way of drawing in-person shoppers. Some 75 million are regularly reported in brick-and-mortar stores on Black Friday. These numbers

have continued to steadily tick up after the easing of pandemic-related restrictions. Consumers spend an average of well over \$325 over the weekend, another consistently increasing number.

Still, some opted out of the traditional Door Buster sales on Black Friday for one of several reasons. They may have turned to online retail options, taken advantage of the prevalence of earlier sales, or simply been concerned about inflation and recent interest rate hikes. Online Black Friday sales continue to reach new annual highs in the billions of dollars. As a new tradition was born, the surge in web purchases was primarily found in categories like electronics, toys, exercise equipment and smart home devices.

The Role of Social Media

Those who have exceptional social media skills can capitalize on them once Black Friday returns.

Whether you frequent Facebook, Instagram, X or Pinterest, here's a chance to leverage your preferred platform to exchange shopping insights and discover amazing deals.

Businesses are increasingly aware of this growing retail audience. It has them allocating more resources to social media advertising to the tune of some half a billion dollars. That provides yet another source of valuable shopping information. One recent study revealed that two-thirds of shoppers now incorporate social media into their shopping strategy. YouTube has emerged as a top platform for researching purchases, followed by Facebook and Instagram.

LOOK FOR EXPERTS

Begin by identifying influencers whom you trust to offer candid and reliable shopping advice. They may be live-streamers, faithful members of a mom community or YouTube content creators. Connect with them to gain the latest insight on the products on your shopping list – and the best places to purchase them. Do they know of local



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alternatives to major retailers? Can they recommend where to find valuable coupons? Seek out videos comparing different brands and highlighting potential pitfalls. You'll be joining more than one-third of all shoppers who turn to social media influencers for this kind of research.

FOLLOW THE HASHTAGS

Hashtags serve as a guide to relevant conversations that

might pique your buying interest. During this time of year, some popular shopping hashtags include #BlackFriday, of course, but also variants like #BlackFridaydeals and #BlackFridaysales as well as #shoplocal and #CyberMonday, among others. Instagram plays host to a #BuyBlack initiative each November to promote Black-owned businesses.

CONNECT WITH RETAILERS

Remember to connect directly with your favorite stores, as well. They often provide exclusive deals and promotions through their Facebook, Instagram, and X feeds – especially on Black Friday. Some even reward customers who follow or like their official accounts with special incentives and discounts. It's a great way to find

exclusive offers.

SHARE IT ALL

Share your shopping finds on your own social media platforms! Consider creating a Facebook group or a Pinterest page where you can post about your finds or assist others in finding items they're searching for. You'll strengthen a community of fellow shoppers who can sniff out all the best deals.

Make the Most of It

This really is the most wonderful time of the year. To maximize your savings, however, you'll have to get organized well in advance.

The better your plan, the better your Black Friday experience.

SHOPPING LIST

Not every item is discounted during Black Friday sales, so it's smart to compile a shopping list that budgets each item individually. Your list might consist of anything from smartphones, TVs and clothing, to laptops and appliances. Some of these items could be on sale – but some may not be marked down. A shopping list serves as a great reminder of your natural budget constraints. Consider waiting until any regular-price items go on sale at a later time. Stores sometimes have more general percent-off sales tied to Black Friday, but be sure to double-check individual items to make certain that they qualify.

MAPPING IT OUT

Prepare for the big day by noting relevant Black Friday advertisements in online ads, circulars or broadcast spots. They'll provide specific information about the items on sale, while helping you plan a shopping route based on opening times. Some stores may have



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special early-morning hours, while others will follow their regular holiday schedules. Proximity to your home may play a role in how you approach things, too.

If all things are equal, consider starting with the store that's farthest away and then work your way back. If you have

a particular item that is a top priority, however, you may want to begin at that store to avoid falling behind other early-bird shoppers. Exclusive Black Friday deals may have only a limited number of those items available. Electronics can sell out quickly if there is high demand for a new release.

GET A HEAD START

Some of the most important planning takes place well before November.

Sign up for loyalty programs, mailing lists or other pre-sale offers to unlock additional savings. Retailers often share exclusive extra discounts or valuable coupons through

these channels that can enhance your Black Friday savings. You'll be able to take advantage of subsequent offers and enjoy savings all year round. Promotional communications with your favorite stores provide reminders about key details like store hours.

Plan Your Shopping Meals

Amid the hustle and bustle of the year's busiest shopping day, you might discover that you never made time to eat.

That can put your entire Black Friday at risk. There's the risk of missing out on a hoped-for item when you finally stop for a quick bite. Or worse, you simply run out of gas due to lack of nutrition. Meal planning is the key.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Food may be the last thing on your mind after indulging in the usual Thanksgiving feast. But if you don't carefully plan things out, you may end up making impulsive decisions driven by hunger. Sugary treats provide a quick boost, but also a quick crash. You could completely run out of energy on a day when every moment counts.

GETTING STARTED

Eat a light meal before going shopping, even if you had a Thanksgiving meal and plan to attend a midnight sale. Experts suggest a protein-carb combination of leftovers such as slices of turkey, green beans, and a portion of baked potato. Next morning shoppers should have a light, healthy breakfast that's high in protein and fiber. Avoid pastries, leftover desserts and processed cereal. Instead, dig into the leftovers by making an omelet with



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turkey and veggies, or a turkey sandwich on a bagel.

WHAT TO BRING

Now, you're ready to go. Remember that packing your own food is a very effective strategy for maintaining healthy eating habits throughout the shopping experience.

Bring your snacks or a small lunch in a cooler, rather than stuffing things in a handbag or backpack.

A LUNCH BREAK

If you'd like something a bit more complex, agree to a stopping point during the day for a visit to a local eatery. The

promise of a meal can help you resist the impulse to indulge in treats and snacks along the way.

DON'T FORGET THE WATER

Remember to bring a water bottle while shopping to avoid dehydration. Experts

recommend drinking regularly, while refilling a personal water bottle throughout the day. Purchasing water bottles while shopping can be expensive and harmful to the environment. Don't forget to hydrate once you return home from shopping, just as you would after exercising.

Shopping Local

Most of the ads in your feed, email box and broadcast outlets will be keyed to the largest stores in your area — but there are compelling reasons to seek out Black Friday deals at smaller, local stores.

KEEP MONEY IN TOWN

For every dollar spent locally, experts say three times that amount circulates within the local economy. The same principle applies to online shopping, as well. Local businesses typically source supplies from other local businesses. Their employees pay rent locally, do their own shopping in the community, and dine at neighborhood spots. So, multiple businesses will benefit from your Black Friday spending.

PERSONAL SERVICE

A hallmark of small businesses is their focus on providing excellent service. They prioritize customer satisfaction, working hard to ensure that you recommend their business to others and keep coming back. You'll be offered personalized attention and unique products, creating a shopping experience that's more tailored to your needs. Small businesses choose

products based on local interests, resulting in more individualized choices for consumers. Pricing might also be more competitive at local businesses.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Beyond providing important employment opportunities to your neighbors, your neighborhood shopkeeper is likely deeply involved with the community. These hometown businesses funnel support

into the surrounding city by paying taxes to support schools, roads and parks. They develop key partnerships with local non-profit organizations. In fact, local non-profits receive far more funding from local small businesses than from out-of-town retailers.

THEY'RE EARTH-FRIENDLY

Shopping at local businesses is earth-friendly, too. By purchasing locally, you are

reducing your carbon footprint since the products don't have to be transported long distances. And in some cases, you may be able to walk to your favorite local business, avoiding the hassle of traffic and parking while using fewer resources.

TIPS FOR RETAILERS

Small business owners also have an opportunity to take advantage of the year's biggest revenue-generating day.

Create a festive atmosphere in your store, while introducing new merchandise and exciting discount opportunities. Provide a break from the chaos surrounding Black Friday at larger retail locations by offering complimentary hot coffee or cocoa, small treats and comfortable seating so customers can relax. If you can't compete with the deals offered by big-box stores, highlight the personal touches that set your business apart.





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Stick to Your Budget

Don't ruin the chance for huge Black Friday discounts by creating a substantial new credit card bill.

As you go about your day, it's easy to get caught up in potential point-of-sale savings without considering your personal spending limit. The convenience of online shopping makes it even more tempting to overspend – then you may face lingering debts until the next holiday season.

Instead, establish a budget for your intended purchases and pledge to stick

to it. Consider using spending apps to help manage your available funds while boosting your savings. Credit cards are fine if they offer tandem cash-back rewards or special promotions, but otherwise, aim to spend within your means.

Escalating interest rates have made this kind of shopping error even worse over the long term. Americans have now accumulated hundreds of billions in revolving debt from credit cards, with the average household paying more than \$1,000 a month in interest charges alone. Don't let the excitement of Black Friday dissolve into regret because your credit card bills ballooned after the holiday season has passed.

SAVE ALL YEAR

Paying with checks or cash on hand is the most straightforward way to stick to your budget while avoiding excessive credit card debt. Save money throughout the year for Black Friday. Consider opening a holiday savings account.

Your local banker may have account options with higher interest rates, and that could allow your money to grow faster over the course of the year. Of course, this requires a good bit of daily discipline – but there's help. Download spending apps that will assist with monitoring expenses while offering strategies to reduce spending and increase savings.

WHEN TO CHARGE IT

Sometimes buying with cash just doesn't make sense. In fact, as odd as it may sound, there are situations where using credit is financially beneficial.

Some credit cards offer cash back, rewards or points on specific purchases, creating important additional savings or perks. This can significantly enhance your purchasing power without incurring extra costs – but only if you quickly address this new debt.

Pay off the card balance as promptly as possible to avoid interest charges that would diminish your savings.

Staying Safe

Black Friday tends to foster a sense of competition among deal-hungry shoppers. You're surrounded by enticing deals and there may be limited availability, too. At the same time, unscrupulous individuals may look to take advantage of distracted shoppers. Here's how to stay safe on Black Friday.

BE AWARE OF DANGERS

Black Friday involves an inherent risk if there is a frenzied rush to secure a heavily discounted or highly desired item. History shows what happens when these situations go badly: More than a dozen people have died on Black Friday over the last 20 years, and there have been hundreds of injuries. Verbal altercations and physical confrontations can and do happen. These mishaps are completely avoidable since no gift is worth putting yourself or others at risk. The risk of running into pickpockets, purse snatchers or petty thieves is also greater in these crowded situations.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Create a schedule and share



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it with friends and family so everyone is aware of your whereabouts and the estimated time you'll be away. This is important since you may be momentarily unreachable because of the natural distractions or noise associated with Black Friday.

FOR CAMPERS

Truly dedicated shoppers

may attempt to secure the very best deals by arriving very early or even camping out in front of the store. Make sure the store is located in high-traffic areas, and select a spot that is well-lit. Ask whether store management plans to hire additional security to patrol the premises. Bring a tent for privacy and protection against the

elements, and don't forget your sleeping bag. Pack an external battery to power lights and your phone. Be prepared to pass the time with books, music or games.

INSIDE THE STORE

Keep your phone in a location where you can easily hear it ring or feel it vibrate, and ensure that it's fully

charged. Be aware of your purse, handbag or backpack at all times. Credit cards provide another layer of security, since they can be swiftly deactivated if you misplace them or have them stolen.

When shopping, pair up with a friend if possible. Establish specific points so you can meet up later. Share contact numbers.