

10 Things You'll Regret Buying Too Cheap



This is a nation of bargain hunters, addicted to thrift, but there are times the cheapest option just doesn't make sense. An item is no bargain when it must be replaced often; when more must be used to do the job; or when the cost in aggravation exceeds the cost in dollars. Instead, look for discounts on high-quality items, and even try haggling. Whatever you do, don't scrimp on these 10 things -- you get what you pay for.

Toilet paper. The cheapest toilet paper is single-ply and needs to be folded over several times to be useable. There's no savings when the rolls run out so much faster. And why use a product that's scratchy and rough? Paper towels are a similar case: The cheap stuff falls apart easily, requiring more to soak up the same spills.

Mattress. Everyone needs a good night's sleep to function properly, and anything that helps the cause is worth a splurge. Although price doesn't necessarily correlate with quality in this market, a super-cheap foam mattress likely isn't going to cut it night after night. Any mattress that causes sleeplessness or back pain -- any pain, really -- shouldn't be tolerated.

Paint. Painting is a chore and no one wants to do more coats than necessary. Expensive paint usually claims low or no volatile organic compounds, so there are no fumes and a room can be used as soon as the walls dry. More evenly distributed pigment and higher-grade resins make it easier to apply the expensive stuff. It's usually more durable and easier to clean, as well.

Tires. Tires are a huge expense, particularly for an SUV, and the temptation to save money is strong. It's possible get several years' wear out of cheap tires on perfectly smooth roads. That

said, Popular Mechanics warns that poor tires can make the ride a perpetual headache (sometimes literally). The experts there suggest buying the tires that came with the car to get the best ride.

Winter Boots. Cheap winter boots are a misery. They may start out waterproof, but that won't last through snow and mud. There are plenty of ways to save money on warm -- and possibly even fashionable -- waterproof boots. Buy at preseason sales for a better selection or when the season is over for even more savings. A really good pair of winter boots can last for years, so the price per wear might actually be higher for a cheap pair that must be replaced every winter.

Insurance. Regular doctor visits and early diagnostic tests can prevent future expenses, and sufficient health insurance helps keep costs from spiraling out of control. At a minimum, high-deductible insurance means an unexpected hospital visit won't result in bankruptcy. The same goes for insuring a house. No matter how careful an owner or renter is, not every disaster can be avoided, so it's smart to have enough insurance to cover emergencies when they happen.

Knives. A good kitchen knife is the basis of all cooking, so a cheap one -- a knife that can't cut easily through an onion without catching or slipping, for instance -- makes for daily irritation and is dangerous and wasteful. It's not necessary to buy the top of the line, but at the very least, a cook needs knives that feel good in the hand. A knives should be well-balanced and heavy enough to cut through chicken bones. A set of eight is not necessary; if you can afford only one, a good 8-inch chef's knife is the one to get. It can last a lifetime.

Dish Detergent. Cheap dish detergent typically contains a lot more water and a lot less detergent than pricier brands. That means more is required to get dishes clean. Might as well buy the good stuff and replenish less often.

Tools. It might be okay to buy a cheap tool for a job that's unlikely to arise again. And some small items, such as a level, start at just a few dollars. But tools such as screwdrivers, hammers, and power drills likely will be used a lot. Buy good ones that will safely accomplish common tasks and pass them down to the children.

Chocolate. There's no point in buying mediocre chocolate. The good stuff may actually save money: A small square of gourmet chocolate is more satisfying than a bar sold for a buck at a gas station.

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