

Surprising things you can get for FREE

Free classes

- U.S. Small Business Administration. Learn how to write a business plan, register your company, and deal with the tax details of running a home business at your local Women's Business Center evening classes (men are welcome, too).

What's the Catch? Novices and more advanced learners share the same classroom.

Find Out More: <http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html> (click on "Local Resources" for a nearby center and for financial and marketing information).

- Apple Stores. Apple gives excellent classes on business and entertainment software, music programs, and computer basics, all remarkably free of sales pitches. There are also classes on how to use Apple hardware, like iPods. Most of the company's stores -- there are more than 170 -- offer several classes a day.

What's the Catch? All classes relate to (often pricey) Apple products.

Find Out More: <http://www.apple.com/retail/> (click on "Visit an Apple store").

Free culture

- Museum visits. While some museums don't charge an admission fee, others can cost \$20 and up (more than a movie!). Take advantage of free days, half days, and nights that take place weekly or monthly at various institutions throughout the United States.

What's the Catch? The free-admission times tend to attract large crowds; expect long lines and less of an opportunity to get up close and personal with a Cézanne.

Find Out More: Check out the Web sites of your local museums.

- Music Together, Music for Aardvarks, Gymboree. These three companies all offer a complimentary peek at exactly what baby music classes entail (hint: plenty of drumbeating, rattle shaking, and scarf throwing). It's a great way to introduce your little one to the experience before shelling out \$135 to \$255 for a full term (generally 10 to 12 weeks).

What's the Catch? Many parents have been taking classes together for a while, so they can be quite chummy. As an observer, you might feel left out and too shy to participate fully.

Find Out More: <http://www.musictogether.com/ClassLocator.aspx>,
<http://www.musictogether.com/ClassLocator.aspx>,
<http://www.musictogether.com/ClassLocator.aspx>.

- Kids' Night on Broadway. Once a year (this year it was in late January), children ages 6 to 18 can experience the Great White Way for free with a full-paying adult. There are also Kids' Nights for nationally touring shows throughout the year.

What's the Catch? Tickets go very fast, especially for the most popular shows.

Find Out More: <http://www.kidsnightonbroadway.com/kids.php>.

Tip: To find out about free movies and concerts in your area, go to Yahoo or Google and type in the kind of entertainment, "free," and the name of your city.

Free gyms

- Health-club trials. LA Fitness, Bally Total Fitness, the Sports Club/LA, and Gold's Gym have a range of free-trial offers, from one day to two weeks, for prospective members, as do many other gyms throughout the country. Rules vary.

What's the Catch? You often have to tour the health club with a sales representative, which sometimes takes as long as an hour. Some gym companies may require you to prove nearby residence with a driver's license.

Find Out More: Go to the gyms for details.

Free photos

- Adorama, Dotphoto, Kodak, Snapfish. In addition to photo sharing and online albums, these popular services provide 15 to 50 free prints when you sign up.

What's the Catch? You have to pay for shipping, which usually isn't more than a few dollars.

Find Out More: <https://www.dotphoto.com/join.asp> <http://www.snapfish.com/registration>

Free pets

- Craigslist Community Pet Listings, Petfinder.com. Unlike shelters, most of which charge a small adoption fee, these sites feature numerous free-pet notices posted by owners, usually as a result of an impending move or an allergic family member.

What's the Catch? Not all the owners who post notices are as honest as you'd wish. Out-of-control animals can be listed as "friendly and calm."

Find Out More: www.craigslist.org (click on your city, then on "Pets"), www.craigslist.org (click on "Classified Ads").

Free phone services

- The Popularity Dialer. Want to flee that meeting? Get out of lunch after an hour? The Web-based Popularity Dialer can place one of five fake calls: the boss call, the cousin-in-need call, the male-friend call, the female-friend call, or the affirmation call (reminding you that you're wonderful). Each recording includes convenient pauses for your side of the conversation.

What's the Catch? You need to know beforehand that you'll want rescuing and you have to be willing to break social graces by taking a phone call in the middle of a meeting or lunch.

Find Out More: www.popularitydialer.com.

- 800-FREE-411. Instead of dialing 411 and being charged 50 cents to \$1.50, call this service, from a cell or a landline, for free nationwide directory assistance.

What's the Catch? You have to listen to a 20-second ad before receiving your number.

Find Out More: 800-373-3411 (800-FREE-411).

- Skype. Download and install free Skype software and call other Skype users, computer to computer, at no charge, anywhere in the world. If you have a webcam, you can see whom you're chatting with, too.

What's the Catch? If you don't have DSL or a cable modem, it may be more cost-effective (money- and sanity-wise) to dial up the old-fashioned way.

Find Out More: www.skype.com.

Free e-mail reminders

- Memo to Me. Avoid visits to the "belated birthday" or "so sorry I missed our anniversary" section of your local card store. Memo to Me reminds you before the event. Just plug in your e-mail, choose a password, and program the events you need to be reminded of and when you need the reminders. Whether it's Grandma's 80th or your own anniversary, no one wants to be the one who forgets.

What's the Catch? There's some innocuous advertising on the Web site.

Find Out More: www.memotome.com.

Tip: E-cards have gotten less corny. You can find witty and well-designed cards at www.hipstercards.com, vintage ones at www.cardcow.com, and photographic ones at ecard.digiart.ee.

Free ice cream

- Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day. On one day every year (this year, April ??), all of the more than 600 Ben & Jerry's stores worldwide offer free cones, with no limit -- eat all the Cherry Garcia you'd like.

What's the Catch? There are often long lines, and popular flavors, like Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, run out early.

Find Out More: www.benandjerrys.com for stores.

Free used books

- PaperBackSwap.com, TitleTrader. List the books that you'd like to get rid of, then wait for someone to request one, which can take as little as eight minutes. Mail your book to the person and you'll receive a credit to choose your own book. PaperBackSwap.com involves only paperbacks, which keeps shipping cheap, usually about \$1.60 per book. TitleTrader also lists DVDs, CDs, and VHS cassettes and can rack up higher costs with heavy hardbacks, though shipping rarely tops \$4 at the book rate.

What's the Catch? Popular fiction moves fast, while classic and esoteric titles may stay put for months.

Find Out More: www.paperbackswap.com, www.titletrader.com.

Free household items

- The Freecycle Network. This nonprofit community group with an environmental mission lets users "recycle" unwanted items by posting ads on local online bulletin boards. If you see a chair or a computer that you'd like, respond to the ad. The site is a great way to acquire a perfectly good coffeemaker or piano while doing your part to reduce waste.

What's the Catch? You're responsible for getting the stuff home.

Find Out More: www.freecycle.org to find a group.

Free (and worth it) samples

Many free-product programs come with hidden costs. The ones below are legit. Sign up for one and your in-box may be inundated, but there's also an outside chance you'll end up with a flat-screen TV.

- Start Sampling (www.startsampling.com) connects manufacturers with consumers who test products. Type in your demographic information and you'll see a screen listing your free-sample options -- everything from cleaning products to Harlequin romance novels to toiletries.
- Kiehl's (800-543-4572) hands out samples of every product it sells approximately 10 million giveaways a year. Request samples at a Kiehl's store (where the selection is usually larger) or a Kiehl's counter in a department store. Or call Kiehl's and tell the operator what you'd like to try and the company will send you up to three samples.
- Programs from American Consumer Opinion and E-Poll (www.acop.com, www.epoll.com) allow users to take product surveys to get cash (\$4 to \$25 per survey), samples (ranging from pizza sauce to even the rare flat-screen TV), or points (which can be redeemed for gift cards from retailers such as Amazon.com and Target).
- Oil of Olay's sample program (www.olay.com; click on "Samples & Offers") gives away small sizes of its newest products.
- Sephora stores (www.sephora.com for locations) offer generous samples from the more than 150 cosmetics lines they carry. Just ask and a salesperson will hand you a packaged sample or fill jars with requested products for free.
- Procter & Gamble's Home Made Simple and Tide e-newsletters (www.homemadesimple.com, www.tide.com) entitle you to discount coupons and new-product samples. [E-mail to a friend](#)

Calls and Text Messages

You can get 500mb of data absolutely free every single month from **FreedomPop**.

Free texting is now possible using apps like Textfree app (**Android - iOS**).

If you like the spontaneity of voice calling, switch to the free **Viber** or **Skype Mobile**.

Cable/Satellite

You can watch a lot of shows for free on Hulu. They have extensive listing that includes contents from premium channels; you can count Lifetime and History plus HGTV among them.

You can also use the good ol antenna to find free TV programming. In the US, virtually all networks have at least 2 channels of programming, which broaden the likelihood you can find more free content (if you are not sure, go to antennaweb.org to see detailed listing of channels according to location)

Free Museum Tickets

It is common practice for museums to open up their doors once a while, without requiring any ticket.

The most direct approach is to use your Google search with terms like “free admission,” “FOC,” “no ticket,” etc, and end it with the museum name.

Or go to SavvyCities; start with the probable location of the museum(s), move on to the “attractions” tab and then the “museum free days” option.

You get a detailed display of museums that fit into that category.

Internet

Why pay cash to your Internet service provider when you can get just as unfettered access to Internet via the many WiFi free hot spots.

If you are lucky enough to have FreedomPop in your region, their 4G wireless Internet is an entirely free option.

Productivity Software

Productivity software like Microsoft’s MS Office can be very expensive.

But thankfully we have a very equal competition in the form of Apache OpenOffice suite, which are free to download.

Another great free alternative is the Google Docs.

Prescription Medications

The traditional practice is to sign up on some loyalty program with the big pharmaceutical companies to get prescription medicines free or cheap.

Now supermarkets have got into the game and you can actually get some dose of antibiotics, diabetes medications and generic drugs FOC (some would require a small fee) when promotions are on.

I am referring to Giant Eagle, Publix, PriceChopper, Meijer and more. On occasions, big pharmaceutical companies may dispense free medicine if you fit into a pre-described profile. Often this is a clinical trial on some new drugs.

To find eligible programs search the RxAssist database.

Haircuts

Many cosmetology schools offer free haircuts.

If you don't mind your hair being attended to by a young apprentice, you can expect your haircut to be free.

You can find cosmetology schools near you by using the Beauty Schools Directory site.

Another option is to check for salons that offer free cuts in exchange for you donating your hair to Locks of love.

To find participating salons, either look for the Locks of Love decal sticker on the salon window, or search online for "Locks of Love Salon" followed by your city name.

8. Gym Membership

If you go to commercial gym, you have to pay for your membership. But you could have found similar amenities from other places, which allow you free access.

One of my favorites is church.

Nowadays, modern churches are often equipped with a gym.

Sure, the exercise room is not as completely equipped as a commercial gym. But the basic stuff that strengthen your muscles, build your stamina and provide resistance training are all there.

In addition, you can search the web or the library for materials that are related to fitness training that does not make use of the popular dumbbells, exercise bench and all.

Movie Subscriptions

You can of course use Hulu or Crackle to watch free movies and shows.

But if you are after the new releases, you can sign up with RedBox to receive text messages, and each month, on the first Monday, they'll send you a free rental code that you can use to rent a new movie for free.

To sign up for it, simply text OFFERS to 727272.

Long Distance Calls

Using the landline to make the long-distance call is pointless, as you achieve better economy even with cellphone.

Make a habit of making calls using Skype or Google's Free Calls via Gmail.

Dental Care

To get free or heavily discounted dental treatment, checkout the medical schools that provide dentistry study.

Even if the treatment is to be performed by the students, these schools often take it upon themselves to make sure that correct process is followed and correct administrations are executed. So that reduces the risk of a botched operation by a rogue dentist wannabe.

To find local dental schools check out [this page](#) on the American Dental Education Association's official website.

The first approach works regardless of your financial status.

However, if you belong to the lower-income bracket, you can find out from the local health authority if there is any subsidized (or free) dental care.

The third option for you is to check out [DentistryFromtheHeart.org](#).

They are a not-for-profit organization that dispatch dentists to various regions to perform free dental services.

Antivirus Software

Microsoft allows you to exchange your current antivirus subscription with their brand-new MS Security Essentials.

For an even better deal, you can try out free AVG or Avast antivirus.

Without even spending a penny, you can prevent virus and malware from attacking your PC.

International Text Messaging

Seasoned travelers know that whenever they step out of the national boundary, the international roaming charges can really go through the roof.

This applies to voice calls generally, but your text messages could just be as affected. Charges can vary depending on where you're, but there is no reason to shut down shop.

So long you can get access to the Internet on your smartphone, WhatsApp can come to the rescue.

This is a free messaging platform and it can connect to smartphones (Apple and Android) and practically all sorts of devices.

This is one of my all-time favorite apps as it not only connects users through voice and text, but also allows easy sending of multimedia files and creation of user groups.

Baby Supplies

All supplies cost money, including those related to small kids. The money-saving solution is to get acquainted with the local stores if you can use any of their baby programs.

I know that Publix Baby Club, for example, gives away free books, discount coupons and samples to their members.

The big-time manufacturers also contribute free samples from time to time. Here are a few other manufactures that offer free baby products (mainly samples):

- [Pampers](#)
- [Gerber](#)
- [Similac](#)
- [Luvs](#)

eBooks

This is one resource that there is a huge abundance of them on the Internet for free. The biggest site where you can get thousands of books for free is the Project Gutenberg which has over 50,000 e-books.

For a list of sites that offer free books/e-books, check out my recent post titled: [100 Sites for Thrifty Bookworms to Download & Read Free Books Online](#)

Closer to home, the local library is an excellent source of free e-books. Nowadays, there are tons of digital content inside the library, and the content is often in popular formats like Kindle and ePub, to encourage readings among the public.

Alternatively, you can use the workstations provided to read e-books online.

Credit Reports and Scores

I always think there is no reason to pay somebody to access your credit history. With the emergence of [AnnualCreditReport.com](#), it is now easy to look at your annual consolidated credit records. It does not cost anything to access.

If you want to know about how you fare in terms of credit scores, [Credit Karma](#) or [Credit Sesame](#) could be really useful and free for this purpose.

Granted, both sites are helpful but you still cannot see your FICO score, the most common marker for bankers to decide on your loan, for example. I would suggest that you register with a real FICO provider first, get that precious FICO score and deregister, all within the free trial period.

For those of you who like to check your credit score often, there is a new site called [WalletHub](#). It is the first and only website that offers free credit scores and full credit reports that are updated on a daily basis.

Magazine Subscriptions

Sometimes we are so busy grinding out our day-to-day life, we forget that the library is the greatest repository of information.

Is your magazine subscription going to come to an end? No problem, the library always has the latest edition available. Some libraries actually allow members to download the digital versions of magazines, so you are not going to worry about the expired subscription.

Kids Meals

Some restaurants offer free or discounted meals for kids. Certainly there are variables in the equation, such as free kids meal “with two adults’ order”, “spending over X dollars”, “lull period only”, etc...

To help your efforts on finding such restaurants, check out MyKidsEatFree.com.

Calendar and Lists

If you are like me and still like to use the good old paper to do list, check out PrintableToDoList.com, which allows you to fill in daily plan and checklist and print it out free.

On the other hand, [Free Printable Calendars](#) allows printing of current and future itinerary, and even allows you to customize calendars.

Apps and Music

There is no need to pay for apps and music when you can get them for free on iTunes, Google Play and even Amazon.

Education

Nowadays online college courses are all the rage and you can find a multitude of websites that offer a wide array of courses, from Art and Science to Engineering and computer science.

You can choose to read the lecture notes, listen to the podcasts, or watch the class in proceeding.

Some offer live interaction so you can actually “talk” to a lecturer or a fellow student.

For a list of places that offer free online college courses, check out my list of [40 Free Online College Courses](#).

Online Storage

With the proliferation of the cloud, online storage is bound to get even more popular.

It is an excellent way to back up or sync your files.

The transaction goes on an incremental basis, so the more space you need, the more cash you have to fork out.

But some offer unorthodox way of giving you disk space.

Dropbox, for example, gives you 500 MB (Dropbox Basic accounts) and 1 GB (for Dropbox Pro accounts) for every friend you refer.

And Google Drive gives you 15 GB free just for signing up.

Wall Art

Don’t think you are creative enough to decorate the walls of your new residence?

Not to worry, help is at hand.

You can find websites offering ready-made artwork that you are able to print and hang on the wall. One such site is Vintage Printable, which features lovely ponds, marvelous scenery and gregarious eagle. The best thing must be that these are all in the public domain, so there is no issue of licensing infringement.

Another site, Feed Your Soul, depicts indie art with the artists giving their consent for their work to be seen and distributed

Money Management Tools

Need some additional help to straighten up your finances? You can find tools such as Mint.

There is a sum function to consolidate your financial information — spanning across checking and savings accounts, retirement funds, credit cards, mortgages, car loans, bills and more.

The result is you get a bird's-eye view on the overall cash flow and available balance. This allows you to see where money is going and be alerted on upcoming bills.

Wedding Invitation Designs

Help comes in the form of WeddingChicks.com, where a mass choice of styles and templates are there waiting to be printed out.

You can also print out free Save The Dates on ThePrettyBlog.com.

Lodging

Couchsurfing.org makes your travel more memorable and fun by pairing you up with a local family happy to host you in their home. Couchsurfing.org is a not for profit organization, so they don't take a fee. Its aim is to foster international relationship among world citizens.

There are many families in the US and Europe who subscribe to this ideology and their objective is to strike up friendship with international visitors.

You need to furnish your profile before any of these families will consider hosting you.

There is also a section on CouchSurfing website that advises on how to improve your chance of free home stay.

Audio Books

The nonprofit LibriVox.org has tons of free audio books, and they are slated toward classics. So if you like your Shakespeare, then this is your place to grab free audio. The site is run and managed by volunteers, and they also welcome newcomers to participate in this new way of storytelling.

Language Lessons

Want to learn a new language? You don't need to pay hundreds of dollars to buy programs and DVDs.

[BBC Languages](#) has tons of free videos and lesson for learning dozens of languages such as French, Spanish, Italian, and German.

BBC even awards you with a certificate if you successfully complete the course.

You can also use other sites and apps to learn new languages, mainly [Duolingo](#) and [OpenCulture's free language courses](#).

Shipping

I spent some time looking for free shipping with my online purchases and bumped into this website: [FreeShipping.org](#) and I like it.

The promo codes are flashed out regularly and you can request for alerts when such promotions are on.

Cinema Tickets

You can get free movie tickets in many ways. One way is to use a site called Show Film First.

You sign up with them for free, then they'll send you a screening code that you can enter on the site to get your free movie tickets.

Expert computer help

Computer slow or frozen? Don't want to spend \$100' by taking it down to the local store?

[Protonic](#) is here to help.

I was pleasantly surprised to find out later that the site is manned by some volunteers.

Upon further investigation, I found out also there is no money incentive to provide the service they do, and at such excellent level. That strong interest to serve seemed to stem from the frustration from manufacturers' failure to provide optimal support even as some form of service and support agreement is in place.

Final Words

There you have it over 50 things you can get for free that some of you are still paying for.

I am sure there are other things that I missed. So if you know of any thing that can be had for free but some of us are still spending money on, please let us know in the comment section below and I will add it to the list.