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Better Business Bureau Offers Tips for How to Shop Black Friday Sales

Black Friday, traditionally the single busiest shopping day of the year, arrives a little late this year on November 29, with many stores advertising Black Friday prices much earlier. Instead of setting an alarm to brave crowds for deeply discounted items, dedicated shoppers are expected to look for deals online - if they haven't already finished their holiday shopping. Retail experts predict increased mobile shopping and tighter budgets in a shorter shopping season.

If you do decide to shop in person on Black Friday, the BBB offers these tips to make your shopping experience

productive (and maybe even enjoyable):

- **Have a plan to make the most of Black Friday deals.**
 - Start with a list of items and use sale flyers and promotions to determine which store has the best price for the big-ticket and popular items.
 - Set a budget and stick with it before heading out.
- **Read the fine print.**
 - Some retailers may offer an additional percentage off the purchase but could exclude certain deals or items such as "doorbusters."
 - Watch for companies boasting a high percentage off; the item may be "75% off," but the original price could be inflated.
 - Carefully check the price tags, terms, and conditions. See if competitors have the item at a better price or have a better return policy.
- **Check the reviews.**
 - If you're not familiar with the retailer, visit BBB.org to check their complaint and review history.
 - BBB reviews (bbb.org) can be trusted over other review sites; find out why.
 - Read product reviews on extremely discounted items.
- **Plan out the excursion.**
 - Make a game plan of which stores to visit at which time and what items to buy at each store. Some retailers only honor certain sale ads early in the morning and have limited inventory of those items.
 - Plan your mealtimes and when you will grab food to avoid shopping while 'hangry.'
- **Sign up for email alerts and reward programs.**
 - Many stores send their best Black Friday deals and exclusive coupons to subscribers to their emails. Sign up before the holiday season, then unsubscribe afterward if needed.
 - Use reward cards or credit cards that offer cash back, points, or other benefits.
- **Know the return policy and warranty information.**
- **Go online.**
 - Pass any information about returns, exchanges, repairs, and warranties to the person using the item.
 - Gift receipts are an easy way for recipients to return or exchange a gift if it's not just right, but make sure the item can be returned before purchasing.
 - You may not have to leave the house if the store offers the deal online!
 - Look for free shipping and in-store pickup options to avoid the crowds.
 - Coupon sites and browser extensions can offer discount codes that may bring the delivery price below that of an in-person exchange.
 - See if the upcoming Cyber Monday price might be lower than the Black Friday one.
- **Look for the BBB Seal.** It's the Sign of a Better Business.
 - Shop with confidence this Black Friday by choosing businesses that prioritize trust and ethics in the marketplace. You'll have peace of mind, avoid scams, and make smart purchasing decisions.

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