

# Denver *on a* Dime



We all know—too well—that the economy has seen better days. We've tried everything: Ignoring. Panicking. Downsizing. Stimulating. And, still, that money tree you planted in the backyard just doesn't seem to be sprouting. The good news?

Your quality of life doesn't have to suffer if you think strategically. To help, we've scoured the city for deals, steals, tips, and bargains so you can spend little, save big, and continue to live well.

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**EDITED BY JULIE DUGDALE**

## Share Your Dinner

Trouble cooking for one? Not into the same leftovers four nights in a row? Here's a way to cap the food spending—and food wasting: Organize a group of friends and plan Sunday-night get-togethers. Have everyone make one big meal at home and split it into individual Tupperware portions. Bring your food to the shindig, trade dishes, and voilà! Dinner for a week, and you only had to prepare one meal. We walked out of our last Sunday-night soiree with sausage and lentil stew, Marsh Island shrimp with rice, sherry chicken, artichoke-pesto pasta, black bean chili, and beef stew. Bon appétit.



## SHOES NEWS

Designer sneaks at hipster Denver shoe boutique **The 400** can set you back \$150 or more. Ouch. But if you're ready to strike when the time is right, the 400-ers mark down sneakers to \$40—sometimes lower—when they're the last pair on sale. Get in good with the owners and maybe you'll score a tip when those hot retro Nikes in your size are all by their lonesome on the shelf. We once bought a "last pair" of super-sweet Puma Clydes for \$30. Actual retail price: \$127. 1535 Platte St., 303-446-0400, [www.the400.net](http://www.the400.net)

## Culture Vulture

Calling all theater buffs: Allow us to introduce you to the Power Pass. For \$465, you get 10 vouchers to see any **Denver Center Theatre Company** play (excluding Broadway) any time. Use it for date night at five different shows, or use a block of tickets for visiting guests at one show. (Bonus: includes *A Christmas Carol* and *The Miracle Worker*, which aren't included in regular season tickets.) You can save up to 27 percent off normal prices. 303-893-6030, [www.denvercenter.org](http://www.denvercenter.org)



## Go Green, Save Green

Three easy tips to make your Xcel bill more wallet-friendly—and your home more energy-efficient.

1. Install compact fluorescent lightbulbs; they cost a few bucks more than traditional incandescent bulbs, but they last up to 10 times longer. (Replacing all standard bulbs can reduce home energy use by up to 75 percent.)
2. Make sure your home is insulated, especially if it was built before 1980. (Proper insulation can reduce heating and cooling needs by up to 10 percent.)
3. Keep the thermostat as low as possible in winter and as high as possible in summer; clean/replace furnace filters as needed; keep drapes closed in the summer to keep out the heat. (These measures can help reduce energy use and resulting expenses for heating and cooling, and reduce emissions by up to 50 percent.)

## PRADA ON A PAUPER'S BUDGET

If consignment stores make you think musty hand-me-downs...think again. Shopping consignment is a fabulous way to hit the jackpot on new, or nearly new, designer duds and accessories at a fraction of the full retail price. Denver fashionistas in the know swear by these chic consignment retailers.

### Wardrobe Works

**CLIENTELE** Women seeking edgy sophistication with "statement" designer pieces. **WE FOUND** The biggest selection of Prada and Gucci we've seen in any consignment store, but what made us reach for our wallets was a Yohji Yamamoto black wool, peaked-lapel jacket for \$325 (full retail: \$1,200–\$1,500).

126 W. 12th Ave.,  
303-446-8446



### The Snob Shop

**CLIENTELE** Women and men keen on a well-organized and edited selection of high-end labels and special-occasion garments (our friend purchased a gorgeous wedding gown here). **WE FOUND** Jewelry by Lagos and John Hardy, bags by Coach and Louis Vuitton, and—the real winner—a black-and-white, wool felt Chanel dress for \$850 (full retail: at least \$2,500).

2804 E. Sixth Ave.,  
303-355-6939

### Repeat Boutique

**CLIENTELE** Shoppers with a flair for all things socialite. **WE FOUND** Plenty of St. John and some classic Thierry Mugler and Chanel, but we're lusting over a fitted, double-breasted, military wool coat-dress by Burberry for \$299. Bonus: the 50 percent sale tag, for a grand total of \$150 (full retail: \$895).

2725 S. Colorado Blvd.,  
303-757-0086,

### ONLINE FIND

## Keep Tabs

Sign up for **Mint.com**, a secure online personal finance/money management service—free of charge—that tracks your finances, helps with budgeting, points out wasteful spending, and provides savings recommendations. Bonus: It comes with a useful iPhone app that lets you check your budget status at any given moment. We tried, we saved, we liked.



## Forgo the Fancy Baby Gear



Let us preface this by pointing out that babies grow. Quickly. We'd venture to say that most gear you buy will be storage-bound in a year. Maybe two. So shop wisely. Sure, if we were infants, we'd want to be snuggled in the cozy confines of the Bugaboo Cameleon stroller. But \$900?! Even when times were flush, we parents had a hard time justifying that kind of cash outlay for a stroller when the kid's 529 account was but a twinkle in our eyes. Instead, go minimalist with an infant car seat and lightweight stroller frame. Total cost for the highly rated **Graco SnugRide** car seat, base, and frame: \$210, of which \$140 covers the car seat and base—which you needed anyway. [www.gracobaby.com](http://www.gracobaby.com)

## Join Wisely

So you're hunting for a new gym. Consider this: Corporate-owned facilities such as **24 Hour Fitness** (19 area clubs) often have membership rates and fees that fluctuate. Don't sign your life away before scoping the promos:

If you **join in the summer**, chances are there won't be an initiation fee, which can run up to \$80. Think long-term: If you attend a 24 Hour Fitness for five years, you could save \$700 or more with a **prepaid three-year membership**, which is \$200 a year the first three years and \$99 each year after, instead of \$250-\$300 per single year. Also, prepaid memberships often come with personal training perks. Use the **Costco membership discount**—currently \$299 for a two-year, all-club membership. Savings: \$200-plus. 24 Hour Fitness, 2770 S. Colorado Blvd., 303-757-3224, [www.24hourfitness.com](http://www.24hourfitness.com)



## AUCTIONS 101



Ever go into an old college friend's house and wonder how she could afford that designer dining room set when you know she has an American Furniture Warehouse budget? Here's how: **auctions**. Visiting a half-dozen auctions in the last few years, we've acquired a Henredon leather sofa and several Drexel Heritage tables and dressers for pennies on the retail dollar. The key: Go in confident and educated. Here, a mini-primer for first-timers.

### 1. Search the newspaper

We've had the most luck at going-out-of-business auctions for furniture stores or dealers, usually advertised in the news sections. Try the classifieds for estate auctions, or visit [Craigslist.com](http://Craigslist.com) for estate sale ads.

### 2. Arrange transportation

Most auctions require you to remove items from the property within 24 hours. Price movers in advance, and if you have your own truck, tip anyone who helps you load.

### 3. Have a pen, paper, and lifeline

Designate someone at home for emergency research, and take down the name, make, and serial number of what you like. Just because the sticker says \$1,000 doesn't mean that coffee table is worth it.

### 4. TiVo the Broncos

Auctions during football season could be your best bet. Many going-out-of-business auctions are extended over several days, and most end

on Sundays. If the Broncos are playing, fewer people will attend (really), which means better deals for you.

### 5. Be prepared for checkout

The price you bid might not be the price you pay. At most auctions, a fee is added (sometimes 10 percent or more) to cover advertising and auction-house costs. Don't be surprised if your dream bedroom set goes from \$1,300 to \$1,500 at the register. Either way, it beats the \$6,500 retail price.

## A Gourmet's Guide to Costco

It's no secret that Costco has screaming deals on huge boxes of cereal, flats of Diet Coke, and tubs of peanut butter, but what about high-end, gourmet items—deal or no deal? We scoured the shelves at the Littleton location and compared prices on the same brands at several area grocery stores. Conclusion: Even with Costco's annual membership fee, the savings add up.

PRODUCT	YELLOWFIN TUNA	OREGON CHAI TEA	NAKED JUICE	BOURSIN CHEESE
COSTCO PRICE	\$9.99/pound	\$8.88/three cartons	\$5.95/64 ounces	\$8.99/15.6 ounces
AVERAGE SUPERMARKET PRICE	\$12.08/pound	\$5.80/carton	\$3.39/15.2 ounces	\$7.05/5.2 ounces
SAVINGS	\$2.08/lb	\$2.84/carton	1.3¢/oz	78¢/oz



## BE A GUINEA PIG

All beauty and wellness gurus start somewhere: Many cut their chops at vocational institutes that serve the public. You need an affordable beauty fix; the students need experience—it's a bit of a no-brainer.

SCHOOL	BEAUTY BARGAIN	BONUS	COMPARE TO
<b>Aveda Institute of Denver</b> 700 16th St., 303-567-7500	Haircut (including wash/style): <b>\$12</b> Color: <b>\$32 and up</b>	Tack on a facial, mani, or pedi for cheap—and keep the bottle of polish. All work supervised by instructors.	The Renaissance Aveda Spa & Salon Haircut: <b>\$32 and up</b> Color: <b>\$42 and up</b>
<b>Denver School of Massage Therapy</b> 14107 E. Exposition Ave., 303-366-4325	Massage two-for-one. A 50-minute rubdown is only <b>\$25</b> . Several times a month (get on the mailing list) a friend's massage is included— <b>\$12.50 each</b> .	No embarrassing visible proof if the service doesn't meet your expectations.	Elixir Mind Body Massage 60 minutes for <b>\$65 and up</b>
<b>Englewood Beauty College</b> 3200 S. Acoma St., Englewood, 303-761-1206	Manicure: <b>\$6</b> (less than your morning latte and scone!)	A full range of cosmetology services at deep discounts in a 60-station salon supervised by instructors.	Tootsies: The Nail Shoppe Manicure: <b>\$15-\$30</b>

### BARGAIN BITE

## Mary Nguyen, chef-owner, Parallel 17:

"[I go to] **Continental Deli** for cured meats, sausages, and cheeses—they're less expensive than some supermarkets and cheese shops." Nguyen also shops for six-inch baguettes at **Baker's Palace** or **Vinh Xuong Bakery**: "True crispy baguettes like you get in the streets of Paris, but for only 35 cents." Continental Deli, 250 Steele St., 303-388-3354; Baker's Palace, 550 S. Federal Blvd., 303-936-2279; Vinh Xuong Bakery, 375 S. Federal Blvd., No. 112, 303-922-4968



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### ONLINE FIND

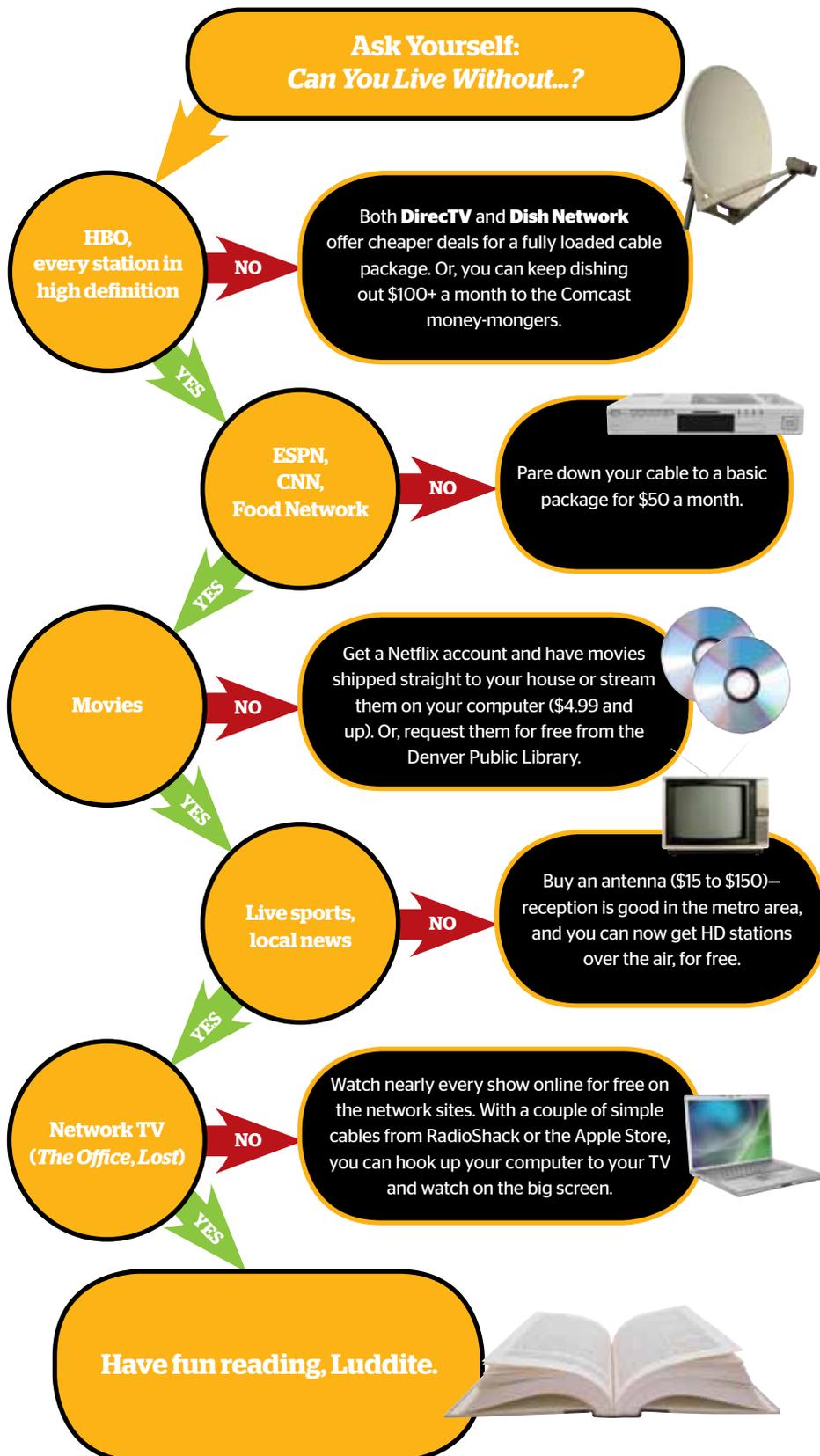
## Techies in the Know

Savvy computer shoppers visit **GotApex.com** to scour the coupon codes for laptops, accessories, digital cameras, and more. A Dell Vostro 1310 laptop for 44 percent off retail value? Yes, please. The site also hosts dozens of niche stores that showcase bargains on everything from airline tickets to cooking supplies.

<b>34° CRISPBREAD</b>	<b>DENVER TOFU</b>	<b>BLUE MOOSE HUMMUS</b>	<b>RUDI'S ORGANIC BAKERY BREAD</b>	<b>HIGH PLAINS BISON (GROUND)</b>	<b>RICE DREAM ORGANIC RICE MILK</b>	<b>NUTELLA</b>	<b>MARANATHA ALMOND BUTTER</b>	<b>IZZE (BOTTLES)</b>	<b>PIRATE'S BOOTY</b>	<b>UDI'S GRANOLA</b>
\$9.59/ four-pack	\$2.89/ 38 ounces	\$4.49/ 24 ounces	\$6.39/ two loaves	\$8.89/ two pounds	\$1.33/ carton	\$8.79/52 ounces	\$6.39/ 26 ounces	\$11.45/ 12-pack	\$7.39/ 20 ounces	\$6.39/ 24 ounces
\$4.69/ box	\$1.99/ 16 ounces	\$3.44/ 12 ounces	\$4.75/ loaf	\$6.43/ pound	\$2.26/ carton	\$4.49/ 13 ounces	\$9.89/ 16 ounces	\$5.31/ four-pack	\$2.77/ four ounces	\$4.74/ 13 ounces
\$2.29/box		10¢/oz	\$1.55/loaf	\$1.98/lb	93¢/carton	18¢/oz	37¢/oz		32¢/oz	10¢/oz

# Sayonara, Cable

Cable is a money-vacuum, no doubt. Simple solution: Go without. Not sure if you'll miss it too much? No worries, we've got some tricks up our sleeve. Consult our handy guide.



## I Sold My Car to Cut Expenses: Why My Life is Better Now

By Jeff Panis

**The main reason** I had a car was to get to and from work: I live in the 'burbs—95 percent of the mileage on that car was commuting. From my house to the office is about 18 miles. So my decision to go carless was really about trying to save money at home. Being free of the Dodge Caliber means thousands and thousands of dollars (in payments, insurance, gas, and maintenance) gets diverted to my two kids...and maybe even a vacation.

When you commit to public transportation or the bike, it's almost like committing to a frugal way of life. I've never been great at consciously watching money. But once you ditch your car, you start to wonder: "Hey, wait a minute, I'm riding my bike to the office. Do I *really* need to eat lunch out four days a week? Why can't I throw a sack lunch into my backpack, cruise to the park, and throw a Frisbee around?" I'm not as reckless with my spending anymore.

And the pluses: I get exercise, I'm more in tune with the neighborhoods I ride through, and I feel more in touch with the city. You're actually on the street, hearing the urban hum. You find yourself being more social, with anybody from the investment banker on the sidewalk to the homeless guy trying to sell you a newspaper. You stumble upon unexpected surprises you'd never see otherwise, and tend to be more aware of good buys and opportunities. That was a bonus I wasn't anticipating.

# SPRING FOR THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Eighty-five dollars—the price of an annual family membership at the **Children's Museum of Denver**—may sound like a lot, but consider: If Mom, Dad, and two-year-old Jimmy go to the museum four times a year, you'll be spending more than those 85 bucks. (You'd shell out \$90, to be exact). The family membership allows unlimited access to the museum, so if you go once a month you'll save \$185 annually. Check out these other annual family/group passes: **Denver Zoo, Downtown Aquarium, the Wildlife Experience, Colorado State Parks, and Rocky Mountain National Park.** 2121 Children's Museum Drive, 303-433-7444, [www.cmdenver.org](http://www.cmdenver.org)



## ONLINE FIND

### Film Frenzy

Visit these websites to sign up for e-blasts that notify you of free new-release screenings in Denver—a great way to save a buck (or \$20) on a night out: **GraceHillMedia.com, FoxSearchlight.com, Miramax.com, Warnerbros.com.**



## BARGAIN BITE

### Elizabeth Sundari Kraft, owner, Heirloom Gardens

"Making your own bread can be easy and much cheaper than buying a loaf. The **No-Knead Bread recipe** published by the *New York Times* requires about 10 minutes of hands-on time, but makes an awesome loaf for sandwiches." [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

## Pet Smart

A visit to Spot's veterinarian can set you back some serious dough—\$300 to \$500 for a spay/neuter; up to \$85 for shots; and \$45 for a simple wellness exam. We found alternative organizations that provide affordable treatments, though certain perks—overnight stay, recovery follow-up, and so on—are likely not included. (Note: Prices for canines.)



### Colorado Humane Society and S.P.C.A. Inc.

**Save on spay/neuter**  
\$70-\$150 303-781-9344,  
[www.coloradahumane.org](http://www.coloradahumane.org)

### Harrison Memorial Animal Hospital

**Save on spay/neuter**  
\$72-\$120; vaccinations \$30.  
303-722-5800, [www.hmah.org](http://www.hmah.org)

### Denver Municipal Animal Shelter

**Save on vaccination clinics** (\$20) every Wednesday. The fee covers your one-year dog license (\$10) if you're a Denver resident. Plus, bring your cat in for free microchipping every Thursday through September. 303-698-0076,  
[www.denvergov.org](http://www.denvergov.org)

### MaxFund Wellness Center

**Save on spay/neuter** from \$62-\$77 and up; wellness exam \$29. 303-595-0532,  
[www.maxfund.org](http://www.maxfund.org)

# CHEAP TICKETS

Getting a seat at a local game can be pricey—then tack on parking and a couple of beers. That doesn't mean you have to watch at home, though. Denver's big five teams have bargain seats up for grabs. (And don't forget the lesser-knowns and pro-affiliates for even cheaper tickets and just as much action: Mammoth, Sky Sox, and 14ers.) Here's how to score big.



## BRONCOS

The Donkeys are required by law to sell 2,000 half-price tickets to every game, but they go quick; scoop them up in early July when they go on sale. Later in the season, some single tickets may remain, but you won't be able to sit with your friends.  
[www.denverbroncos.com](http://www.denverbroncos.com) or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)



## ROCKIES

Ball games at Coors Field are cheaper than a movie: Center-field "Rockpile" seats remain an absurdly cheap \$4, and the Rockies offer a slew of reduced-price package options, like the \$49 value pack: four tickets, hot dogs, sodas, *Colorado Rockies Magazine*, and a parking pass.  
[www.coloradorockies.com](http://www.coloradorockies.com)



## NUGGETS

A court-side ticket to catch Melo or Chauncey tops out around \$650, but you can snag a spot at the Pepsi Center for as little as \$10, or opt for one of the packages, such as the Coors Light "Guys' Night Out" (two tickets, beers, and T-shirts, \$49).  
[www.nba.com/nuggets](http://www.nba.com/nuggets)



## AVALANCHE

So much for hockey being a blue-collar sport: The Avs have the priciest tickets in town. Your best bet is the \$99 family package (four tickets, sodas, and pizzas/hot dogs); \$25 a head isn't bad for a night out on the town.  
<http://avalanche.nhl.com>



## RAPIDS

Catching an MLS game is a steal in general, with tickets at Dick's Sporting Goods Park ranging from an affordable \$12 to a still-manageable \$35. A family deal, when available, is even better: Four tickets, hot dogs, and sodas starting at \$69.  
[www.coloradorapids.com](http://www.coloradorapids.com)



## For What It's Worth

Boulder's **Sensorielle Spa** implemented a new pricing structure in February that totally works with our writer-editor budgets: Pay what you can afford. The spa therapists believe that everyone deserves the chance to heal and rejuvenate, especially during tough times. Suggested prices are posted based on the value of the service (60-minute "classic" massages start at \$99), but all the spa asks is an honor-system payment that's feasible for you—no questions asked. If your back aches for an hour massage, but your bank says you've only got \$50, so be it. Just be sure to pay it forward elsewhere. Services include massages, facials, waxing, ayurvedic treatments, and more. Bonus: Spa products are organic, nontoxic, biodegradable, and recycled. 1801 13th St., Suite 150, Boulder, 303-247-9932, [www.sensoriellespa.com](http://www.sensoriellespa.com)



### ONLINE FIND Trade Up

Old toys filling the garage?

Kids' gear collecting dust in the spare bedroom? Visit **Zwaggle.com**, a Denver-based online transaction site, to exchange used kids' items via a simple points system—the perfect solution for clutter-phobes trapped by outgrown toys and accoutrements.

## Sales Newsletters We *Don't* Delete From Our Inbox

**Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th** The outlet version of the designer store already marks down its merchandise 40 to 70 percent, meaning its sales provide even deeper discounts. Newsletter subscribers get an additional 5 to 10 percent off. Sign up in the store at Colorado Mills, 14500 W. Colfax Ave., Lakewood, 303-277-0335.

**Sarah** The inventory at this Wash Park staple is constantly turning, and as a result the tiny shop offers up some of the best sales in town, like denim discounted 50 percent (note: this once-a-year sale isn't advertised). But you have to be fast—items sell out quickly. Sign up at [www.sarah-denver.com](http://www.sarah-denver.com). 1067 S. Gaylord St., 303-482-2299.

**Best Colorado Deals by Janet Simons** A weekly roundup of the hottest deals in the Mile-High, from inventory closeouts to the best spots on Cherry Creek North's sidewalk sales. Sign up at [www.bestcoloradodeals.com](http://www.bestcoloradodeals.com).



## TO-DOS THAT SAVE ON YOUR "I DOS"

We asked Boulder-based wedding consultant Heather Dwight, owner of event-planning company Calluna Events, for some tips to keep the bottom line manageable on the big day.

### 1. Dress for Less

Local bridal salons often host trunk shows where gown designers bring in their latest looks and offer a 10 to 15 percent discount if you snap up a dress that day. Try d'Anelli Bridal and Tux in Lakewood. Or, peruse a few high-end consignment shops for huge markdowns on once-worn designer dresses.

### 2. Do It Yourself

Dropping \$15 apiece on printed place cards that end up on the floor spattered with cake frosting at the end of the night is excessive. Printing up even 100 or so of these would rack up \$1,500—for place cards! Instead, try a DIY option for your stationery. Visit Vintage Glam Weddings ([www.vintageglamblog.com](http://www.vintageglamblog.com)) for adorable DIY inspiration on everything from invitations to decorations to party favors.

### 3. Flower Power

Choose decorations that are easily transportable from church to party. For example, floral arrangements on the altar can easily double as entryway decor at the reception. And, look for seasonal flowers that are grown locally—less expensive than shipping in.

### 4. Cocktail Cuts

Shortening your cocktail hour is an oft-overlooked way to save megabucks on your alcohol tab. Instead of an hour, go for 45 minutes. Your guests will never know, and 15 minutes saves a drink per guest. (More if your wedding is doubling as a college fraternity reunion.) At dinner, consider skipping the bubbly; many folks don't care for Champagne, so why not have them toast with whatever they're drinking? Also forgo the passed wine or stationary bottles. Guests likely won't consume as much if they have to order from the bar or waitstaff.

## Talk is Cheap

After too much time on WebMD, you're convinced that your nagging cough is something lethal, but a \$20 co-pay to find out you're overreacting seems ridiculous. Solution? Dial into one of these **free local health-call lines**. The health experts on the other end will answer your questions and tell you whether it's time to pony up and call the doc—or just turn off your computer and get a good night's sleep.



### Denver Health Nurse Line 303-739-1211

Call 24 hours a day for free medical information.

### The Children's Hospital ParentSmart Nurse Line 720-777-0123

A representative will relay your specific needs to the appropriate nurse, who will call you back.

### Centura Ask-A-Nurse 303-777-6877

Registered nurses dispense medical advice and referrals.



## CONSIDER ALL THE OPTIONS

How much can you save getting from A to B? To find out, we compared two extremes—daily driving and daily walking/pedaling—with some alternatives, like Denver's new car-share organization (think locally owned Zipcar). Do the savings outweigh the hassle? Your call.

TRANSIT OPTIONS	ESTIMATED EXPENSES	MAINTENANCE FACTOR	LOGISTICAL HASSLE METER
<b>Car ownership</b>	Annual insurance/car payments/gas: <b>\$4,750</b>	Oil changes, tune-ups, miscellaneous repairs: <b>\$700/year</b>	<b>Low.</b> It's parked in your garage.
<b>RTD</b>	Annual pass: Local: <b>\$840</b> Express: <b>\$1,536</b> Regional: <b>\$1,968</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Significant, depending.</b> Your life revolves around bus timetables. Hectic or tight schedules take a lot of planning.
<b>Occasional Car</b> (Denver's car-share club)	Annual membership ( <b>\$50</b> ), plus per-use fee ( <b>from \$4.95 + \$0.25 per mile</b> )	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Slight.</b> Walking or transport to/from pickup lots required.
<b>Denver B-Cycle</b> (city bike-share program)	Annual membership ( <b>under \$100</b> ), plus modest per-use fee	<b>\$0</b>	<b>Fair.</b> The program's new, so kinks are likely. And transport to/from docking stations is required.
<b>Walking or riding own bike</b>	<b>\$0</b>	Minimal; everyone's tires (and sneakers) need replacing: <b>\$100/year</b>	<b>Fair.</b> You can ride, walk, and lock wherever you want, but bad weather can easily thwart the best-laid plans.



### ONLINE FIND

## Scout It Out

Fitness freaks will delight in **TheDailyScout.com**, an active-lifestyle site that strikes up tasty deals with Colorado vendors, gyms, spas, activity operators, and the like. Become a Daily Scout member at no cost and flash your membership card to take advantage of the posted offers, like two-for-one yoga classes.

### BARGAIN BITE

## Tyler Skrivanek, sous chef, Duo Restaurant

"I like to use **Golden Organic** for my dried bulk and nuts for my house—you can buy in five-pound to 50-pound bags. Preorder and they will have it ready for you to pick up." 4941 Allison St., Units 1-4, Arvada, 303-456-5616



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## Book Accordingly

If you want a cozy place in the wilderness to enjoy exploring, hiking, biking, skiing, or gorgeous scenery, rethink the "rustic" wilderness lodge or B&B—à la the Minturn Inn in Eagle County, which can run you \$150–\$320 per couple each night—and try the **Shrine Mountain Inn** off of

Vail Pass. It's not an inn so much as a set of three gigantic log cabins that are part of the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, but at \$27–\$41 a head, the price is right. The cozy—if simple—huts sleep six or more in private and shared bedrooms, with full kitchens, bathrooms (hot water), wood-burning fireplaces, and even a shared outdoor sauna. Take the car door-side during the summer (snowshoes/skis required in winter). With staggering views of two mountain ranges and acres of wilderness outside, you won't miss the luxury (read: TV, Internet, concierge) of pricier accommodations. In fact, we prefer the solitude for a true wilderness escape. [www.shrinemountaininn.com](http://www.shrinemountaininn.com), [www.huts.org](http://www.huts.org)



Walter's Cabin at the Shrine Mountain Inn