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MONEY

Best Things to Buy in May

Look for deals around Mother's Day, Memorial Day

By Beth Braverman, AARP
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The spring deal drought is over as retailers ramp up promotions in May, providing ample opportunity for savvy shoppers to pick up goods at a discounted price.

The available bargains reflect the change in seasons as retailers focus ahead on summer goods and seek out shoppers looking for gifts as graduation and wedding seasons get underway.

Mother's Day falls on May 12 this year, but Julie Ramhold, a senior staff writer and consumer analyst at DealNews, recommends avoiding traditional gifts like flowers and jewelry, especially close to the holiday when retailers hike prices to take advantage of procrastinators looking for a last-minute gift.

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Like the three-day weekends surrounding Presidents Day and Labor Day, Memorial Day weekend (May 25-27 this year) represents a great time to purchase large items like furniture, mattresses and appliances at significantly lowered prices. Expect storewide sales tied to the holiday at department stores, big box retailers and online merchants.

"It really is one of the biggest sales weekends of the year," says Kimberly Palmer, a consumer expert with Nerdwallet. "And it comes at a time when we haven't seen a lot of other sales recently, so there are opportunities to shoppers to get those items they've been waiting to buy."

Keep an eye out for these sales in the second half of the month, as many retailers now launch them well before the actual Memorial Day holiday. Here are some specific categories where shoppers may see some deals this May:

Mattresses

Memorial Day weekend is one of the best times to get a deal on a mattress. In addition to discounts, look for free delivery and gifts with purchase such as pillows or a mattress topper.

"Go ahead of Memorial Day, find a mattress that you like, and then wait for the sale to drop," advises budgeting expert Andrea Woroch. "Then you don't feel the same pressure from the salesperson to buy, and you have some time to comparison shop."

Where you might find deals: Mattress Firm, Casper, Purple

Potential savings: 30 to 50 percent off

Bedding

Need some sheets for that new mattress? May is the first month since the white sales in January when you'll see widespread discounts on bedding.

Where you might find deals: Nordstrom, Pottery Barn, Brooklinen

Potential savings: 30 to 40 percent off

Kitchen appliances

Retailers often push countertop equipment like air fryers and stand mixers as nontraditional Mother's Day gifts. Move quickly if you see an item you like because inventory on popular items may be limited.

Where you might find deals: Kohl's, Macy's, JCPenney

Potential savings: 40 to 50 percent off

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Grills and accessories

May is National Barbecue Month, giving retailers an excuse to drop prices on grills and accessories like tools and baskets. If you need a new grill before the summer you'll likely see the best prices over Memorial Day weekend. But, if you can wait until the summer grilling season ends, even lower prices will be found around Labor Day (Sept. 2 this year).

"Beyond just the discount, you may also see extra value in things like free delivery and complimentary assembly, or they'll agree to take your old grill away," says Jeanette Pavini, a savings expert and author of *The Joy of Saving*.

Where you might find deals: Lowe's, Costco, local retailers

Potential savings: Up to 40 percent off

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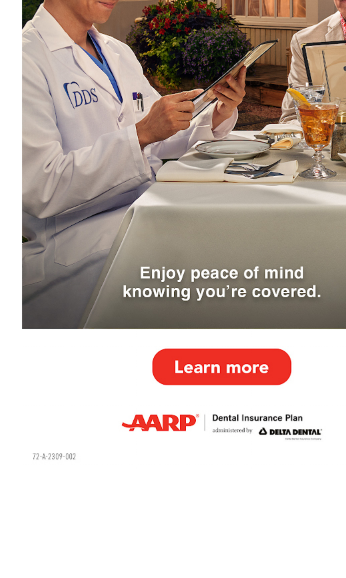

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Furniture

Both department stores and furniture retailers will discount bedroom, living room and other sets this month as part of their Memorial Day sales. Keep an eye out for these deals to launch midweek ahead of the long weekend.

Where you might find deals: Ashley Home Store, Rooms to Go, La-Z-Boy

Potential savings: Up to 30 percent off

Storage equipment

Many consumers are still in spring cleaning mode this month. "People are tackling those garages and other areas this time of year, so retailers offer discounts on storage solutions," says Sarah Jankowski, director of user growth and integrated marketing at Shopkick.

Where you might find deals: Home Depot, The Container Store, Wayfair

Potential savings: 20 to 30 percent off

Star Wars merch

"May the 4th be with you" started out as a nerdy meme shared among Star Wars fans who got the Jedi pun, but it's grown into a full-fledged holiday that even casual fans celebrate. Retailers have gotten in on the game with discounts on everything from figurines to graphic tees.

"If you're even remotely interested in *Star Wars*, May the 4th is a good time to shop for those items," Ramhold says.

Where you might find deals: Target, Lego, Amazon

Potential savings: Up to 60 percent off

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Beth Braverman is a contributing writer who has covered shopping and personal finance for more than a decade. Her work has appeared in Consumer Reports*, CNNMoney.com, CNBC.com, and dozens of other outlets.*

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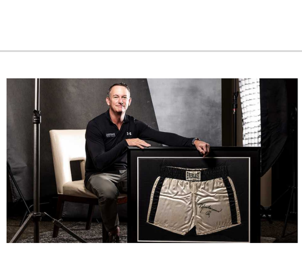

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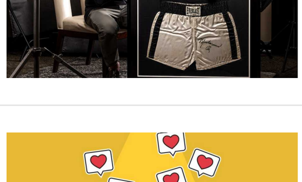

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