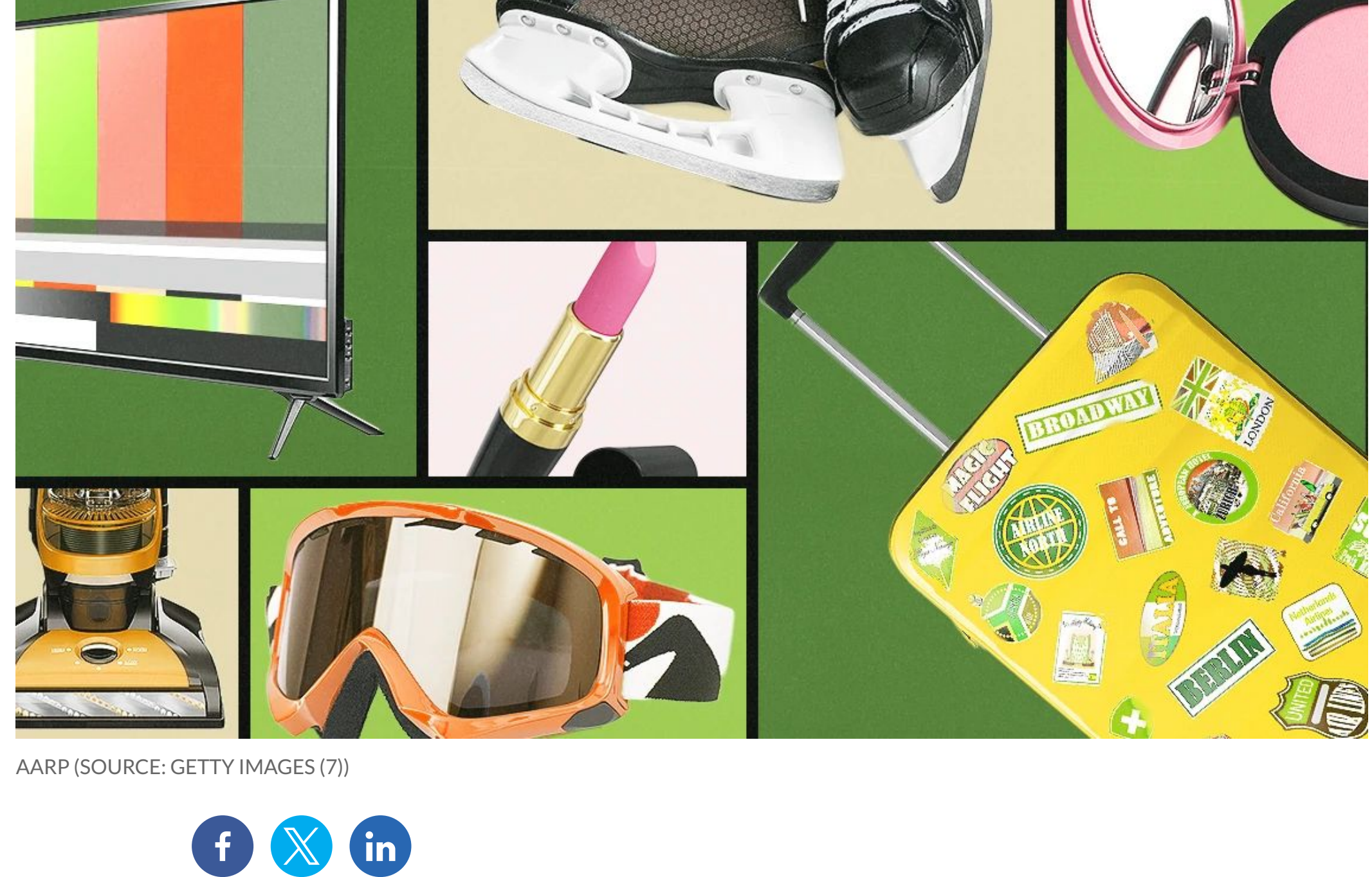


MONEY

Spring Into March Bargains

Few big sales, but lots for careful shoppers

By Beth Braverman, AARP | 3 Comments
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The official start of spring means you'll likely see [green shoots](#) and animals emerging from hibernation this month. What you may not see are gigantic storewide sales from retailers.

March tends to be a [quieter shopping month](#) since there aren't any major three-day weekends or shopping holidays. The [deals](#) that are available tend to tie into the change in seasons as both merchants and consumers shift into warm-weather mode.

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"We are entering what we call the 'deal drought,'" Julie Ramhold, senior staff writer and consumer analyst at DealNews, says of the next couple months. "Post-holiday sales and President's Day is over. The next big shopping holiday isn't until Memorial Day."

That said, there are a few smaller retail holidays or celebrations that may result in focused promotions for specific items. Expect to find sales on all things green in the run-up to [St. Patrick's Day](#) (March 17), on college sports gear related to March Madness, and on frozen food in celebration of "National Frozen Food Month."

Another "holiday" that's gained momentum in recent years is Pi Day, a play on the mathematical figure π, whose first three digits are 3.14, lending to celebration of physical pies (both pizzas and desserts) on March 14 (3/14).

"What used to be a cheeky, nerdier holiday has become pretty mainstream," says Brad Godwin, SVP sales and partnerships with Breaktime Media, a shopper engagement tool used by retailers. "We might see Papa John's and Pizza Hut do sales, with other companies jumping in in a playful way as well."

Since those tend to be smaller sales, Godwin says you likely won't see marketing for them until the week or days leading up to Pi Day.

Beyond that, here's a look at some of the best products to buy in March:

Vacuum cleaners

You're not the only one experiencing that spring cleaning itch this time of year. Retailers are more than willing to help with deals on vacuum cleaners and other cleaning products. Look for the most savings on newer models, such as cordless stick vacuums and robo-vacuums, which have come down significantly in price in recent years.

"The traditional, stand-up, plug-in vacuums aren't as expensive, so there isn't as much movement in price," Godwin says.

Where to find deals: Dyson, Target, Walmart

Potential savings: 15 percent to 25 percent off

Beauty products

Historically, Ulta Beauty has hosted its annual "21 Days of Beauty" sales event this month, while Kiehl's has used the month for its "Friends and Family Sale." Expect other retailers — both online and in-store — to follow suit in this category, with discounts aimed at capitalizing on interest from consumers looking to for a new makeup palette or skincare routine for spring.

"Beauty products are kind of seasonal, like clothing now," Ramhold says. "We will see a big push for spring beauty items."

That also means that winter-related beauty products, such as moisturizers and lip balms, could be on clearance, creating an opportunity to stock up for next year.

Where to find deals: Ulta, Kiehl's, Whole Foods

Potential savings: 25 to 50 percent off



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Winter sports gear

Sporting goods and outdoor stores need to make room for warm-weather sports gear, which means they're extremely motivated to move out sports equipment for winter sports. Look for sales on skis, snowboards and accessories as well as on smaller winter sports items like ice skates, sleds and snow tubes. While you're there, keep an eye out for deals on winter apparel. Although department stores have likely sold out of such items by now, you may still find some deals on snow pants, winter coats and long underwear at these stores.

Where to find deals: Dick's Sporting Goods, REI, local ski shops

Potential savings: 30 to 50 percent off

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Travel supplies

Retailers discount travel gear, including luggage of all sizes, from suitcases down to backpacks and travel purses, in March. With merchants catering to both spring breakers and consumers starting to plan longer summer trips, you'll also find deals on smaller travel accessories like dop kits, packing squares and eye masks.

Where to find deals: Kohl's, Macy's, Nordstrom Rack

Potential savings: 40 to 50 percent off

Televisions

While they don't offer discounts as hefty as those seen during Black Friday, retailers do run TV deals throughout the entire first quarter of the year to make room for new inventory. You may see the larger price deductions later in the month, tied to the end of the March Madness basketball tournament, for those looking to upgrade ahead of the Final Four games.

Where to find deals: Best Buy, Amazon, Samsung

Potential savings: Up to 40 percent off

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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