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How to Get Cheap Sports Tickets and Concert Tickets

Try these strategies to save money on admission to special events.

By Beth Braverman | Edited by Barri Segal | Reviewed by Antonio Barbera | July 19, 2023, at 2:26 p.m.

Save

ADAM DAVIS | ICON SPORTSWIRE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Keep in mind that prices for tickets to sporting events tend to decrease as the event gets closer.

Inflation is increasing the price of just about everything these days, and event tickets are no exception. Especially when it comes to secondary-market tickets, which many consumers purchase.

Resale concert tickets now cost an average of $242 each, almost double what they cost before the pandemic, and theater tickets have increased 36% to $217 each, according to data from SeatGeek.

Tickets to sporting events have also gone up: A seat at an NBA game now costs an average of $164 at resale, rising 69% when compared to pre-pandemic prices, and NFL ticket prices went up 60% to an average of $324 each over the same period.

That means that a family of four could spend $1,000 or more for a day's – or night's – entertainment. But there are ways to lower the cost. Follow these tips to make sure you're not

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- Don't shop ahead for sporting events.
- Go out on a school night.
- Take advantage of presales.
- Get the gang together.
- Hit up the box office.

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Don't Shop Ahead for Sporting Events

Prices for tickets to sporting events tend to decrease as the event gets closer, with notable exceptions for playoff games or teams that hit a hot streak.

For most regular-season games, you'll get the best price within a day or two of the match. Note that tickets for concerts typically don't follow the same patterns, so if you see a price that looks good, make the purchase.

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Go Out on a School Night

Since demand for shows and sporting events on the weekend is higher, prices tend to be higher as well.

"If all else is equal, going to an event on a Tuesday night or a Wednesday night is likely to save you money as demand for live events peaks around the weekends, says Chris Leyden, director of consumer strategy at SeatGeek.

This tip can be particularly useful for concerts when an artist is playing multiple shows at the same arena.

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Take Advantage of Presales

Presale events are an opportunity for eventgoers with a special code to purchase tickets before they go on sale to the public.

There are several ways to get access to presales, including joining a team's or recording artist's fan club or signing up for the loyalty program at a venue. Some credit cards also offer presale access for events as a perk to cardholders.

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Especially for plays and sporting events, if you're buying on behalf of eight or more event attendees, you may get access to a group discount. Contact the group sales office at the theater or stadium to find out more about accessing these deals.

Hit Up the Box Office

Many theaters and other venues sell tickets directly to the public, meaning you can purchase them without having to go through the secondary market or pay a markup.

"A lot of venues allow you to just walk up and buy a ticket in person at the box office once tickets go on sale, even up until the night of the event if it's not sold out," says Audrey Fix Schaefer, vice president of the board of directors for the National Independent Venue Association.

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Plus, if you buy tickets in person you may not have to pay the convenience fee many venues charge for purchases you make online.

Wait a Few Days Before Buying On the Secondary Market

For events that sell out quickly, you'll likely find yourself shopping for tickets on the secondary market. Often, resellers price tickets the highest immediately after they go on sale.

"You want to avoid the first 24 to 48 hours after an on-sale or a big concert announcement to allow the prices to potentially even out," says Stubhub spokesperson Adam Budelli.

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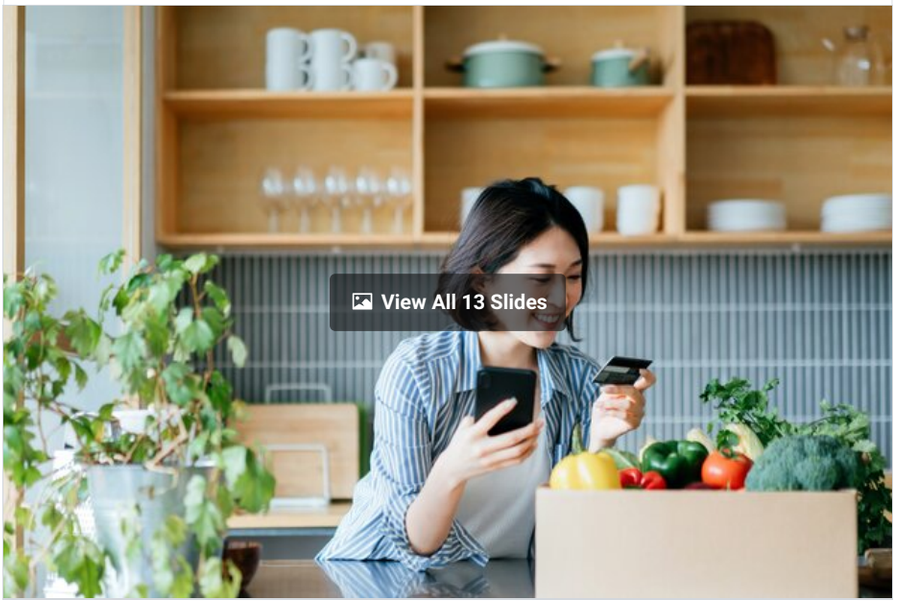

Updated on July 19, 2023: This story was published at an earlier date and has been updated with new information.

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