

● Ask America's Ultimate Experts

# “I want free stuff!”

From chocolate to movie tickets, there's a lot of free stuff out there just waiting for you!



## 1 Become a freebie magnet!

Visit the top sites!

Freebie aggregator sites scour the Net for the juiciest giveaways. Which sites do the best job? “FreeFlys.com and HeyItsFree.net have a lot of great stuff in terms of the variety and quality that's offered,” says consumer expert Jody Rohlena. “I've gotten everything from free facial gel to free coffee.” Another top swag site? “At Freebies4Mom.com, you can get apps, songs and books for your Nook. They also post a calendar showing where and when there are free events. For example, I found a free Lowe's home improvement class!”

**Free Yosemite!**  
Visit NPS.gov to learn which days of the year the National Park Service offers free admission to their parks, suggests Eubanks. The next free days are from April 22nd through April 26th!

Be direct!

“Sign up at company websites,” advises freebie guru Ryan Eubanks. “At Procter & Gamble's site, PG Everyday.com, for example, you can log in once every three months to get free samples of top products. Or reach out to retailers: Target gives away products at Samples.Target.com.” Another freebie trick? “Look for companies, like Kellogg's and Disney, that put codes on their products that can be redeemed for points,” says Eubanks. “Find codes online by typing in the company name plus the words ‘rewards’ and ‘codes.’ My friend just earned enough points with the Pampers Gifts to Grow Program to get free custom photo baby announcements!”



## 2 Show your love!

“Friend” top brands!

“Follow retailers you like on Twitter or like them on Facebook,” says Rohlena. “You'll get the scoop on freebies through newsletters and social media alerts. Nordstrom, for example, has Sample Saturdays. If you like them on Facebook, you'll see their giveaway offer in your timeline. I got a free Burberry perfume sample a few weeks ago!”

Stay loyal!

“Take advantage of loyalty programs,” urges lifestyle expert Elizabeth Mayhew. “In return for getting to know your shopping habits, retailers give you freebies.” Adds expert Kathy Spencer: “If you sign up for a Godiva rewards card, you get points for buying chocolate, which I never do. But just for having the card, I can get a free piece of chocolate every month!”

## 3 Surprising ways to score free stuff!

Watch Scandal!

Or *Mad Men* or *NCIS*! Use the free app Viggle (Viggle.com)—it's a kind of digital Nielsen rating system that tracks what you watch—and you'll get paid in rewards just for enjoying TV, says Mayhew. “Hit the ‘check in’ button on your smart phone while you're watching, say, *The Office*,” she explains. “The app will recognize what you're watching and you'll earn points that you can put towards gift cards ranging from Starbuck's to Sephora.”

Visit your bank!

“Bank of America cardholders get free admission to museums the first weekend of every month,” reveals Rohlena. “It pays to ask and see what your bank, credit card and even your cable provider offer. For example, with Optimum cable, I get free movie tickets every Tuesday. So always ask—you never know what perks you're entitled to!”

Go to the vet!

One place that may not leap to mind when you think “freebie”? The vet's office, says Spencer. “Veterinarians get a ton of free promotional products from cat treats to dog food samples that they're often very willing to give away if you ask. I just got free lam's cat food!”



—Kristina Mastrocola



Just ask!

“The makeup counters at Macy's, for example, usually have stuff they'll give you for free if you ask politely,” says Rohlena. “Another way to get free beauty products is through a website I love, GWPAddict.com. They let you know which free gifts are available with purchase—like when it's Clinique bonus time.”

Review your passions!

Start a blog about something you're passionate about and get free products to review on your site. Just visit the website of products you'd like to write about and reach out to their PR contact. “Share a link to one of your reviews or let them know how many readers you have, and they'll send you free products,” says Spencer.

## Our expert panel

 <p><b>Jody Rohlena</b>—deputy editor at <i>ShopSmart</i> magazine—is a consumer expert who specializes in finding the best deals and most impressive freebies.</p>	 <p>Giveaway guru <b>Ryan Eubanks</b> is the owner of Hey, It's Free! LLC (HeyItsFree.net) dedicated to finding the best freebies on the Net.</p>	 <p>Contributing editor to NBC's <i>Today</i>, home and consumer expert <b>Elizabeth Mayhew</b> is the author of <i>FLIP! For Decorating</i>. Visit her at ElizabethMayhew.com.</p>	 <p>Shopping maven <b>Kathy Spencer</b> is the coauthor of <i>How to Shop for Free</i>. Find more of her money-saving tips and tricks at HowToShopForFree.net.</p>
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