

(Style on a Dime) Dinner + Movie = Savings!

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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RESTAURANT.COM
EAT. DRINK. SAVE MONEY.

**\$25 RESTAURANT
GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR
ONLY \$10**

CHOOSE FROM THOUSANDS
OF RESTAURANTS NATIONWIDE

SHOP & SAVE NOW ▶

First, my girlfriend in Chicago called me raving about it. Then my girl, Beverly, who lives here in the cities, told me all about it while we were having lunch last week. Knowing how much a deal means to me, naturally they were excited to make sure I was aware of the newest strategy to get my hubby to splurge on dinner and a movie (not that my man is cheap, so don't start spreading rumors. We're both just frugal.). If you too want to treat yourself to a nice meal at a great discount, then I want to let you in on my favorite new deal called www.restaurant.com. At this website you can purchase gift certificates for restaurants across the nation at savings of 50% or more! Do I have your attention yet? Good!

How it works

I found this discount dining website to be quite user friendly and easy to navigate, even for me. This is how it works: Simply go on to www.restaurant.com and enter either the state, city, or zip code of the area in which you would like to dine. The list of participating restaurants will then appear. You will have the option, for instance, of purchasing a \$25 dollar gift card for only \$10!

The only requirement is that your total bill must meet a minimum dollar amount. Let me give you an example to make it crystal clear. I am going to purchase a \$50 gift certificate at Woolley's Steakhouse in Bloomington and will only pay \$20 for it. However, my total restaurant bill must equal \$100, not including alcohol. In essence, I have just purchased a \$100 meal for only \$70 dollars --and that works for me! If I want to spend less, I could buy a \$25 gift card, it will cost my only \$12.50 (my meal total must equal \$50). While the amount of discount varies from place to place, all details, including spending requirements and the 18% pre-discount gratuity, are clearly posted in advance of checkout.

If you want to take in a movie on your date night, head over to Costco first and pick up discounted tickets for Regal Cinemas or United Artists Theatres nationwide. You can purchase a 5-ticket pack for only \$37.50, (\$7.50 each) and they can be used any day and at any time (and they don't expire). That's a great deal compared to the \$10 weekend price per ticket.

Perfect for gift-giving

Restaurant.com offers an opportunity for you to give these gift cards as gifts to others. It can be a great last minute option, and you can simply email it to the recipient or print it out and include it in a greeting card. In addition, the discounted movie tickets are also a practical gift to give the young and old alike (It's one of my mother-in-law's favorite gifts to receive).

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One of the reasons that I am so impressed with www.restaurant.com is that, at the click of a mouse, discounts are always available and ready when you are. Instead of waiting to for the local newspaper to feature dining coupons, clipping them out, and leaving them at home on my dresser, this system works much better for me. From what I can tell so far, most of the restaurants that participate are locally-owned; they're not chains. The benefit is that we do our part in supporting local businesses, which can only benefit our local economy more directly. So while you are out Enjoying that new local restaurant on the cheap, help the owners attract more customers by spreading the word. Bon Appétit!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.