

Spa savings

7 ways to find great deals on facials and massages



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Discounted spa treatments are easy to find, if you know where to look.

If you're desperate for a spa fix but not up for shelling out hundreds of dollars for treatments, you might still be able to squeeze a massage into your budget. Spas are ramping up incentives. Spafinder.com, one of the largest spa Web sites, reports a 30 percent increase in specials posted since the start of 2008. So there's never been a better time to indulge. Here are tips for spa savings:

Call spas and ask, "What specials are you offering?"

Inquire about off-season deals, whether certain days or times are cheaper than others, and about cost-cutting packages. (Take note: *Discount* is a dirty word in the spa world.) If you've never been to the spa, ask about specials for new clients. And don't be afraid to admit up front that you're looking for a deal. "We won't hold our nose," promises Ella Stimpson, spa director of the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, Colo. "A good

spa hopes to win you over, even with one basic treatment, so that you become a repeat customer."

Try chain massage stores.

The décor usually isn't too fancy and chains are prone to staffing turnover, but the savings can be big. Massage Envy, for example, has more than 500 storefront locations nationwide and employs only certified therapists performing Swedish, deep-tissue, trigger-point, reflexology, and hot-stone massages. As a member, you get one monthly massage for \$49 to \$59 per month (depending on location) with additional massages that month costing \$39 to \$49 each.

Go to school. Cosmetology and massage therapy schools can also save you a bundle. The Kohler Academy, a beauty school in Scottsdale, Ariz., charges \$40 for a spa facial. The nearby swanky Spa at Camelback Inn wants \$145 for its Signature Facial.

Most schools offer a student spa/salon or clinic where treatments are done under the supervision of instructors. Search the Web sites of the American Association of Cosmetology Schools (www.careersinbeauty.org) or the American Massage Therapy Association (www.amtamassage.org).

Consider Costco. The discount warehouse sells two \$50 SpaFinder gift certificates for \$79.99, a 20 percent savings. You can buy the certificates at stores or at Costco.com. Use them for treatments (including discounted ones) at any spa in the SpaFinder network.

Search the Web. Sites like Spafinder.com, Spamagazine.com, and Spa-addicts.com post special deals. Lifebooker.com, for services in New York City and Los Angeles, is another great site for finding deals, as is SpaWeek.org. At Google, type in your city name and "spa discount" to find promotions, or sign up for your favorite spa's e-mail alerts on specials.

Buy in bulk. You might be able to purchase a series of treatments—say, six for the price of five—to be used within a specified amount of time. Some spas offer a frequent-user card and the 10th visit is free.

Ask about product deals.

As spas make the transition from one season to another or change product lines, they often offer specials. Last fall the Golden Door Spa at the Boulders Resort in Arizona created a \$349 "Go Green Special" that included an organic cucumber-mint sugar body scrub and an 80-minute facial as it phased out its summer cucumber line. "These types of specials are here one day and gone the next," says Jennifer Wayland-Smith, director of the Golden Door Spa. "They aren't even posted online, only at the front desk or if you call."