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By Sarah Scanlan

## **Hidden costs of the holidays can creep up quickly**

ATLANTA (CBS ATLANTA) - So you think you've budgeted every dime you're going to spend on your family and friend's gifts. This year, the holidays won't put you in the hole - *or will they?*

They could if you're not careful. In addition to buying gifts, groceries, and decorations to celebrate the holidays, there are some little expenses that can really add up. So what are some of these hidden holiday costs and how can you prepare for them?

**Childcare.** Plan ahead for shopping trips and holiday parties and ask for help from family and friends. But if you have to pay for a babysitter, there are still ways to save money. Believe it or not, said savvy shopper Leanna Gregor, you can actually get coupons for babysitting services. "There are some good coupons right now for trustworthy sites like Angie's list (25 percent off) or Sittercity (20 percent off)," Gregor said. [You can find both of those coupons at couponwinner.com.](#)

**Travel expenses.** Compare plane tickets online before you buy as "the price difference between airlines can be anywhere between \$100 and \$350," Gregor said. For shorter trips, consider renting a car to avoid putting the wear and tear on your own car.

**Shipping fees.** Rather than paying to ship a gift to someone across the country, buy online and ship directly to their home. [FreeShippingCoupons.com](#) organizes all the brands that are offering free shipping in one place, so if you're ever in doubt, check that site.

**Holiday cards.** Get 20-40 percent off holiday cards from [promocodes.com](#) and [promotionalcodes.com](#)

According to the National Retail Federation, holiday shoppers say they plan to shell out an average of \$704.18 on holiday gifts and seasonal merchandise. So if you can find a way, it's probably not a bad idea.

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