

Living on Coffee, Hope, and Noodles: Budgeting for Student Life



Estimated Read Time: 4 minutes

After your parent's made you read [Catherine's blog on how to fund post-secondary education](#), you may think you're all set for school.

- You know approximately how much money you need to cover your year.

Check.

- You've secured funding and have approximately enough money to cover your year at school.

Check.

- You know how to make sure your cash lasts all year.

Um....

How will you avoid sliding into your final exams drinking instant coffee and wearing clothes stained

with noodle soup? You need a plan. You definitely don't want to do that. Have you tasted instant coffee lately?

You can budget and avoid running out before your final exam! Here are my top tips for living on more than coffee, hope, and noodles while you're at school.

Top 5 Budgeting Tips for Students

1. Shop smart.

Use your student card to get discounts. Look for bargains. Use coupons. Shop at thrift stores. Your savings will add up.

Niagara Tips: Look for discounts at grocery stores, like Zehrs and Sobeys, and entertainment locations, like [Landmark Cinemas](#) or [Parkway Lanes](#). Try shopping for what you need to cook at home at the [Farmer's Market](#) or Bulk Barn. Check out local thrift stores, like [Plato's Closet](#). There are plenty of local restaurants and stores that offer discounts with your student card – so don't be afraid to ask!

2. Avoid credit card traps.

Credit cards are an expensive way to borrow money. The interest rates pile on debt if you cannot afford to pay off your balance in full each month. Try to spend only what you have each month, or look into a line of credit for better interest rates.

3. Be smart with books and materials.

Sell or trade old books and buy used textbooks whenever possible. Share books and materials when you can.

Niagara Tips: Check out [Hannelore Headley Old and Fine Books](#), [Booksmart Books](#), and [The Write Bookshop](#) for selling, trading, and buying used books. If you want new books, you may find what you need at The Book Outlet. You can also check out Kijiji and student boards too!

4. Use a student account for banking.

It can be difficult to manage finances on a limited student budget. A [no fee Sprowt student chequing account](#) can save you money and help you keep records of your expenses and spending.

5. Save on transportation costs.

Walking, biking, carpooling, and public transit are all good options. Some schools include the cost

of transit in tuition, so check to see if you have a pass and use it to save the costs of using a personal vehicle (gas, parking, insurance).

Niagara Tips: If you can't carpool or take a bus, taxi companies such as [Brock Q Taxi](#) and Grand Taxi will offer you a student discount

These are a few ideas on how to save money while you're at school. I'd love to hear how you save. Do you use any of [these tips](#) to stay on budget?

[Download our budget template](#) to help you stay on track this year. Budgeting isn't glamorous, but neither is a life filled with hot water soups and friends going out when you can't afford to join them. Be proactive. Be smart. Be happy in September and in April when your year wraps up!

[DOWNLOAD BUDGET TEMPLATE \(.xlsx\)](#)