

POST OFFICE® TRAVEL MONEY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE 2014



In the seventh annual *Christmas Shopping Guide* produced by Post Office Travel Money, New York shops again emerge as cheaper for bargain-hunters than London – with savings of up to 73 per cent on top fashion items. For those planning trips closer to home in European cities that stage traditional Advent markets, Prague is best value.

Key findings are that:

- The biggest New York bargains are on designer jeans – although American fashion brands are also much cheaper than in London
- Around one-in-five of more than 80 items surveyed are over 50 per cent cheaper in New York. Look out for big savings on brands like Hollister, Abercrombie & Fitch, True Religion jeans, J Crew, Ralph Lauren and Victoria's Secret
- In Europe the cost of three-night breaks, including meals, drinks and festive snacks, is lowest in Eastern European cities. Prague is cheapest overall, while 'must-have' gift items cost less in Riga than in London.

UK shoppers planning pre-Christmas trips to the USA can purchase US dollars on demand at over 4,000 Post Office branches while euros are available over the counter at more than 10,000 branches. The other currencies featured in the *Christmas Markets Barometer* are available on demand at over 1,600 Post Office branches.

More than 70 currencies can be pre-ordered at over 11,500 Post Office branches or online at postoffice.co.uk for next day branch or home delivery. Post Office Travel Money also offers prepaid US dollar, euro or sterling Travel Money Cards, which can be loaded before travel and used like plastic on a shopping break.



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20 Cost comparisons



Item	London	New York	Saving
Men's designer jeans: Hollister Slim straight jeans	£59.00	£16.06	-73%
Women's designer jeans: True Religion Stella Super Skinny jeans	£280.00	£107.32	-62%
Men's fashion: Abercrombie & Fitch Mount Armstrong shirt	£68.00	£26.21	-61%
Men's fashion: Abercrombie & Fitch Adams Mountain hoodie	£88.00	£34.68	-61%
Women's designer fashion: Abercrombie & Fitch Mandi shirt	£58.00	£25.05	-57%
Women's designer fashion: Abercrombie & Fitch Jogger sweatpants	£58.00	£25.05	-57%
Men's designer jeans: Levi's 501 Original fit stonewash jeans	£70.00	£30.19	-57%
Women's designer fashion: Hollister Pebbly Beach puffa parka	£139.00	£61.66	-56%
Men's fashion: Abercrombie & Fitch Upper Hudson parka	£270.00	£125.44	-54%
Skincare: Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream skin protectant 50ml	£30.00	£14.69	-51%
'Dream Toys': Transformers Stomp & Chomp Gridlock	£89.99	£48.94	-46%
Make up: Clinique Long Last Lipstick	£17.50	£10.49	-40%
Women's designer jeans: J Brand Maria high rise skinny jeans	£205.00	£125.44	-39%
Men's fashion: Polo Ralph Lauren Epson quilted vest	£255.00	£156.80	-39%
Men's fashion: J Crew Herringbone flannel shirt	£82.50	£51.06	-38%
Women's fashion: J Crew mohair cardigan	£89.50	£57.49	-36%
Gadget: Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 Kids Edition	£199.00	£139.85	-30%
'Dream Toys': Disney Frozen Snow Glow Elsa Doll	£34.99	£24.47	-30%
Women's lingerie: Victoria's Secret Demi Bra	£39.50	£28.26	-28%
Gadget: Apple iPad Air 2 Wi-Fi 16GB	£399.00	£348.95	-13%



All prices are based on the Post Office online exchange rate (13 November 2014).

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Useful information for UK shoppers planning a trip to New York

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KNOW YOUR TAX

New York prices quoted include sales tax of 8.875 per cent – although items of clothing and footwear costing less than \$110 are zero-rated. Although sales tax cannot be reclaimed, some stores (i.e. Macy's) offer tourists an International Savings Card which wipes out the sales tax with a 10 per cent discount on selected purchases.

DUTY FREE ALLOWANCES

The duty free allowance for UK citizens travelling from outside the EU is £390, including allowances for alcohol and cigarettes. If you bring back any item worth more than this allowance, you must pay duty and/or tax on the full item value, not just the value above the allowance. You cannot group individual allowances together to bring in an item worth more than the limit.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers visited stores in central London (Oxford Street/Regent Street areas) between 3 and 7 November to price check all the items featured in this year's Christmas Shopping Guide. Some prices were also double-checked online and by telephone. Prices for New York were researched online over the same time period and spot checks were made by telephone.

London prices were sourced from: Abercrombie & Fitch, Apple Store, Hollister, House of Fraser, J Crew, John Lewis, Levi's Store, Ralph Lauren, Selfridges & Co, UGG Australia, Urban Outfitters and Victoria's Secret. New York prices were sourced from: Abercrombie & Fitch, Apple Store, Best Buy, Bloomingdale's, FAO Schwartz, Hollister, J Crew, Levi's Store, Lord & Taylor, Ralph Lauren, Toys 'R' Us, UGG Australia, Urban Outfitters and Victoria's Secret.



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European Christmas Markets Barometer



ITEMS	PRAGUE Czech Rep.	RIGA Latvia	TALLINN Estonia	BUDAPEST Hungary	COPENHAGEN Denmark	STOCKHOLM Sweden	LILLE France	BERLIN Germany	VIENNA Austria	BRUSSELS Belgium
4 x cup of coffee	£4.28	£8.93	£8.12	£4.94	£13.32	£8.91	£5.52	£6.49	£9.74	£6.49
2 x three-course meal for two including bottle of house wine	£42.75	£113.64	£105.52	£63.71	£131.22	£184.48	£99.19	£121.75	£97.40	£146.10
2 x return bus or train transfers from airport to city centre	£6.11	£3.90	£5.19	£7.69	£15.99	£37.43	£16.23	£4.22	£6.49	£12.99
4 x glass mulled wine/punch/ Glühwein at Christmas market	£4.28	£6.49	£16.23	£3.30	£13.32	£7.13	£9.74	£6.49	£14.61	£6.49
4 x piece of cake/gingerbread/ Stollen at Christmas market	£6.11	£6.49	£16.23	£6.59	£8.88	£7.13	£9.74	£8.12	£12.99	£6.49
TOTAL FOR LIVING COSTS	£63.53	£139.45	£151.29	£86.23	£182.73	£245.08	£140.42	£147.07	£141.23	£178.56
Two-night package with B&B accommodation & flights (Eurostar for Brussels & Lille) for two	£467.49	£414.25	£414.71	£488.48	£396.29	£347.22	£639.77	£633.79	£662.00	£631.25
TOTAL INCLUDING PACKAGE	£531.02	£553.70	£566.00	£574.71	£579.02	£592.30	£780.19	£780.86	£803.23	£809.81

Source: Post Office. Data relates to 13 November 2014 exchange rates.

Food, drink and transfer prices were supplied by National and Regional Tourist Offices, and cross-checked with online research. Package prices were sourced online via Thomas Cook and based on flights (Eurostar for Brussels and Lille) departing London on 5 December and returning on the afternoon/evening of 7 December, with B&B accommodation (two sharing). Prices include hand luggage only on flights and exclude transfers.

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Christmas shopping comparison: London vs Riga



Item	London	Riga	+/-%
Levi's 501 Original Fit Stonewash Jeans	£70.00	£52.63	-24.8%
UGG Classic Short Boots	£130.00	£110.12	-15.3%
Ralph Lauren RLX Men's Quilted Hooded Jacket	£300.00	£263.16	-12.3%
iPad Air 2 Wi-Fi 16GB	£399.00	£376.52	-5.6%
Clinique Long Last Lipstick	£17.50	£16.56	-5.4%
Polo Ralph Lauren Classic Mesh Polo Shirt	£70.00	£68.02	-2.8%
iPad Mini 3 Wi-fi 16GB	£319.00	£340.08	+6.6%
My Burberry Eau de Parfum (50 ml)	£65.00	£69.64	+7.1%

Riga prices supplied by Riga Tourism