

POST OFFICE® TRAVEL MONEY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE 2013



In the sixth annual *Christmas Shopping Guide* produced by Post Office Travel Money, shops in New York and Boston again emerge as cheaper for bargain-hunters than London. Researched in conjunction with Virgin Holidays, Post Office Travel Money found that shoppers could save as much as 50 per cent on purchases Stateside. From over 100 items surveyed, the *Christmas Shopping Guide* features over 50 of the best bargains, together with examples of gifts that cost more in US cities than in London.

Key findings include:

- Boston emerges as cheaper than New York for most items due to lower sales tax and higher exemption rates on clothing and footwear
- Savings of over a third are commonplace but the best bargains are on jeans and designer label clothes. Prices for Levi's or Hollister men's jeans are 41 per cent lower in New York and Boston than in London, while women can save even more – up to 48 per cent on J Brand jeans in Boston
- Fragrance, make-up and skincare brands like Benefit and Clinique are much cheaper in the USA. The best buy for women is Elizabeth Arden's Eight Hour Cream (47 per cent cheaper in Boston than in London), while men can save up to 36 per cent on Abercrombie Hot cologne
- The latest electronic must-haves can be picked up for up to 26 per cent less than in London. The biggest discount found (26 per cent) was on the Kindle Paperwhite WiFi e-Reader
- Although there are great savings on toys, not all of this year's 'Top Toys' listed by the UK Toy Retailers Association are available in the USA. However, Post Office Travel Money found lower prices for six of these 'Top Toys' in New York and Boston – with the biggest saving of 44 per cent on an InnoTab 3S
- Caution needs to be exercised as not all items are cheaper than in London. British fashion brands like Burberry and Ted Baker are more expensive while shoppers can expect to pay significantly more for French brands like Chloé accessories and Clarins or Guerlain skincare.



For more information on packages to New York City and Boston visit www.virginholidays.co.uk/shoppingguide



POST OFFICE® CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE 2013

Useful information for UK shoppers planning a trip to the USA



KNOW YOUR TAX

All prices quoted include sales taxes, which vary depending on the state and city. In New York City items of clothing and footwear costing less than \$110 are zero-rated for sales tax, while shoppers heading to Boston will find their dollars stretch further when buying certain fashion items as clothing and footwear under \$175 is exempt from sales tax. For clothing and footwear costing more than \$175 in Boston, tax is only payable on the amount over and above the tax exemption limit.

Sales tax is 6.25 per cent in Boston compared with 8.85-8.875 per cent in New York. 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.

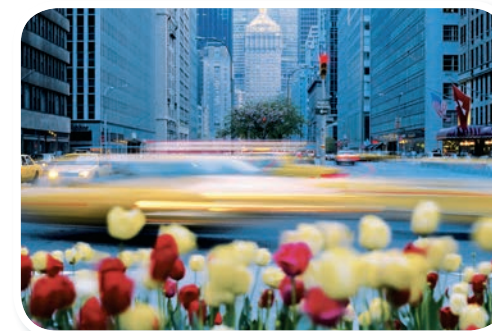
GETTING YOUR CURRENCY

UK shoppers planning pre-Christmas trips to the USA can purchase US dollars on demand at over 4,000 Post Office bureaux de change branches, pre-order for next-day collection at more than 11,500 branches or order online for branch or home delivery at postoffice.co.uk. The chip and pin-enabled prepaid Post Office Travel Money Card can also be loaded up with US dollars and used to pay for goods.

The Post Office has just been named by the UK public as the 'Best Foreign Exchange Provider' for the seventh year running at the prestigious British Travel Awards.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING COST COMPARISONS

All prices are based on the Post Office online exchange rate (20 November 2013).



POST OFFICE® CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE 2013 | COST COMPARISONS FASHIONS



WOMEN'S	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
J Brand Maria high-rise skinny jeans	£250.00	£139.46	-44%	£129.54	-48%
7 For All Mankind 'The Skinny' jeans	£185.00	£107.38	-42%	£98.97	-47%
Hollister Super Skinny jeans	£54.00	£31.81	-41%	£31.81	-41%
Rag & Bone Elsa dress	£310.00	£191.76	-38%	£180.75	-42%
Abercrombie & Fitch Laura Shine hoodie	£68.00	£43.70	-36%	£43.70	-36%
J Brand 485 sateen super skinny jeans	£190.00	£129.00	-32%	£119.30	-37%
Converse All Star low-top sneaker	£44.99	£32.13	-29%	£28.92	-36%
Rag & Bone Halifax midnight leggings	£280.00	£199.43	-29%	£188.26	-33%
UGG Classic Short boots	£150.00	£108.08	-28%	£99.61	-34%
Diane von Furstenberg Zarita lace dress	£300.00	£226.62	-24%	£214.89	-28%
Ted Baker Evvie structured waist dress BAD BUY	£149.00	£205.70	+38%	£180.75	+21%

MEN'S	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
Polo Ralph Lauren Elmwood Down Vest	£295.00	£156.89	-47%	£146.61	-50%
Hollister Slim Straight jeans	£54.00	£31.81	-41%	£31.81	-41%
Levi's 501 Original Fit jeans	£70.00	£41.13	-41%	£41.13	-41%
Converse All Star high-top sneaker	£47.99	£28.92	-40%	£28.92	-40%
Abercrombie & Fitch Algonquin shirt	£78.00	£50.13	-36%	£50.13	-36%
7 For All Mankind Austyn relaxed fit jeans	£170.00	£117.84	-31%	£128.17	-25%
Calvin Klein Prostretch boxer briefs	£22.00	£15.42	-30%	£15.42	-30%
J Brand Kane slim straight fit jeans	£175.00	£130.40	-25%	£120.66	-31%
7 For All Mankind Slimmy slim fit jeans	£179.00	£138.07	-23%	£108.61	-39%
True Religion Ricky Super T straight fit jeans	£310.00	£256.61	-17%	£238.11	-23%
Burberry check pattern cashmere scarf BAD BUY	£295.00	£345.16	+17%	£330.98	+12%

- The survey best buy for Christmas 2013 is a man's Polo Ralph Lauren gilet, which costs 50 per cent less in Boston than in London
- There are significant savings Stateside on all 10 pairs of the men's and women's designer jeans surveyed. Men can save 41 per cent on Hollister or Levi's 501s while J Brand ladies' 'Maria' high-rise skinny jeans cost almost twice as much in London as in Boston
- Top fashion names like Rag & Bone, Diane von Furstenberg, Converse and Abercrombie & Fitch offer savings of between 24-42 per cent
- Expect to pay more for British brands in US cities: researchers found a Ted Baker dress priced at 38 per cent more in New York than in London while a Burberry men's scarf costs 17 per cent more in the Big Apple.

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ACCESSORIES



Item	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
Michael Kors Runway stainless steel chronograph watch	£379.00	£276.39	-27%	£269.72	-29%
Fossil Grant Chronograph stainless steel watch	£135.00	£101.46	-25%	£99.01	-27%
Marc by Marc Jacobs leather card holder with money clip	£90.00	£68.57	-24%	£66.92	-26%
Ray-Ban Aviator sunglasses	£130.00	£101.46	-22%	£99.01	-24%
Oakley Hijinx wraparound sunglasses	£135.00	£104.96	-22%	£102.43	-24%
Tiffany & Co. Return to Tiffany silver heart tag bracelet	£235.00	£192.42	-18%	£187.78	-20%
Marc by Marc Jacobs Classic Q Natasha bag	£310.00	£257.49	-17%	£251.29	-19%
Marc by Marc Jacobs Classic Q slim zip wallet	£175.00	£145.54	-17%	£135.20	-23%
Michael Kors Selma large top zip satchel	£315.00	£264.49	-16%	£244.46	-22%
Ray-Ban Classic polarized Wayfarer sunglasses	£165.00	£139.94	-15%	£122.91	-26%
Burberry solid leather card case wallet BAD BUY	£120.00	£136.44	+14%	£133.15	+11%
Chloé Marcie flap continental wallet BAD BUY	£280.00	£346.36	+24%	£338.01	+21%

- When Post Office Travel Money and Virgin Holidays researchers checked the cost of men's and women's fashion accessories including handbags, wallets, watches, sunglasses and jewellery they found US savings of 22 per cent or more for in-vogue names like Michael Kors, Fossil, Marc Jacobs and Ray-Ban
- The biggest bargains were on stainless steel watches: 29 per cent less in Boston than in London for a Michael Kors model and 27 per cent less for the latest Fossil Grant Chronograph watch
- But shoppers hoping to slash pounds off designer wallets by Burberry and Chloé will be disappointed as these cost up to 24 per more in New York.



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FRAGRANCE, MAKE-UP AND SKINCARE



Item	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream skin protectant 50ml	£25.00	£13.64	-45%	£13.32	-47%
Clinique All About Shadow eye-shadow duo	£22.00	£13.99	-36%	£13.66	-38%
Abercrombie & Fitch Abercrombie Hot cologne for men 50ml	£58.00	£37.78	-35%	£36.87	-36%
Clinique Chubby Stick intense lip	£17.00	£11.90	-30%	£11.61	-32%
Benefit BADgal lash mascara	£17.50	£13.29	-24%	£12.97	-26%
Armani Code eau de parfum 75ml (ladies)	£72.00	£55.98	-22%	£55.99	-22%
Elizabeth Arden Untold eau de parfum 100ml	£69.00	£55.29	-20%	£53.94	-22%
Chanel Coco Mademoiselle eau de parfum 100ml	£95.00	£80.47	-15%	£78.53	-17%
Dior Miss Dior eau de parfum 100ml	£93.00	£80.47	-13%	£78.53	-16%
Ralph Lauren Polo Black eau de toilette 125ml	£60.00	£53.18	-11%	£51.90	-14%
Tom Ford Noir eau de parfum 100ml BAD BUY	£78.00	£87.46	+12%	£85.36	+9%
Clarins One-Step gentle exfoliating cleanser BAD BUY	£20.00	£24.49	+22%	£23.90	+20%
Guerlain Super Aqua-Serum 50ml BAD BUY	£90.00	£115.45	+28%	£112.67	+25%

- There are great savings to be made on some cosmetic and fragrance brands but Post Office Travel Money advises caution before splashing the cash. Check the London price in advance: you can squeeze 45-47 per cent off a tube of Elizabeth Arden's classic Eight Hour Cream in the USA but pay 25-28 per cent more for another skincare product – Super Aqua-Serum by Guerlain
- Clinique and Benefit are again the make-up counters to head for in US cities. The *Christmas Shopping Guide* found savings of over 30 per cent on Clinique lip and eye products and around 25 per cent on the Benefit brand
- Abercrombie & Fitch's Abercrombie Hot cologne is the best US fragrance buy for men, costing 35-36 per cent less than in London, while Armani Code eau de parfum is the women's biggest bargain for the second year, priced at 22 per cent less in Boston or New York.



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CONSUMER ELECTRONICS AND TOYS



CONSUMER ELECTRONICS	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
Kindle Paperwhite WiFi eReader	£109.99	£83.96	-24%	£81.93	-26%
Beats by Dr Dre Studio over-ear headphones	£269.95	£209.88	-22%	£204.82	-24%
Apple iPad mini smart cover	£35.00	£27.29	-22%	£26.63	-24%
Kindle Fire HDX 7" 16GB	£199.99	£160.93	-20%	£157.05	-21%
Apple iPod Touch 16GB	£199.00	£160.23	-19%	£156.37	-21%
Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 kids tablet	£199.95	£160.93	-20%	£157.05	-21%
Bose SoundLink wireless Bluetooth speakers in leather case	£299.95	£244.89	-18%	£238.99	-20%
Apple iPad mini WiFi 16GB	£249.00	£209.21	-16%	£204.17	-18%
Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 7" WiFi tablet 8GB	£159.99	£139.94	-13%	£122.23	-24%
Apple iPad Air WiFi 16GB	£399.00	£349.16	-12%	£340.74	-15%

- US savings are lower on electronic goods than on fashion items but prices are generally at least 12-15 per cent less than in the UK
- Just launched, the latest Kindle Paperwhite WiFi eReader is the electronic best buy – 24-26 per cent below London prices
- Tablet-hunters can make decent savings on leading brands. The new Kindle Fire HDX costs 20-21 per cent less than in London while the kid's version of the Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 is priced at 20 per cent lower in New York and 21 per cent less in Boston
- 'Must have' Apple products cost up to 24 per cent less in the USA. A smart cover for the iPad mini makes a great Christmas gift and is 24 per cent cheaper in Boston than in London.

TOYS	London price	New York price	% saving New York vs. London	Boston price	% saving Boston vs. London
InnoTab 3S	£99.99	£55.97	-44%	£68.28	-32%
Furby Boom!	£59.99	£41.28	-31%	£40.29	-33%
Monopoly Empire	£19.99	£13.99	-30%	£13.65	-32%
LeapPad Ultra	£119.99	£104.96	-13%	£102.42	-15%
Monster High 13 Wishes Doll	£22.99	£20.98	-9%	£18.43	-20%
LEGO City Coast Guard 60014	£59.99	£55.98	-7%	£54.62	-9%
Nerf N-Strike Elite RapidStrike CS-18 BAD BUY	£24.99	£29.38	+18%	£30.72	+23%

- Toy shops are thin on the ground in New York and Boston but Virgin Holidays researchers found seven of the 'Top Toys' named by the UK's Toy Retailers Association – six of these at prices well below London high street levels. The biggest saving of 44 per cent is on the popular InnoTab 3S, while the latest Furby costs around a third less than in London. However, not all toys are cheaper: the newest Nerf N-Strike model is up to 23 per cent more expensive in Boston.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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- Researchers visited stores in central London (Oxford Street/Regent Street areas) between 14 October and 14 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
- Virgin Holidays researchers visited stores in central New York and Boston between 11 October and 11 November to research the cost of items. Some prices were also double-checked online and by telephone
- Prices in London were sourced from: Abercrombie & Fitch, Apple Store, Bose, Burberry, Currys, Fossil, Harvey Nichols, Hollister, House of Fraser, John Lewis, Liberty, Levi's Store, Selfridges & Co, UGG Australia and Tiffany & Co
- Prices in New York and Boston were sourced from: Abercrombie & Fitch, Apple Store, Best Buy, Bloomingdale's, Bose, Burberry, Diane von Furstenberg, FAO Schwartz, Fossil, Hollister, Levi's Store, Lord & Taylor, Macy's, Michael Kors, Ralph Lauren, Saks Fifth Avenue, Smart Toys, Sunglasses Hut, Tiffany & Co, Toys 'R' Us, UGG Australia and Urban Outfitters.

