

Financial Steps to Take Before Buying a Car



Think about the effort it takes to search for the right new car and to negotiate the lowest price.

Unless you plan to pay cash in full, the third leg of the stool is finding the best possible financing. Because loans typically come in 12-month increments, we're talking about a decision that will affect your household budget a minimum of two years and probably more like five or six.

Here are a few things to consider while looking for the best financing option:

Assess your credit

Your credit score is likely the single biggest factor a lender will consider in determining what interest rate to offer you. Your score is based primarily on your credit reports, which you can get for free by visiting AnnualCreditReport.com.

Check the reports for errors and take action to dispute any that you find, because a higher credit score usually leads to a lower interest rate on a loan.

Get preapproved for a loan

Borrowing options usually boil down to working with a financial institution or with the dealership. Too many people assume the latter is their only option. But you can find a loan at banks or credit unions as well. For customers with excellent credit, dealerships sometimes offer low- or even no-interest rates. On the other hand, dealers' rates can be markedly worse than those available elsewhere. Among financial institutions, credit unions typically offer better terms than banks.

If you go through a bank or credit union, ask for a preapproval letter. Walking into the dealership with that in hand gives you more bargaining power to negotiate a better price.

Decide what to do with your old car

If you have a vehicle already, trading it in may be enough to cover a down payment or at least serve as a credit against the cost of your new ride. Sites such as Kelley Blue Book and Edmunds can help you appraise the trade-in value.

The dealer may well offer less — sometimes substantially less — than you could get by selling your old car privately. The tradeoff is you'll have the inconvenience and uncertainty of dealing with strangers.

Figure out how much you can afford

Take a look at your financial situation to determine how much vehicle you can afford. What other living expenses, such as mortgage or rent, utilities and other recurring payments already have a claim on your income?

When calculating costs, you might also check with your insurance agent about rates. Why? Because in addition to your driving record, insurance rates can vary depending on a vehicle's maintenance costs as well as the history of claims tied to your specific make and model.

Buying a new car is a major financial commitment, typically second only to purchasing a home. Taking time to figure out how much car you can afford and finding the smartest financing are well worth the effort.

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NEW DEBIT CARD ACTIVATION/ PIN CHANGE PHONE NUMBER

To activate your debit card and/or change your PIN, call 800.717.4923. You MUST be calling from the phone number we have on our system. If you need to update your phone number, see a MACU Member Service Representative today!



BANK FEES WORTH THE COST? AMERICANS PAY \$159 A YEAR IN BANK FEES

Most people notice bank fees on their monthly account statement. It's typically just a few bucks, so you glance right over it, but a new study has found that those small fees are really adding up.

According to MoneyRates.com, a financial advice site, the average American pays \$159 a year in checking account fees, also called maintenance fees. For customers, the only real way to dodge this charge is to consider online banking. Of the 100 banking institutions analyzed, the study found that 61% of online banks didn't charge any monthly fees.

Another way to avoid fees is to bank small. The study found that larger banks (those with \$15 billion or more in deposits) typically charge more in maintenance fees. In fact, the average maintenance fee at a large bank is \$14.93, compared to \$11.06 at medium-sized banks and \$11.09 at small banks. Overall, the average maintenance fee is \$13.25 a month.

The study also looked at other popular fees, including overdraft fees, fees for using ATMs and minimum opening balance requirements. While largely unavoidable, there is one silver lining—these fees are decreasing.

Overdraft fees are among the steepest charged by banks, targeting customers who are less than diligent with regularly checking their account balance. Since 2010, customers have been able to opt out of overdraft protection, yet many feel like they need the back-up plan and the banks are cashing in. On average, overdraft fees have dropped 16% to \$32.22 in the last six months. This is a bit lower than the median overdraft fee of \$35 published in the Pew Charitable Trust's April report. Those annoying ATM fees that we all try in vain to avoid are decreasing as well. On average, banks charge non-customers \$2.80 for using their machines, 7% less than last year.

Truthfully, many of us pick our banking institution based on proximity and convenience, but there's a better strategy. Today, with the variety of banks available, it might be worth researching new places to tuck away your money.

Check out www.membersadvantagecu.com for a fee schedule, along with surcharge free ATMs.

Ref: Yahoo Finance

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INACTIVE AND DORMANT ACCOUNTS

The Credit Union has a number of accounts which have been inactive for a substantial length of time. In many cases we have not received a change of address, and in some cases a member is deceased with no living relatives or "payable on death" instructions. After a certain period of inactivity when we do not know the whereabouts of the member, we are required to send any unclaimed funds to the state.

These accounts incur a cost to the Credit Union (and ultimately the entire membership) in the form of postage and production costs for mailing statements, computer software costs based on the number of open accounts, and especially in the risk of fraud on accounts that have not been used regularly. In order to minimize the financial risks to the Credit Union and the costs of maintaining these accounts, a dormant account fee is assessed on these inactive accounts.

The dormant and inactive account fee is assessed on the accounts of those members who are 18 years of age or older, have less than a minimum balance of \$100, AND have had no activity on the entire account/base number (savings, loan, CD, share draft/checking, or credit card) for 365 days or more. ALL these conditions must be met for an account to be deemed inactive and have the fee assessed. The monthly dormancy fee is currently \$5.00, and is assessed at month end.

Avoid the fee! Be an active member. After all, you own it!

In the event that we charge your account in error, please bring it to our attention and we will gladly refund you the inactivity fee.

Focus on... Shelley Young

Shelley Young has been with Members' Advantage Credit Union as a Mortgage Loan Originator since April of 2016. Shelley has worked in the mortgage field since 1991, so she brings a lot of experience to the position.

Originally from Wisconsin Rapids, Shelley moved to Tampa, FL in 1987 and then made a brief stop in Dallas, TX in 1999. She has been back in the area since 2000, when her son, Dylan, started kindergarten.

Shelley is married to her husband, Scott, has one son (who lives in Madison), one daughter (student at UWSP), and one 7 month old grandson. Her hobbies include golfing, cooking, and spending time with her grandson.

Stop in and talk to Shelley about any of your mortgage needs!



Buffalo Chicken Jalapeno Poppers

Ingredients

10 jalapeño peppers, sliced in half lengthwise
4 oz 1/3 less fat cream cheese
3 medium scallions, green part only, chopped
2 oz shredded low fat sharp cheddar (I used Cabot 50%)
4 oz shredded chicken
1/4 cup Franks Hot sauce (or any buffalo wing sauce)

1/2 cup egg whites, beaten

3/4 cup panko crumbs

1/8 tsp paprika

1/8 tsp garlic powder

1/8 tsp chili powder

pinch salt and pepper

cooking spray

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a baking pan lined with parchment or foil with cooking spray. Wearing rubber gloves, cut peppers in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds and membrane.

Combine cream cheese, cheddar and scallions in a medium bowl. Mix in shredded chicken and hot sauce.

Combine panko, paprika, chili powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper in another bowl.

Fill peppers with chicken cheese filling with a small spoon or spatula.

Dip peppers in egg, then in panko mixture to coat and place on prepared baking sheet. Spray the peppers with more oil and bake until golden, about 25 to 30 minutes. Remove from oven and serve immediately. Serve hot, make 20.



Skinnytaste.com



EMV Chip Card Fraud Prevention: What you need to know

Fraud Prevention

The EMV chip generates an encrypted, one-time-use digital key for each transaction. Stolen account information cannot be used to create a fake chip card. However, EMV does not prevent or deter fraudulent card-not-present purchases, such as online shopping. Most card fraud in the U.S. take place in card-not-present transactions. Payments fraud is an evolving challenge, with criminal networks constantly seeking new ways to exploit perceived weak links in the system. For example, evolution to EMV is only one proposed step in the fight against fraud and has been around for nearly two decades. As criminals adapt to changing protection systems, new counter-measures are being developed. There is no single solution for the ever-changing threats that exist today, or that can anticipate what new challenges will come years from now.

Future of Card Security

Extensive efforts are already under way to improve card security, including the implementation of EMV standards and – another popular fraud prevention technology – tokenization (a one-time-use digital code). Tokenization would prevent card account information from being passed through retail systems and help prevent card-not-present fraud. These changes require significant financial investment by all parties – and have been the subject of some criticism by many, including parts of the retail industry – but are moving forward.

Ref: The American Bankers Association



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Your net worth to the world is usually determined by what remains after your bad habits are subtracted from your good ones.

-Benjamin Franklin

Best Ways to Save at Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving is a time to gather with loved ones for a satisfying meal and kick off the holiday season. If you pay current prices for your menu items, though, you could blow a chunk of your holiday budget before you even get to the pumpkin pie. Use these tips to keep your Thanksgiving festive and thrifty.

Get a free turkey

The turkey, which cost an average of about \$23 in 2015, is easily the most expensive item on a traditional Thanksgiving table — but you can often get one for free. Many supermarkets offer them as loyalty rewards, and even allow shoppers to select the turkey.

If your local supermarket doesn't participate in this type of rewards program, opt for a frozen bird. It can be significantly cheaper, and odds are your guests won't know the difference.

Choose reusable dinnerware

Disposable cutlery, tablecloths and dinnerware simplify holiday cleanup, but the costs really add up, especially if you spring for higher end items. Save money, reduce waste and create a warm, elegant atmosphere by using cloth napkins and tablecloths as well as real flatware, glassware and dishes.

Make your own sides with store brands

Purchasing prepared gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce and desserts is convenient, but it's also an unnecessary expense. Making your own sides, condiments and desserts is cheaper and often a lot tastier, too.

When cooking for a large Thanksgiving crowd, avoid brand name ingredients. You should be able to find substitutes that keep costs down without sacrificing flavor.

Simplify the menu

It's tempting to get ambitious and create a Thanksgiving menu with more courses than your guests could possibly eat in a sitting. But to prevent spending your whole holiday budget on the Thanksgiving meal, skip the saffron, truffles and endless appetizers. Instead, plan a simple menu with a few hearty sides and stick with seasonal produce, such as apples, sweet potatoes, pumpkins and Brussels sprouts. These will be much more reasonably priced than imported fruits and vegetables.

Make smart Black Friday shopping decisions

Thanksgiving has also become a time to start shopping for the ensuing holidays. But **Black Friday**, Cyber Monday and other Thanksgiving weekend sales tend to inspire a shopping frenzy that doesn't always result in the wisest choices. To keep your cool:

- Make a list — **and a budget** — to head off impulse buys.
- Compare prices online before making purchases.
- Avoid opening multiple store credit cards at once. This can lower your credit scores and make it easier to overspend.
- Hold off on buying toys, which tend to be cheaper during December's first two weeks.

Making smarter Thanksgiving spending choices keeps dinner and shopping costs under control without putting a damper on family fun. And when the weekend is over, you'll still have enough cash to make your winter holidays sparkle.

savings corner

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.20% APY*

Share Certificate
(\$1,000 minimum)

6 month term	.40% APY*
12 month term	.55% APY*
18 month term	.60% APY*
24 month term	.75% APY*
30 month term	.85% APY*
36 month term	1.06% APY*
48 month term	1.16% APY*
60 month term	1.31% APY*

IRA Certificate
(\$1,000 minimum)

12 month term	.55% APY*
18 month term	.60% APY*
24 month term	.75% APY*
30 month term	.85% APY*
36 month term	1.06% APY*
48 month term	1.16% APY*
60 month term	1.31% APY*

IRA Passbook
.40% APY*

Money Market Shares
From 0.10% - .40% APY*

*Rates are subject to change.
APY=Annual percentage Yield

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9:00-5:00 M-F Lobby
9:00-1:00 Sat. Drive-up Only

PLOVER

7:00-5:00 M-W Drive-up
7:00-6:00 Th-F Drive-up
9:00-5:00 M-W Lobby
9:00-6:00 Th-F Lobby
9:00-1:00 Sat. Drive-up Only

24 hr Drive-up ATM

No Surcharge for Members
using a MACU debit card.

CHRISTMAS EVE HOURS:

Saturday, December 24 - 7am-Noon

WE WILL BE CLOSED

Thursday, November 24 - Thanksgiving