



## **Check out your local dollar store for frugal finds**

Looking for cheap holiday decorations or gift wrap? Do you need inexpensive stocking stuffers? Your local dollar store may have just what you need at prices that won't put a dent in your wallet.

An updated version of the old "five and dime" stores, dollar stores are gaining popularity. They've become the fastest-growing retail channel in the United States and are rebuking the common misconception that all they sell is junk. According to ACNielsen, a research group that tracks the industry, nearly seven out of 10 U.S. households shopped at a dollar store last year. New improvements include brand-name merchandise, fresh fruit and refrigerated and frozen food.

Here are some of the better buys available at some dollar stores:

Holiday, birthday decorations – The selection might be limited, but what they do have will be very inexpensive and you can buy more decorations for the same money you'd spend at a party store.

Gift wrap and greeting cards – Cards can cost as little as a few pennies if you buy a box of them, and single greeting cards cost around \$0.50, compared to \$4 to \$6 at a regular gift store.

Toys – Buy cheap toys and gifts for rewards, child birthday party favors, stocking stuffers and gag gifts for adults.

School and office supplies – You'll never go back to the office supply store again when you can spend a lot less on items like calculators, glue, paper, rulers, tape and notebooks.

Cleaning products – While these items may not be brand name, they will still do the job at a much cheaper cost to you.

Containers – If you need inexpensive drinking glasses, vases or food containers, a dollar store is your best bet.

*Source: "Don't sell dollar store deals short" by Gregory Karp*