

Gift Cards

Top Tips E-Guide

*Getting a gift card? Good choice.
Now let's make sure you make the most of it.*

Whether it's for a birthday, a holiday, to say thank you or you just bought it for yourself - gift cards* are perfect for all occasions. So if you've got one, you want to make sure you make the most of it. You probably won't be surprised to hear that we know an awful lot about gift cards, so we thought we'd share some of our top tips with you. Whether you're buying them, gifting them, receiving them as a reward or incentive or enjoying spending them, there are some simple things you should know to get the most out of your card. *Gift cards - physical, vouchers, digital or e-gift cards.

BUYING A GIFT CARD

1 Buy from a trusted source

To get the most out of your card, always make sure to buy it from a trusted provider. Whether it's online, in store or as a reward or incentive, getting a gift card from a reliable source will make your experience all the better.

2 Ask questions

We get it - you want to be informed. And if you're buying a card for someone else, you also want to know the recipient has everything they need to enjoy their gift. So, ask questions! Whether it's in the store, over the phone or online - staff will be happy to answer any questions to make sure you're getting the right card.

3 Save the receipt

Nowadays, it's second nature to bin the receipt, but with gift cards it's important to keep hold of it. When you give a gift card as a present, the recipient will have a much better experience if they have the receipt to hand - so don't forget to give it to them.

SPENDING A GIFT CARD

1 Enjoy it

With a gift card, you can choose exactly what you want and where you want to buy it. Remember: most cards can now be used online, so you don't need to wait - you can just log on and start shopping! Before you rush off, though, make sure to double check the expiry date and its terms of use to get the most out of the card. Some providers also offer the opportunity for you to register your card online - we suggest you do this straight away.

2 Keep hold of any paperwork

If you ever lose your gift card, your receipt may allow you to claim the money back or receive a replacement. So make sure you keep the two separate so if you lose your card you still have the receipt. Or you can just take a photo of the receipt, so you always have it with you. Got the card from your employer? The letter that came with it can work the same way - chat with someone from your company if in doubt.

BUYING A GIFT CARD

4 Point out the value

When giving the card to a friend, family member or employee, let them know that they can check the balance of their card in store and, depending on the retailer, online as well. This will make sure they get the maximum value from it and can enjoy the card to its fullest.

5 Make sure it's ready to use

While a lot of cards can be used immediately, some need to be activated before use and others have to be collected from a store. Find out how the card works before you gift it and make sure the recipient knows what they have to do. This will make it much easier for them to get shopping straight away!

If you need help or assistance – what should you do?

If you have a question in relation to a particular gift card, please contact the gift card retailer or issuer. You can also get in touch with your local Citizens Advice Bureau or email the Gift Card & Voucher Association at giftbetter@gcva.co.uk

SPENDING A GIFT CARD

3 A gift card is a lot like cash

With unique designs and branding, it's easy to forget that a gift card is similar to money. Be sure to keep it in a safe place, keep a note of the card number & receipt if you have it, but unlike a lost tenner, if you do lose it and have the card number, contact the gift card provider and you may be able to get your gift card cancelled or reissued. And it's worth taking a picture of the card number. This means if the card is lost you can still use it online (if available).

4 You're protected

Remember that your consumer rights apply to gift cards just as they would with any other gift. So on the off chance the card is faulty, you can return it for a replacement or refund. If you bought your gift card over the internet, you have the right to return it without reason within 2 weeks after the day you received it. Remember this right will not apply to gift cards that have been personalised for you.

5 Don't leave it too late

We know how it is, things get busy and you don't always have enough time to treat yourself. If you suddenly realise your card is about to expire, don't fear. It's definitely worth getting in touch with the gift card issuer as they may well give you some extra time to choose that perfect item.

The Gift Card & Voucher Association (GCVA) is a membership organisation and trade body for the gift card and voucher industry in the UK, it does not make or enforce laws, have a supervisory or enforcement role nor any legal responsibility for its members or the goods or services sold through them.

This Guide is provided in good faith. The GCVA is not responsible for the terms of use of a gift card issued by an organisation or any communications they may provide.