

Show your support for local businesses on Small Business Saturday November 26

From U.S. News Instead of pitching tents, elbowing people in the face and yanking a toy out of another shopper's hands on Black Friday, those on the hunt for holiday gifts this week might have a more serene shopping experience on Small Business Saturday.

Small Business Saturday falls on the first Saturday after Thanksgiving – or as some know it – the recovery day after Black Friday. But as Black Friday has crept into Turkey Day, Small Business Saturday offers more mindful shoppers a way to enjoy Thanksgiving and then support the local community two days later.

History of Small Business Saturday

American Express launched Small Business Saturday in November 2010 to help bring attention to smaller stores in communities and encourage shoppers to support local business instead of just megastores on Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

By the next year, the day had become nationally supported and endorsed by local governments and the White House. In 2014, an estimated \$14.3 billion was spent on Small Business Saturday, according to American Express.

Why Focus on Small Business Saturday?

Small Business Saturday is nestled in between the major shopping days of Black Friday and Cyber Monday – so it makes sense people (and their wallets) may want to take a break. Plus, it's hard to believe local businesses can compete

with deals from mega-sellers like Wal-Mart, Macy's and Amazon. So why should a person embrace the shop small mentality?

The shop small movement is less about getting the best possible deal and more about supporting the local community. It helps keep cute cafes and mom-and-pop delis from turning into Starbucks and Quiznos. It also keeps money in the community.

In fact, according to the American Independent Business Alliance, 48 percent of the money spent on purchases at a local independent businesses is re-circulated locally, but less than 14 percent of purchases at chain stores stay within the community.

How to Find Deals and Small Businesses to Support

American Express has created an interactive map to help shoppers locate small businesses.

The nationwide map can be used to search by business name or ZIP code. Shoppers can also filter the search based on dining, shopping, entertainment, travel or services.

Unlike the Black Friday advertising madness, Small Business Saturday deals aren't necessarily widely distributed ahead of time. Some deals may get shared on social media, through circulars in the mailbox, on websites or just by signage when you shop in stores. Some small businesses will also advertise via online ads or by using marketing materials for #ShopSmall sponsored by American Express.

Just keep in mind Small Business Saturday focuses less on generating massive buzz to draw customers like on Black Friday. Small shop owners aren't going to release store maps, like Wal-Mart, or open doors at 6 p.m.

on Thursday – thus motivating people to skip Thanksgiving dinner entirely in hopes of nabbing a 32-inch Smart TV for \$125.

Shopping Small Online

Those who don't live near local businesses or don't want to leave the comfort of their homes can still shop small online. Plenty of small business owners have online stores and ship their products around the country.

Deals are also already being shared on the Shop SmallFacebook page. Shoppers can use the Facebook page to find a variety of wares from coffee beans and skin care to jewelry and clothing.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask

Those who already have favorite local businesses should check out store websites and social media pages to look for sales. Or just go the old-school route and call to inquire about any Small Business Saturday deals.



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