

Be Careful When You Shop On Coupon Websites

Description



You may read [Smith Leong's account of how he ended up paying \\$88 for a membership he did not expect here.](#)

The original incident that prompted me to write this post took place while I was walking down Orchard Road, when a group of guys tried to hard-sell me some Manhattan Fish Market coupons for \$19.90. The coupons were fairly attractive, with a savings value of over \$100, but I pointed out to them that there was no way I could use them all up before they expire at the end of the year. They continued to try to sell me on the value, saying I could share them with friends, etc, but no. Budget Babe does not fall for that sort of stuff, so I walked away.

(Also, you can easily find coupons for Manhattan online, such as on Groupon, so why pay?)

The Manhattan FISH MARKET: \$9.95 for 3 Course Set Meal (worth \$21.60) at 15 Outlets. More Options Available

The image is a screenshot of a Groupon coupon for The Manhattan Fish Market. The coupon features a green 'Buy Now!' button with a right-pointing arrow. Below the button, it states 'Amount: from \$9.95'. A table shows a 'Discount' of 54% and 'You save' of \$511.65. There is a 'Buy it for a friend!' button and a 'Limited time remaining!' warning with a clock icon. At the bottom, it says '1894 Bought!'. To the right of the text is a photo of a 3-course set meal, including a bowl of soup, a plate of fried fish, and a glass of iced tea. Below the photo are the words 'Highlights' and 'Fine Print'.



I did a quick search online, and realized that there are quite a number of online coupon-saving sites in


Singapore where consumers are asked to pay for membership first before getting access to the discounts. Furthermore, according to many blogs and Facebook posts I saw, many of these consumers are not able to get back their refunds.



I also noticed that many of the sites I found, also happen to be owned by the same company, which is helmed by a **successful** expat CEO who lives in a landed property here in Singapore.

Here are some of the user complaints about StreetDeal which I came across:

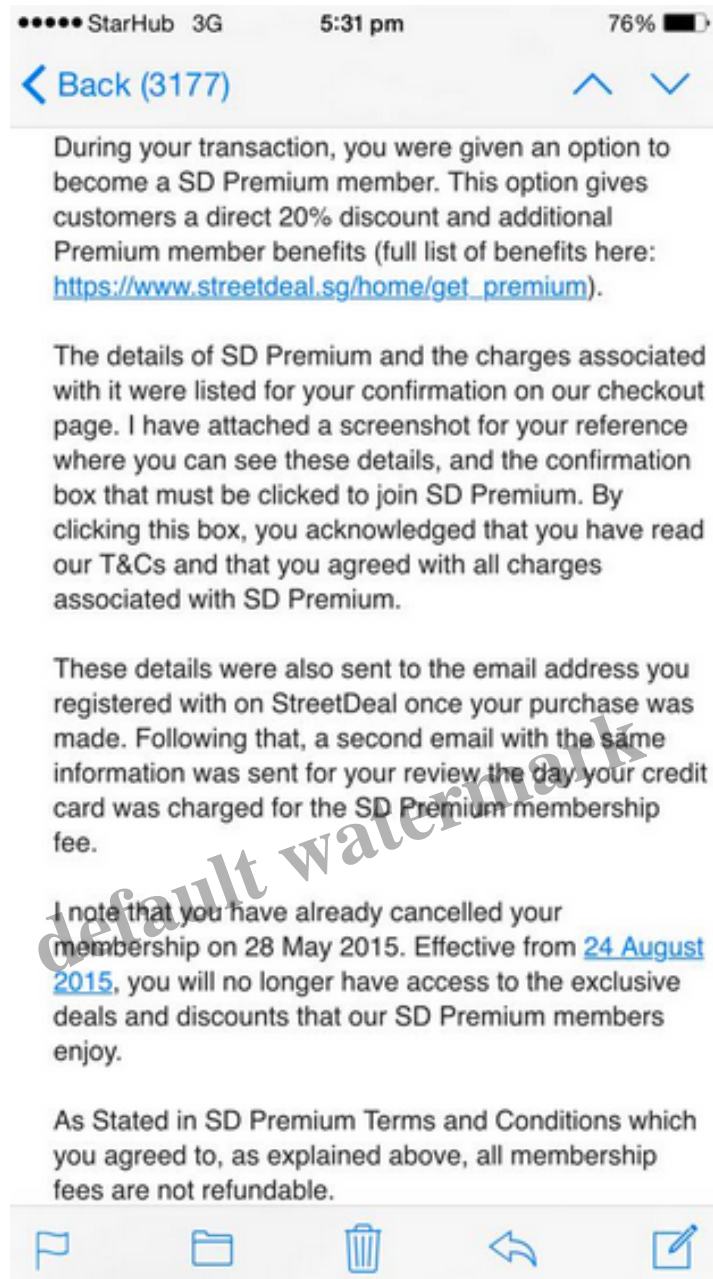
1. StreetDeal Singapore

 **Natalie Tan** Hi all...i just noticed i'm the victim too...i guessed i have been charged more than 4 times!! I only aware....what can i or we do to get our refund back?money charged or deducted for nothing!
17 January at 18:43 · Like ·  1

 **Khoo Yan Jie** hi, did anyone manage to get their cash back? same thing happen to me too. currently they are claiming that " As stated in SD Premium Terms and Conditions which you agreed to, as explained above, all membership fees are not refundable. " anyone know how to handle this situation? pls help out.
4 March at 15:04 · Like

 **Royal Railey** I was scammed too. My last purchase was last year then they suddenly charged me \$88 for memberfee. I sent an email to complain and i told them im going to CASE to file against them. Maybe we should all go so that they will be scared. coz they will just ignore a 1by1 complaint
3 March at 07:06 · Like ·  2

On some sites, many prior users have also expressed their difficulty in getting back their refunds.

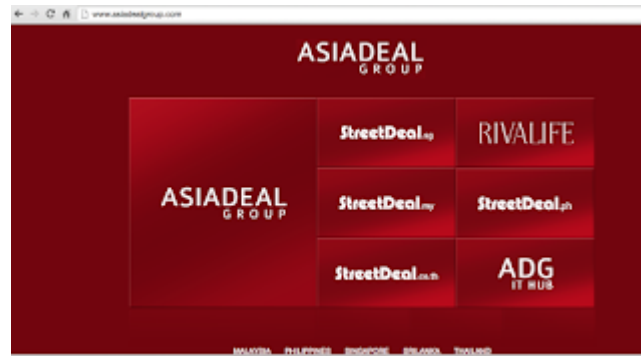


Source: Streetdeal Singapore consumer interests group Facebook page

Here are 3 more coupon websites I personally avoid like the plague.

2. RivaLife

Owned by Asia Deal Group, where on their company website, they state that they also own StreetDeal.



3. SaveTheDeals

WHAT IS SAVETHEDEALS?

What is SaveTheDeals about?

SaveTheDeals is the first membership site for deals, discounts and promotions where you can for only \$34.90 per month save up to \$140 every month.

Who created SaveTheDeals?

Vertigo.com Pte. Ltd. If you have questions to ask us about VIP subscription, you can ask us by writing to the following email address: support@savethedeals.sg

How to contact SaveTheDeals?

You can email us at support@savethedeals.sg.

How much does a VIP membership to SaveTheDeals cost?

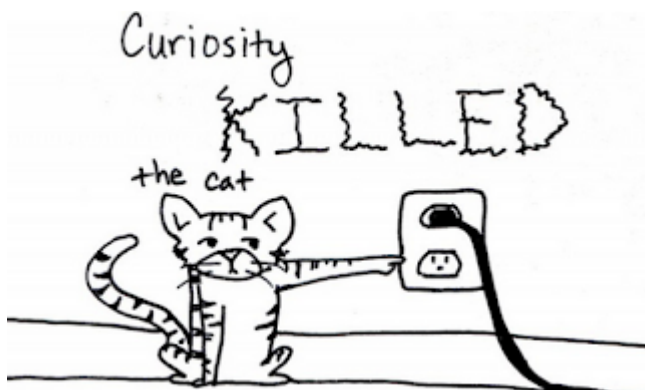
If you subscribe to SaveTheDeals's Welcome Offer, you are authorizing Vertigo.com Pte. Ltd. to charge you \$1 to benefit both from a gift and a VIP access for a trial period of 72 hours. At the end of this trial period, your membership shall be renewed every 30 days, and you shall be charged \$34.90.

Do I have to subscribe for a fixed period?

No, VIP membership has no ongoing obligation. You can unsubscribe from SaveTheDeals whenever you like by following the procedure in our Terms of Use. However, by unsubscribing, you will lose all the advantages that come with SaveTheDeals

Their promise is that you can save up to \$140 each month, but before I could see what offers they had, I had to first pay \$1 for a trial access, which would get automatically upgraded to membership for \$35 monthly from then on.

Maybe some folks are willing to pay all that money and contribute to the company's profits, but definitely not me.



They'll sell you based on the fact that you'll get refunded. Do you? Once you purchase a deal, you have to scan the receipt to them and there are user reviews online sharing that it takes 30 days for them to "process" a refund. Membership is automatically renewed, but once you're no longer their member, they're no longer entitled to pay you any money back?

NEED HELP?

+65 3158 8346

Monday to Friday, 12:00PM to 21:00PM (excluding public holidays)



Still not a Member?
Sign Up

Check the Welcome Offer!

Already a Member?
Sign In

Your email address

Your password

OK

[Forgot password?](#)

- Home
- Weekly offers
- Cashback
- Promo
- Deals
- Help
- Contact

BENEFITS OF THE VIP SAVETHEDEALS MEMBERSHIP

STEP 1 **I Receive a Welcome Offer**

Purchase the Welcome Offer product, send your proof of purchase (picture or scan) at the address receipt@savethedeals.sg and we will refund you on your Paypal account.

STEP 2 **I Benefit From \$35 Refund Vouchers**

Each week, you will have the choice between 2 offers on the same principle than the Welcome Offer (buy the product, send the proof of purchase back, get your refund).

STEP 3 **I Enjoy Savings on All my Purchases**

An unlimited access to the members area and to all the best offers from online retailers: cashback, promotions and deals. All of it without commitment and without minimum purchase.

4. MySweetSavings

WHAT IS MYSWEETSAVINGS?

What is mySweetSavings about?
MySweetSavings is the first membership site for deals, discounts and promotions where you can for only \$34.90 per month save up to \$140 every month.

Who created mySweetSavings?
Vertigo.com Pte. Ltd. If you have questions to ask us about VIP subscription, you can ask us by writing to the following email address: support@mysweetsavings.sg

How to contact mySweetSavings?
You can email us at support@mysweetsavings.sg.

How much does a VIP membership to mySweetSavings cost?

If you subscribe to mySweetSavings's Welcome Offer, you are authorizing Vertigo.com Pte. Ltd. to charge you \$1 to benefit both from a gift and a VIP access for a trial period of 72 hours. At the end of this trial period, your membership shall be renewed every 30 days, and you shall be charged \$34.90.

Do I have to subscribe for a fixed period?

No, VIP membership has no ongoing obligation. You can unsubscribe from mySweetSavings whenever you like by following the procedure in our Terms of Use. However, by unsubscribing, you will lose all the advantages that come with mySweetSavings

Looks familiar?

Coupon Sites I Personally Use

But honestly, if you're smart enough to use coupons, there's a lot of free money waiting around for you to take advantage of.

When I was living in the U.S. previously, I picked up independence, as well as quite a few nifty tricks to save money (after all, I was a student on a budget, without my parents' financial backing). One of the biggest tricks we used was **coupon**-ing, where our landlord had coupon subscriptions which were delivered regularly to our front door.

Before we went anywhere, we always looked out for a coupon we could use. Discounted tickets for Red Flags, 2-for-1 purchases for groceries at Costco...and I daresay we saved a ton of money!

However, with sites like the ones I mentioned above, please read the T&Cs carefully lest you end up

paying more than you expected to. Here are the 3 coupon providers I use regularly instead:

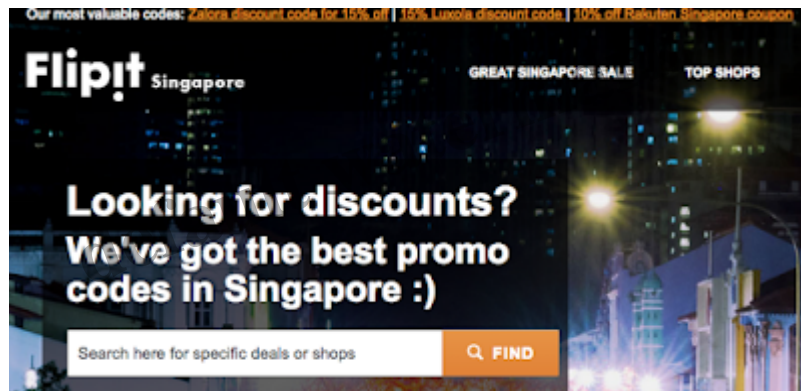
1. [Groupon](#)

I wrote about how this site helped me to save tons of money in previous posts before. Furthermore, they're a reputable company and some of the deals can be quite value-for-money. Just remember to check the terms and conditions before buying so you know the conditions tied to the deal.

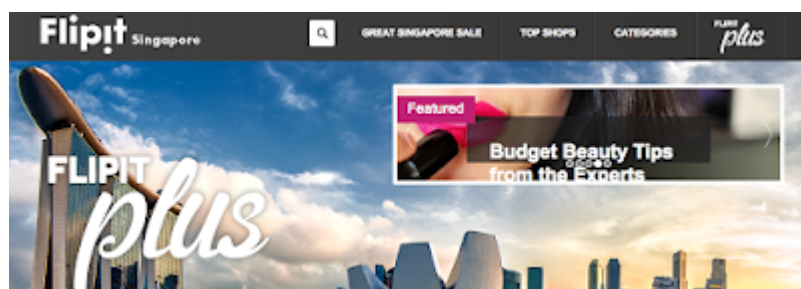
You'll have to pay via credit card or Paypal to Groupon before you can get the deal, and I always have this irrational fear that my card will get over-charged, but thank goodness Groupon hasn't let me down so far.

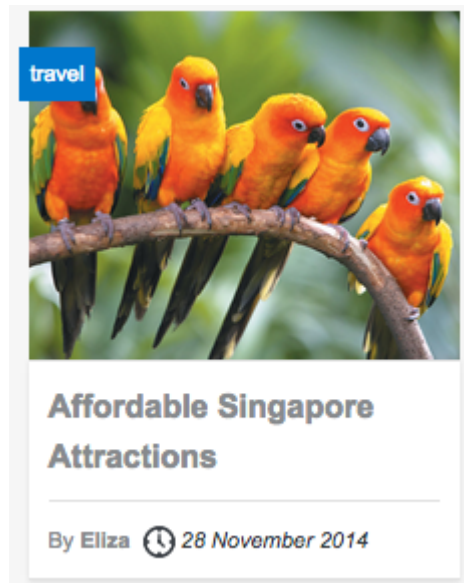
2. [Flipit](#)

You know that field asking you for a promo code when you do a cart check-out? This great website is where you can get those codes!



I was recently asked by Flipit to contribute a budget beauty tip (you can read the article [here](#)) and as a result, got introduced to their money-saving platform which comes with a blog.





They have a cool feature where you can browse by merchants you frequent, and find even more information on when new discounts for that store will appear on the page. I use GrabTaxi for most of my cab bookings, so this was really useful for me.

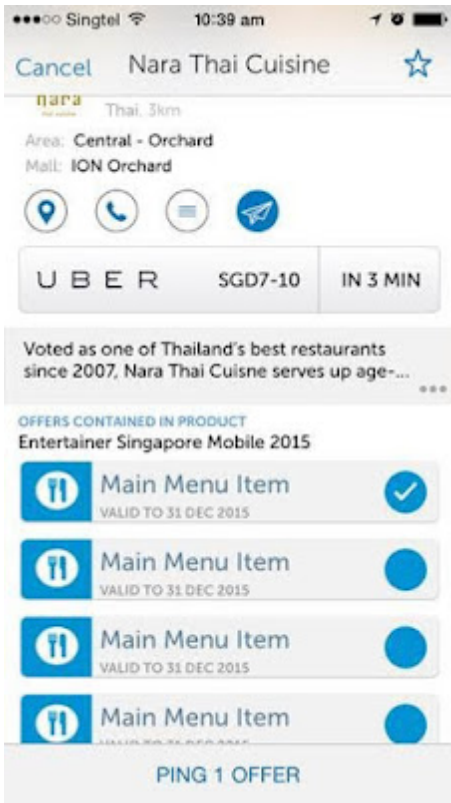
Some of their coupons which I love. The best part I like about Flipit is that **you don't have to pay or even sign up for a membership before you can use their coupons** (unlike the ones above) and they have a deal-spotting team who manually sources and monitors the validity of the codes. Most other coupon sites have automated offers instead which makes it less sincere if you asked me. As a blogger, I also think their savings blog is pretty awesome.

Uber promo code: 16 SGD on first ride when you sign up for the app
No booking fee at HostelWorld with this exclusive discount code

3. The Entertainer

This is a mobile app rather than a website, and their focus is on **Buy One Get One Free** offers across over 800 restaurants and bars, as well as over 250 travel offers. If you want to spend on a classy restaurant or a 4-star hotel staycation for special occasions, this app really comes in handy.

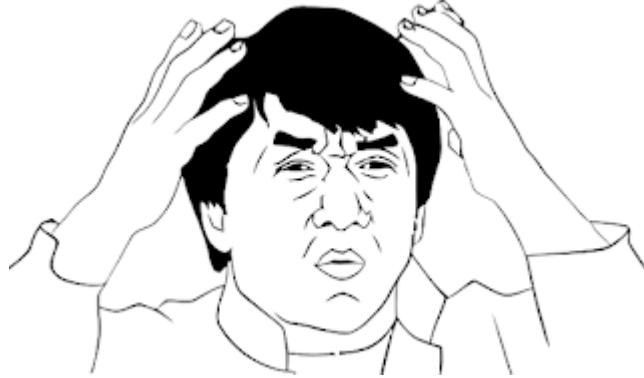
While the app is free, they only have basic vouchers for you to try out. If you want the full access, you'll have to pay \$60 to unlock all their deals. I'm not a fan of paying for coupons, but after trying them out myself, I do think some of their deals can be pretty good. You also visit a merchant up to 3 times for the 1-for-1 promo, or even PING coupons to your friends to exchange for the ones you like better.



Plus, if you eat at fine-dining restaurants, getting one-for-one can pay off the cost for this app easily in a single sitting. Annual savings can be pretty impressive, so I honestly think the \$60 is worth spending.



However, a good practice would be to first check with the merchant before you order. I was at The Canopy a few weeks ago – pretty out of the way, but my best friend and I made the trip there to get the 1-for-1 deal for our brunch – and it turned out that brunch items are not counted as “main course” despite being more expensive.



I eat brunch pretty often, and this is the first time I’m being told a brunch item doesn’t count as a main. So we begrudgingly paid. If we had known earlier, we would have chosen to eat at the nearby Grub instead -.-“

I read other bloggers’ reviews on this app and realized they only chose to focus on the positive parts of the app (with barely any mention of the price you’ll have to pay), so I thought I’d better highlight the limitations to you guys so you can decide for yourself whether the money will be worth it or not. The 1-for-1 offers are apparently not just excluding brunch, but also do not apply for beverages, desserts and shared platters.

Nonetheless, I’m using the app with my friends and boyfriend, so it still makes having it pretty worth it.

If you wish to buy the app’s offers, I’ve also negotiated for a 10% discount code for you guys: **2015BUDGETBABE**.

Disclaimer: I did not get any monetary payments to write this, nor will I be paid or enjoy any other perks from The Entertainer when you use my code.

Are there any other coupon sites you find useful? Do let me know in the comments below!

Category

1. Savings