Be Careful When You Shop On Coupon Websites

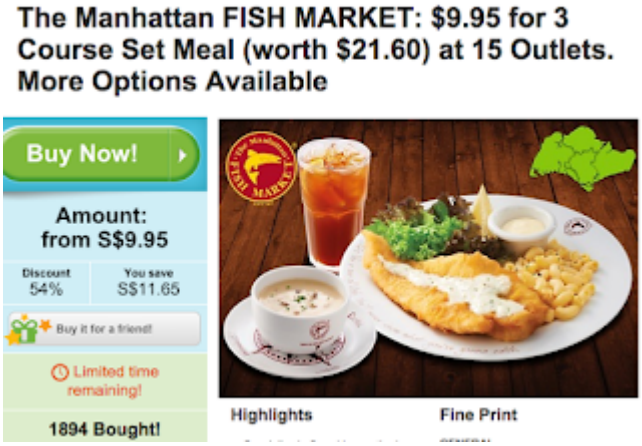
Description



You may read [Smith Leongâ??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?)



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.

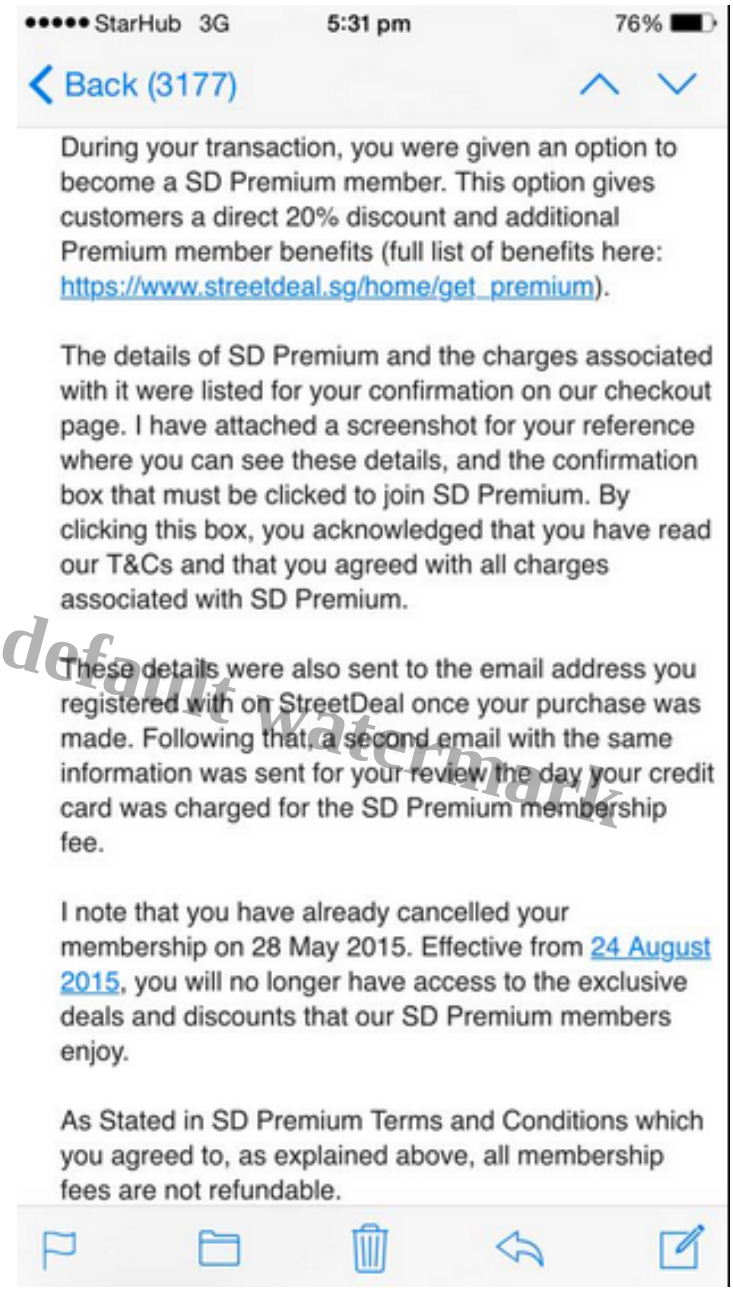
Here are some of the user complaints about StreetDeal which I came across:

1. StreetDeal Singapore



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



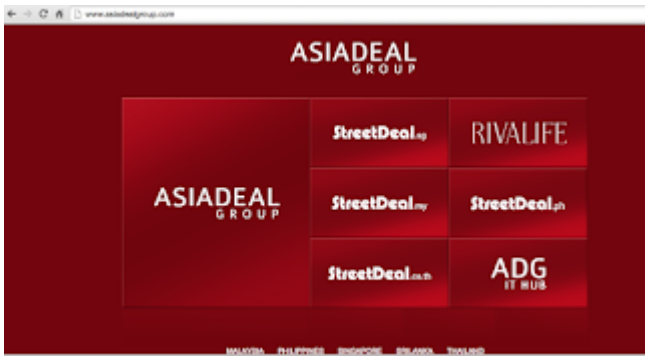
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Source: Streetdeal Singapore consumer interests group Facebook page

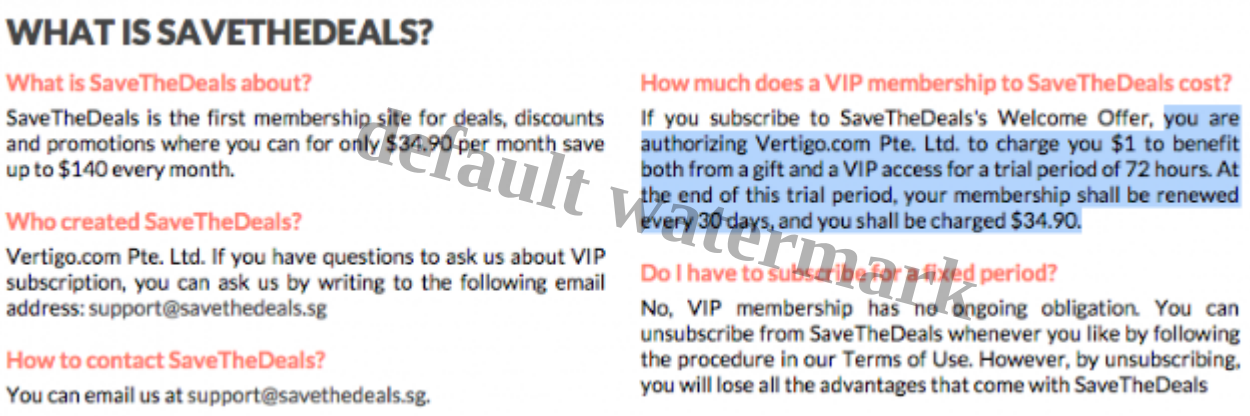
Here are 3 more coupon websites I personally avoid like the plague.

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.

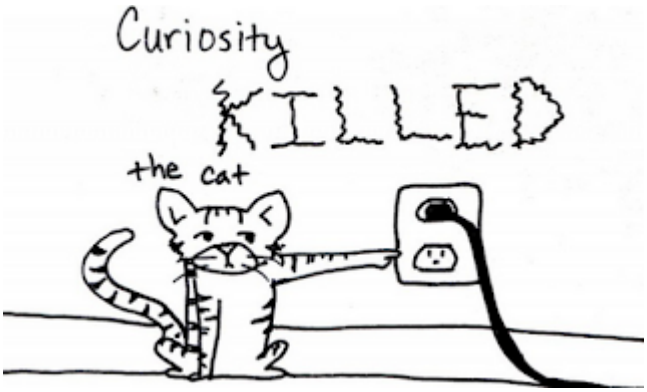
Do I have to subscribe for a fixed period?

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

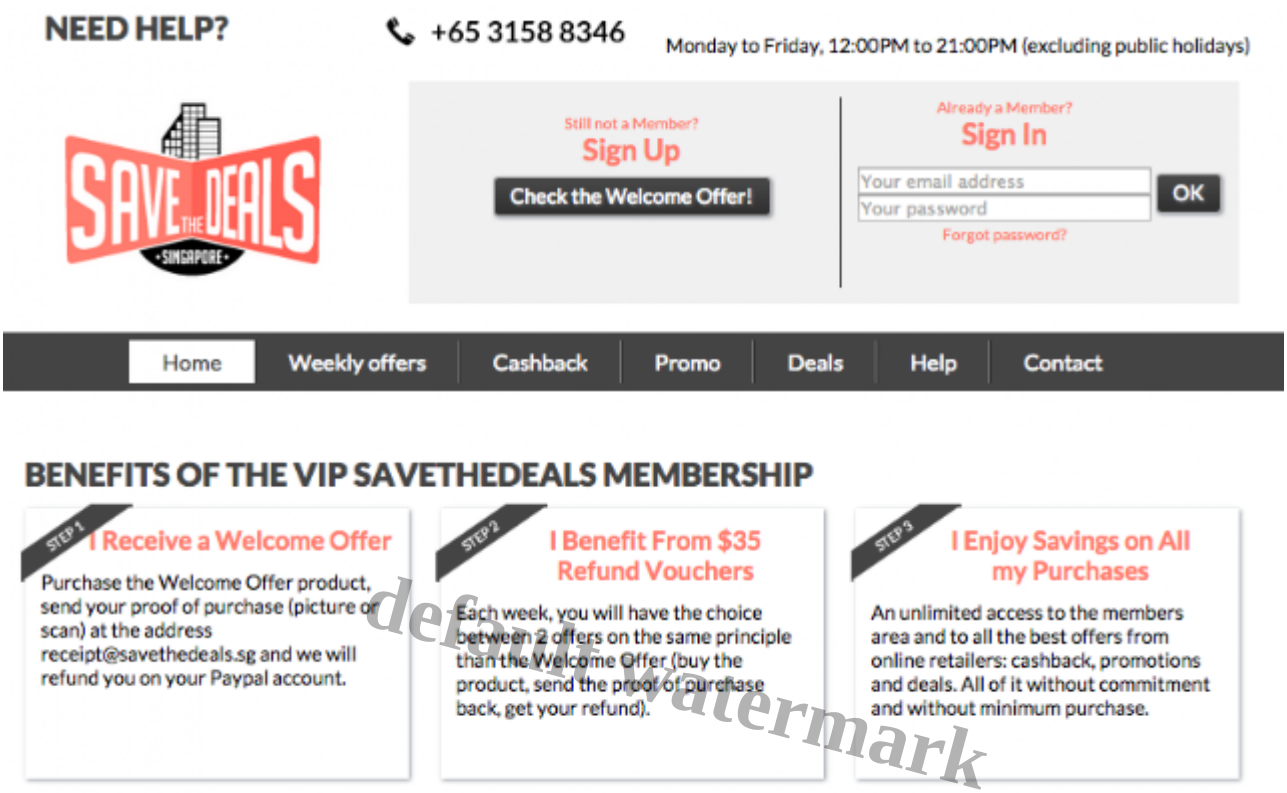
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Their promise is that you can save up to $140 each month, but before I could see what offers they had, I had to first pay $1 for a trial access, which would get automatically upgraded to membership for $35 monthly from then on.

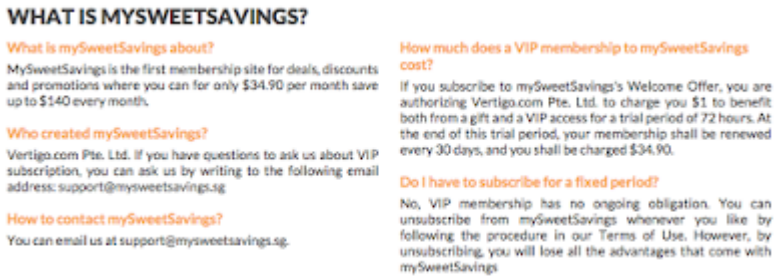
Maybe some folks are willing to pay all that money and contribute to the companyâ??s profits, but definitely not me.



Theyâ??ll sell you based on the fact that youâ??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 â??processâ?• a refund. Membership is automatically renewed, but once youâ??re no longer their member, theyâ??re no longer entitled to pay you any money back?



4. MySweetSavings



Looks familiar?

Coupon Sites I Personally Use

But honestly, if youâ??re smart enough to use coupons, thereâ??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 parentsâ?? 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 Costcoâ?¦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

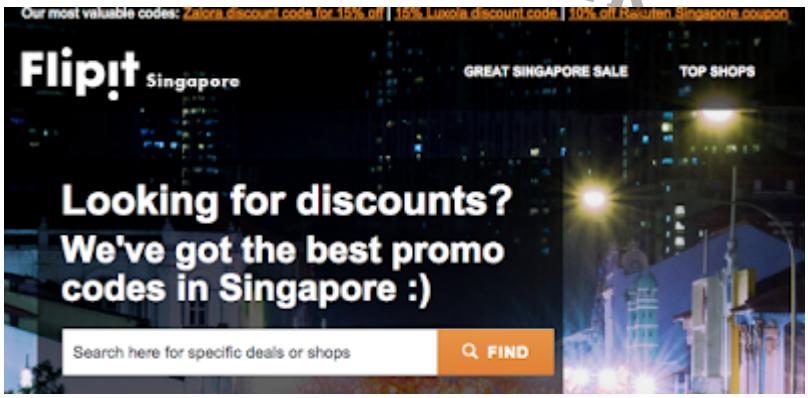
I wrote about how this site helped me to save tons of money in previous posts before. Furthermore, theyâ??re a reputable company and some of the deals can be quite value-for-money. Just remember to check the terms and conditions before buying so you know the conditions tied to the deal.

Youâ??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 hasnâ??t let me down so far.

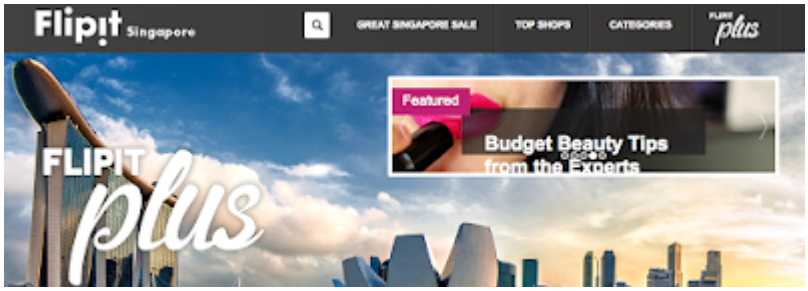
2. Flipit

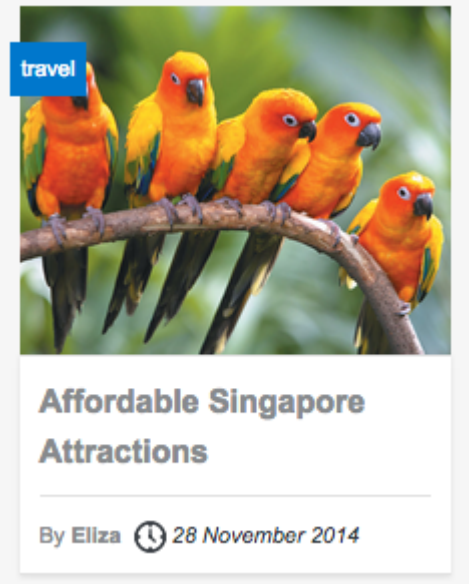
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You know that field asking you for a promo code when you do a cart check-out? This great website is where you can get those codes!



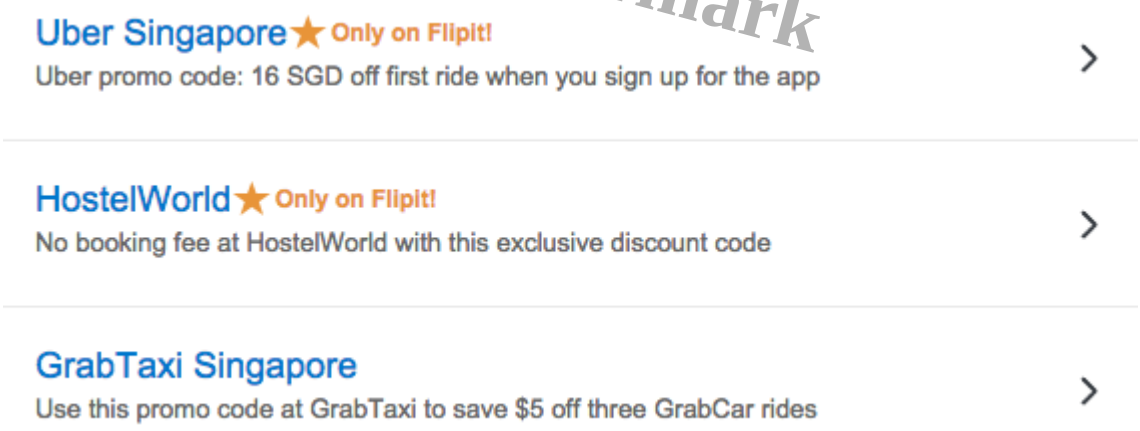
I was recently asked by FlipIt to contribute a budget beauty tip (you can read the article here) and as a result, got introduced to their money-saving platform which comes with a blog.





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.

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Some of their coupons which I love.

The best part I like about Flipit is that **you donâ??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.

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, youâ??ll have to pay $60 to unlock all their deals. Iâ??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.



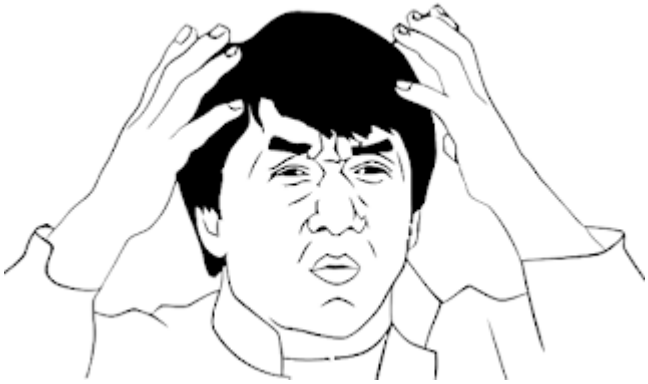
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Plus, if you eat at fine-dining restaurants, getting one-for-one can pay off the cost for this app easily in a single sitting. Annual savings can be pretty impressive, so I honestly think the $60 is worth spending.



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However, a good practice would be to first check with the merchant before you order. I was at The Canopy a few weeks ago â?? 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 â?? and it turned out that brunch items are not counted as â??main courseâ?• despite being more expensive.



I eat brunch pretty often, and
this is the first time Iâ??m being told a brunch item doesnâ??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 -.-â??

I read other bloggersâ?? 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 youâ??ll have to pay), so I thought Iâ??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, Iâ??m using the app with my friends and boyfriend, so it still makes having it pretty worth it.

If you wish to buy the appâ??s offers, Iâ??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

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