

buzzkills



BY LAUREL MILLS

1. **SALES THAT AREN'T REALLY SALES:** There's nothing quite like a good sale at one of your favorite stores. At a rehearsal dinner, a friend who saw me from across the room assumed my big smile and excited hand gestures were due to the introduction of my date. I was actually introducing my cocktail dress — a steal at \$26. That said, 10% off is not a sale. The discount must be at least twice the amount of the sales tax to get my heart racing. And, when a store is "going out of business," any discount less than 30% is an insult to my inner bargain hunter.

2. **TRAFFIC:** Sitting in your car and not moving while the guy in front of you continually misses lights because of whatever fascinating conversation he's having on his cell phone is not my idea of fun. A lane closure on I-65 at rush hour is enough to take anyone's mood from sunny to surly in a matter of minutes.

3. **CONTESTS THAT AREN'T REALLY CONTESTS:** If there is an entry form for a vacation, I'll fill it out. Like most people, I like vacations, and I like free stuff. But don't call me and tell me that I've won 10 days in the Bahamas only to then ask for \$300 to cover "administrative fees." Despite what my dating history implies, I was not born yesterday.

4. **MANDATORY FUN:** I am not what you would call a "joiner." I don't sing along, teams of anything make me nervous and I generally refrain from any activity involving a crowd. So, of course, there's nothing I love more than a meeting.

And my absolute favorite kind of meeting is the "don't worry, we're going to have fun" kind. Do you know what I think would be fun? Not going to a meeting.





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FINE PRINT: I'm a full disclosure kind of gal. And I prefer to lay it all out on the table, so to speak. Therefore, fine print is like my Achilles Heel. (True story: I just typed "Achilles Hell" while I was writing that. If that's not Freudian, I don't know what is.) If the price is going to jump by \$400 after the first month or I'll have to give you my soul for premium channels, couldn't you just let me know that from the beginning? Sure, you won't reach as many of your sales goals, but the world will be a better place.



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STAINS: I should know better by now, but I love crisp, white shirts and soft, cream-colored sweaters. I also love red wine. I have many beautiful tops that have only been worn once.



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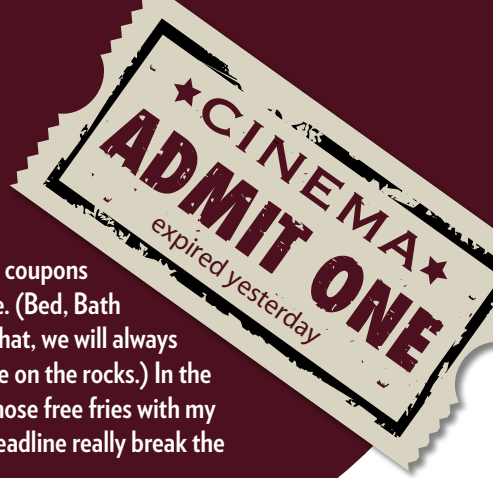
CALORIE COUNTS: For me, nutritional information is like my mother's attitude towards my drinking habits — don't ask, don't tell. I'm an adult who is fully capable of finding fat content and sodium percentages if I so choose. But, if I don't ask, I don't want to know. There's nothing quite like chowing down on some chocolate lava cake only to have someone volunteer, "Wow, do you know that's got like eight million calories in it? I'd go to the gym right now if I was you." And, while I'm at it, do I know what's in a hot dog? No, and I'd like to keep it that way.

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BAD HAIR DAYS: When I was in college, my best friends and I decided to have a "pretty day" at the salon. I wanted auburn highlights. Instead, my hair ended up pink. I complained to the salon, and after they tried to tone down my I-would-have-preferred-a-Chia-head do, they wanted to add blonde highlights, too. My friend Jenny dragged me out of there — as she said, "when there's a train wreck, you don't add another car" — and I spent \$300 at another salon returning to a presentable hair shade. "Bad hair days" are understood across religious and cultural lines for a reason.

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POOR SERVICE: It takes a lot of Diet Coke to keep this body going. It also requires a fair amount of bread and the occasional cocktail. Being ignored at a restaurant and having to forego these items makes me cranky. And I don't like being cranky. Last week at lunch, I had to ask for another Diet Coke three times before I got one. (That day did not end well for our waiter.) A good meal can easily go off the rails when there's no beverage to enjoy it with.



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EXPIRATION DATES: Maybe it's a pipe dream of mine, but I feel like coupons should never expire. (Bed, Bath & Beyond, you honor this, and for that, we will always be friends. Carmike Cinema, we're on the rocks.) In the words of Amy Poehler, would those free fries with my burger a few days past the deadline really break the bank? Really?