



15 Services Moms Love

Food and Meal Prep:

1) Simon Delivers. www.simondelivers.com. It took me a long time to give grocery delivery a try because I had several reservations: Would they have higher prices? (not really) Would they offer convenient delivery times, and would I need to be home to meet them? (yes and no) Would they offer my favorite brands and accept coupons?(yes)

There is a delivery charge of \$7.00 on orders of \$80. or more. The charge is \$9.95 for orders that are less than \$80.

After comparing prices with area grocery stores, item to item, brand to brand, I found the pricing to be within pennies on staples. Some specialty food or non-food items were priced higher. One thing to consider: It is possible that you will spend less at Simon Delivers because you are more *aware* of the pricing. I pay closer attention to the cost of things online than in the store. Mainly because a price pops up for each item and there is a running total on the side of the screen.

2) Byerly's grocery pick-up. www.lundsandbyerlys.com This service allows you to place your grocery order online and arrange for pick up. They require four hours to prepare the order. There is a \$4.95 charge. This service is available in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area at seven different locations. Delivery is also available for \$9.95. They deliver seven days a week. Time slots are determined by zip code. If you don't live in the metro, check to see if this service is available in your area.

3) Allrecipes.com. If you have a day when you are trying to avoid a trip to the grocery store and you want to use the ingredients you have on hand - check out this site. They offer a wide variety of recipes. I really appreciate the reviews. Many times other people try the recipe, suggest improvements or reassure you that it will be " a hit with kids."

4) Meal assembly places. Make gourmet entrees from fresh foods without preservatives. Pack them up, take them home and freeze for a day when you need an easy meal. Try: Mix it Up Meals www.mixitupmeals.com
Let's Dish www.letsdish.com

Errand Running

1) Shutterfly. Once you decide to go digital, this is the best way to develop film. They offer so many fun options while providing a beautiful product. I've tried others. This is

my favorite.

2) Netflix. Never go to the movie store again. This is such a great service. Select movies and put them in the queue. They send out a movie after they receive the movie that you returned. You can keep them as long as you like with no additional charges. They mail them to you. You mail them back. No postage. No problems.

3) Online banking. Banks have really embraced technology. Take advantage of it! Avoid standing in long lines at the bank:

- Use your ATM card.
- Sign up for direct deposit if your employer offers that service.
- Transfer money between savings and checking online.
- I use FREE internet bill pay from US Bank. I set up new accounts in a minute and then can track them online. Each month I enter the amount and date to be paid and they send the bill for me. It saves me time writing out checks and also saves the money for stamps. They guarantee their service and will even pay late fees if some unfortunate circumstance (on their end) were to occur.

This differs from automatic bill pay. Automatic bill pay is a service offered by your bank or credit card which allows you to authorize them to withdraw money from your checking account. I've read a few articles cautioning readers to be a bit wary. If the amount paid is incorrect it may take months to resolve and if you cancel a membership or service it is *your* responsibility to cancel the agreement with the bank or credit card company or you will be out the money.

4) United States Post Office. www.usps.com The Post Office offers a number of services. Use these services and eliminate stopping at the Post Office entirely.

- Order stamps online or by mail.
- Arrange for free carrier pick-up. Fill out the Carrier Pick-up form online and they will pick up the package at your regular delivery time. The package must be ready to go, stamped and wrapped when the carrier arrives. You don't have to be home at the time of pick-up. Figure the postage by weighing it at home and printing a label from their site.
- Buy prepaid envelopes or flat rate boxes to avoid the process of calculating rates at home.

Budget Friendly

1) For comparison shopping. If you are interested in getting the best price and want to save the hassle of calling stores or running around, do some preliminary cost comparison online before you hit the stores. www.bizrate.com www.nextag.com

2) For deals: These sites will tell you about special discounts, close-outs and free shipping offers from a variety of retailers. www.couponhut.com
www.monkeybargains.com www.savester.com

3) Looking for cheap gas? Go to www.twincitiesgasprices.com. They post the best prices by area. This can be helpful when planning errands. I may choose to shop in a different area based on the location of the gas station with the best price. Or I sometimes look to see if any of the stations on the way to school are posting a good price.

Lend a hand

1) Memo to me. www.memotome.com If you spend any time on your computer during the day this is a godsend. It's a free service that will send you an email to warn you about an appointment, meeting or just to remind you that its your day to pick up the kids.

2) Send an e-card. Forgot a birthday, or remembered on the day? This is a fast, free solution. It's also a nice way to brighten someone's day or give them a laugh.
www.hallmark.com www.americangreetings.com

3) Hate automated phone services? It is especially hard to be stuck on terminal hold when you have small kids. Kids always need you when you're on the phone. A man named Paul English came up with a way to find a human! He has instructions on how to get around the system on his web site: www.gethuman.com. Go to the tips section. For specifics on a particular company, hit get human 500 database.

15) Organizing services. Karen Henke from Come to Order is ready and available to help you with all of your organizing needs. www.come2order2day.com

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Karen Henke is the owner of Come2Order in Minneapolis, MN. Visit www.come2order2day.com and request a *free* Time-Savers Kit which is loaded with time-saving tips and services. *And* sign up for a subscription to the *free* monthly newsletter.