

Dorm Shopping Budget Planner

Plan What to Buy, Skip, Share, and Wait On

A compact planner for setting a realistic dorm budget before you start filling carts at every store.

What this PDF includes: a budget snapshot, category spending plan, buy-before vs wait-to-buy checklist, roommate/shared item tracker, price comparison table, deal notes, and a final custom budget page.

Student / room	Move-in date	Total budget
		\$

Quick Start

- Set your total budget before you make a shopping list.
- Separate must-haves from nice-to-haves.
- Ask your roommate before buying shared items.
- Check your school rules for appliances, lights, wall decor, and power strips.
- Buy small basics before move-in; wait on bulky decor until you see the room.
- Keep receipts until you know everything fits and is allowed.

DormRoomBlueprint.com

Plan what to buy, what to skip, and how to make dorm life easier.



Budget Snapshot

Start with the number you can actually spend. A budget only works if it includes taxes, shipping, and last-minute items.

Must-haves first Bedding, laundry, bathroom, cleaning, basic storage.	Roommate check Mini fridge, microwave, rug, vacuum, mirror, and shared decor.	Wait to buy Bulky furniture, extra bins, large rugs, and decor you cannot measure yet.
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Budget line	Amount
Total dorm budget	\$
Already spent	\$
Reserved for move-in week	\$
Emergency/forgotten item buffer	\$
Remaining budget	\$

Suggested Budget Split

Use this as a starting point. Adjust based on what your dorm already provides and what you already own.

Category	Suggested share	Your budget	Notes
Bedding + sleep	25-30%	\$	Sheets, pillow, comforter, mattress topper if needed
Bathroom + laundry	15-20%	\$	Towels, shower caddy, hamper, detergent
Storage + organization	15-20%	\$	Under-bed bins, hangers, hooks, closet helpers
Desk + tech basics	10-15%	\$	Lamp, chargers, power strip if allowed, planner
Cleaning + health	5-10%	\$	Wipes, trash bags, first aid, medicine basics
Decor + comfort	10-15%	\$	Rug, mirror, wall decor, extra pillows
Move-in buffer	5-10%	\$	Forgotten items, replacements, last-minute store runs

Buy Before Move-In

Buy the items you will need immediately or that are annoying to find during move-in chaos.

■ Twin XL sheets if your school uses Twin XL beds.	■ Small first-aid and medicine kit.
■ Pillow, pillowcase, comforter, and mattress protector.	■ Chargers, extension-free power setup, and school-approved surge protector if allowed.
■ Towels, shower shoes, shower caddy, and toiletries.	■ Command hooks or removable strips if your housing allows them.
■ Laundry hamper or bag, detergent, and stain remover.	■ A small fan if your dorm runs hot and fans are allowed.
■ Basic cleaning supplies: wipes, trash bags, cloths, and hand soap.	■ First-night bag with pajamas, medicine, chargers, towel, and toiletries.

Budget tip: Do not spend the whole budget on decor first. The boring items are what make the first week easier.

Wait Until You Know Your Room

■ Large rugs or oddly shaped rugs.	■ Extra lamps if you do not know outlet placement.
■ Extra storage bins before measuring under-bed space.	■ Too many throw pillows or blankets.
■ Bulky chairs, ottomans, or beanbags.	■ Full kitchen supplies unless your dorm setup needs them.
■ Big mirrors if you do not know wall/door space.	■ Large cleaning tools like mops or vacuums unless storage is clear.
■ Decor that depends on wall rules or layout.	■ Extra clothes and shoes if closet space is tiny.

Wait-to-buy rule: If the item is bulky, expensive, shared, or depends on measurements, wait until you see the actual room.

Ask Your Roommate First

Shared items are where students and parents accidentally overspend. Ask before buying duplicates.

■ Mini fridge	■ TV or streaming device
■ Microwave	■ Printer
■ Coffee maker or kettle	■ Bluetooth speaker
■ Vacuum or broom	■ Storage cart
■ Full-length mirror	■ Trash can
■ Rug	■ Shared cleaning supplies

Shared item	Who is buying it?	Budget split?	Notes
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	

Check Your School Rules

Rules vary by campus and building. Check before spending money on items that might be banned or limited.

■ Microwave wattage cap	■ Coffee maker or kettle rules
■ Mini fridge size limit	■ Furniture and lofting rules
■ Extension cord and power strip rules	■ Air fryer, toaster, and hot plate rules
■ Candle, wax warmer, and open flame rules	■ Pet, plant, and humidifier rules
■ LED/string light rules	■ Air conditioner or fan rules
■ Wall decor and adhesive rules	■ Move-in cart and parking rules



Category Budget Tracker

Use this page while shopping. Write the planned budget first, then track what you actually spend.

Category	Planned	Actual	Difference	Priority
Bedding + sleep	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Bathroom + laundry	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Storage + organization	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Desk + tech basics	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Cleaning + health	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Decor + comfort	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Snacks + kitchen basics	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low
Move-in extras	\$	\$	\$	High / Med / Low

Price Comparison Tracker

Before buying, compare the same item across 2-3 stores and include shipping, pickup, and return rules.

Item	Store 1	Store 2	Store 3	Best choice
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	

Do not forget: A cheaper item is not always cheaper if shipping is high, returns are hard, or the item will not fit in your dorm.



Splurge, Save, Skip

Use this to stop impulse buys before they eat the whole budget.

Usually worth spending on	Usually okay to save on	Usually okay to skip/wait
Mattress topper if the bed is uncomfortable	Basic towels and washcloths	Bulky decor before seeing room
Comfortable pillow	Storage bins after measuring	Too many throw pillows
Laundry bag/hamper that is easy to carry	Simple desk lamp	Extra duplicate appliances
Quality surge protector if allowed	Basic cleaning supplies	Oversized furniture
Durable shower caddy for communal bathrooms	Affordable hangers	Decor that breaks housing rules

Parent and Student Reminders

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents: do not buy every dorm list item before the student sees the room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents: ask what the student actually wants to choose themselves.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students: decide your must-haves before you start aesthetic shopping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students: leave budget room for forgotten items during the first week.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents: keep receipts and avoid final-sale items before move-in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Parents: focus on comfort, sleep, laundry, health, and basics first.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students: text your roommate before buying shared items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Students: do not feel pressured to have a perfect dorm on day one.

Realistic reminder: A dorm can look good and function well without buying everything at once. Move-in week will show what the room actually needs.

