

Project Prom

the big night on \$100 or less

PROM IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER and you want to avoid spending the \$1,048, that according to the 2006 *Your Prom* survey, is the average cost per couple. Is it possible to have a red-carpet night without spending more than \$100 per person? You bet. Get ready to break tradition, not your budget.

Duds for studs

Guys, don't rent a tux for prom if you can't afford it. A good deal is usually about \$99.99 for a full tux with accessories – too much for your \$100 budget. Your best bet is to just wear a suit. Head to a thrift or consignment store, where you may be able to find one for \$20. Visit goodwill.org or buffaloexchange.com to find a store near you.

budget \$50 for suit, shirt, and maybe a tie

save more: Your best option may be to borrow a suit or tux from a relative or a friend who is close to the same size as you.

The guys from *The Buried Life* (page 11) attended the MTV Video Music Awards in four suits purchased from a thrift store.

Glam game

As a guy, you've got it easy on this one. For the ladies, some makeup reps at department stores may do yours if you buy an item or two. Your cheapest option is to do make-up, hair and nails at home with friends – you can share makeup, nail polish, and curling irons for free. Check out these websites for do-it-yourself tips: promspot.com, 2promhairstyles.com, or promadvice.com.

budget \$10 for a new lip gloss and nail polish to match your dress

Golden ticket

Prices are usually fixed, so it really depends on your school. Some school's tickets are \$25 each, while other schools price theirs at almost \$100 for a pair. Yikes!

budget \$25

save more: Find out if volunteering to plan, set up, or clean up after the dance will get you a break on the ticket price. You might even score some for free.

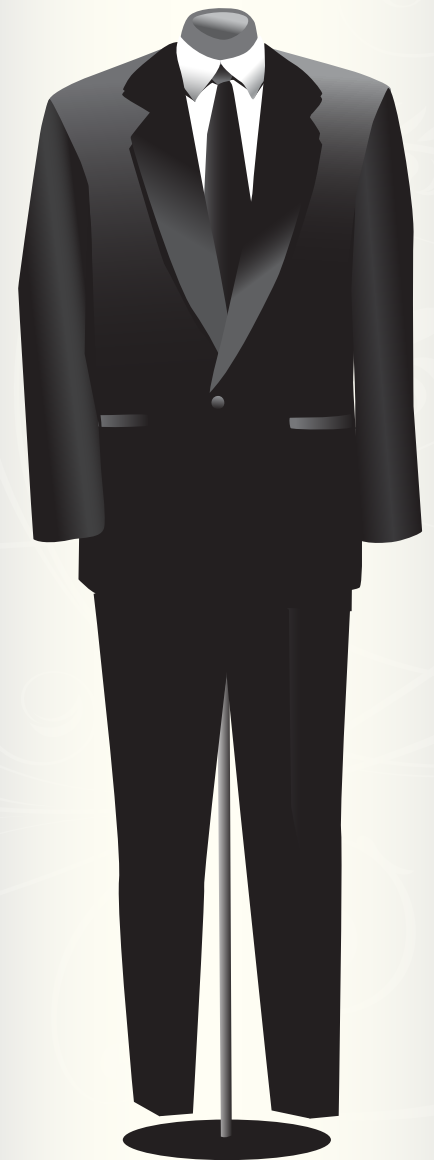
smile and say "cheap"

Don't overpay for pics at the dance. Ask a parent or friend with a camera to take your pictures somewhere with a cool background. All you pay for is printing.

suit	\$50
ticket	\$25
food	\$10
flowers	\$10
gas	\$5

TOTAL \$100

Guys



money dance moves

- Offer to take photos throughout the night for a group
- Make and sell boutonnieres/corsages
- If dances aren't your thing, help out friends and be a chauffeur for the night
- After your prom, sell your dress on eBay for next year's prom-goers

\$6.6 BILLION

WAS SPENT IN THE PROM INDUSTRY IN 2007.

sources: Condé Nast Bridal Media • nypost.com

Gowns for girls

The same basic principles should apply for ladies as for guys: If stores like Forever 21 (forever21.com) or Ross (rossdressforless.com) don't work, try thrift stores to find an older dress you can update (vintage is still in). See if friends are interested in a "dress exchange," where you can get together to trade or sell old dresses. Also, check closetelite.com for dress rentals, as well as ebay.com and craigslist.org for used dresses.

budget \$40

Fancy fare

Your best bet is to get together with a group of friends willing to be non-traditional for a potluck at someone's home. The environment is much more comfortable and you can be as loud as you want. Check out *Good Deal with Dave Lieberman* on foodnetwork.com to find impressive recipes for a small budget – there are even how-to videos.

budget \$20 split between you and a date for the potluck and decorations

Check out brassmagazine.com to see our past cover story on Dave Lieberman.

Green bling

Don't go to a flower shop for corsages or boutonnieres (they'll run you \$25 to \$35). Kroger or other grocery stores may have these for around \$10. Wherever you go, order it about a week ahead of time – they're going to be swamped with orders during prom season.

budget \$10 each

save more: Get together with your date beforehand to make each other's corsage or boutonniere. Search "corsage" or "boutonniere" at expertvillage.com and ehow.com for instructions.

Wheels

If you really want to spring for a limo, split the cost with a group of friends; \$70 to \$150 per hour goes a lot farther split between ten people rather than one or two. If not, ask a friend to drive you (be sure to tip) or borrow your parent's car if you haven't got one and drive yourself. **b**

budget \$20 for gas, split four ways between you and your friends

BOTTOM LINE: \$100 is a lot less than the small fortune spent by some prom goers. Consider our **save more** suggestions, meet your goal, and just make sure you have a great time with your own version of prom.

dress	\$40
ticket	\$25
food	\$10
flowers	\$10
gas	\$5
glam	\$10

TOTAL \$100

Girls

