

Guide to getting perfumes for less.

The internet is usually the cheapest option when purchasing aftershave, cologne, perfume and Eau de toilette. As rather than expensive shop fronts with fancy displays, they can simply pile it high in warehouses and sell it cheap.

When comparing prices always note down the size of the bottle and exactly what you're buying, and don't confuse perfume, the more expensive, with the weaker Eau de toilette, as you may just find **it's a false economy**.

The US option.

A couple of large-scale US sites deliver to the UK and can be very competitive, especially with the pound so strong against the dollar, though you may need to pay import duty; factor in an additional 33% to cover delivery and charges. For full info on the right way to pay and the delivery charges read Top tip when ordering from USA ask them to send it marked as GIFT—you may then get it duty free!!

Most web perfume retailers offer free delivery, but ensure you allow for the time it'll take to be delivered. Depending on the website the time frame usually ranges from three to 10 working days after ordering. Some of the internet retailers sell testers and imported perfume/aftershave from other markets (grey imports) at an even cheaper price, but the main problem is they're often unboxed. While at first this may not seem like a good idea for a prezzie, here's my tip.

Tie a ribbon round it

Buy any unboxed scents then simply go to a card shop or stationers and buy a nice looking gift box for a pound or two and pack it in that, you could even tie a ribbon round. The money saved on buying the perfume should more than cover it. It'll also look as if you've made an extra special effort rather than an extra cheap effort!

Of course, not all cheap online perfume is what it appears to be, so it's always worth having a healthy degree of scepticism of little-known retailers, particularly if the price is too good to be true and there isn't any feedback from site users. And use your common sense if you bump into street traders surrounded by a thronging crowd selling what appears to be the genuine article at knock-down prices: **if it's that cheap, there's usually a reason.**

Generally the places to avoid are the shops where most people head to buy scents, such as department stores. As these are prime destinations for perfume buyers, they can keep the prices high knowing they'll always get custom. Instead head for such venues as Asda, which have very competitive pricing policies, although Superdrug and the other supermarkets aren't far behind. Specialist perfume shops like The Fragrance Store can shave a few quid off the price but won't touch the **online retailers for value.**

Duty Free.

If you're tripping abroad or someone you know is, it's always worth checking out duty free which can sometimes (although not often) beat online retailers for newer and pricier perfumes. Use the World Duty Free site before you go to check prices. You can also get 10% money off vouchers; £5 when you spend £50, £10 off £100, £15 off £150, £20 off £200 and £25 off £250.

Find Fragrances on eBay

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Once you know what type of fragrance you want, go to the Health & Beauty Portal, click Fragrances, and start searching for item listings on eBay.

Categories: The Categories list on the left side of each page will help you narrow down your listings by item type. You'll find links for Men and Women. As you dig deeper into the site, you'll also be able to narrow down your choice by brand.

Keyword search: Search eBay title listings for specific words. For example, if you want to find eau de parfum, type "eau de parfum" (without quotation marks) into the Search box. Click "Search title and description" to expand your results. Visit eBay's Search Tips page for more tips on searching with keywords.

If you can't find exactly what you want, try shopping eBay Stores tell the eBay Community what you want by creating a post on Want It Now, or save a search on My eBay and eBay will email you when a match becomes available.

Buy Fragrances With Confidence

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Before making your purchase, make sure you know exactly what you're buying, research your seller, and understand how eBay and PayPal protect you.

Know your purchase

Carefully read the details in item listings.

Figure delivery costs into your final price. If you spend a lot of money, make sure the seller will insure the item when it ships.

If you want more information, ask by clicking the **"Ask seller a question"** link under the seller's profile.

Always make sure to complete your transaction on eBay (with a bid, Buy It Now, or Best Offer). Transactions conducted outside of eBay are not covered by eBay protection programs.

Never pay for your eBay item using instant cash wire transfer services through Western Union or MoneyGram. These payment methods are unsafe when paying someone you do not know.

Know your seller

Research your seller so you feel positive and secure about every transaction.

What is the seller's Feedback rating? How many transactions have they completed? What percentage of positive responses do they have?

What do buyers say in their Feedback? Did the seller receive praise?

Most top eBay sellers operate like retail stores and have return policies. Do they offer a money-back guarantee? What are the terms and conditions?

Buyer protection

In the unlikely event that a problem arises during your transaction, eBay and PayPal are there for you.

Pay safely with PayPal: PayPal enables you to pay without the seller ever seeing your bank account or credit card numbers. In fact, PayPal protects buyers 100% against unauthorized payments from their accounts. Plus, with PayPal Buyer Protection, your purchase can be covered up to £500.

eBay Security & Resolution Center: Visit the Security & Resolution Center to learn how to protect your account and use eBay's quick and efficient resolution tools.

In general, if you are in doubt, the most important thing to do is to ask the seller explicit questions such as style number, identification or more close-up photos of the item and tag.

A genuine seller will be more than happy to answer you questions. Sellers of fake will tend to ignore you and sell to others who do not ask questions on the ground that these are the people who either don't care or not trouble makers.

When you ask a question, make sure you present yourself as a knowledgeable buyer by asking explicit question such as "What is the style number/colour code/tracking number/ID code,...etc". Don't just ask "Is it authentic?".

If a seller cannot or does not answer your question satisfactorily, then don't buy from them. Its better be safe than sorry.

1. Examine the outside packaging. Is the lettering the same font and type?
2. Is the wording on the box in the same place?
3. Is the box folded and glued in the same manner? Is the seam even and properly connected? Does it fall apart when handled?

4. The detail bordering need to be the same. In the Coco Perfume case there is a gold trim around the outside of the box and the inside flaps are gold.
5. The UPC Bar code on the box should be in the same place. Do the numbers match up?
6. Are the trademarks present and in the right places?
7. Is there an inner lining inside the box and is the construction consistent with the perfume box you are comparing with?
8. Look at the details, angles and coloring of the cap and its construction. Does it fit properly on the bottle? Does it slide on and off easily.
9. The bottle construction is very difficult to copy. Are the angles of the glass smooth and even? Quality bottles are seamless.
10. Check the clarity of the color and print work on the bottle.
11. Another good indicator is the sprayer. Examine the sprayer detail outside and inside the bottle. In this case the gold sprayer and the stem inside it were completely different.
12. Finally, see if the colouring of the juice and the smell are consistent with the department store product. The smell test is always the first test for consumers, but it can be hard to tell the difference unless you wear it for a period of time.