

# Cleaning with the Super Six



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# Cleaning with the Super Six

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You can save hundreds of dollars a year by making not just washing powder, but all your cleaning products at home and you don't need a whole lot of chemicals either.

It is possible to clean your whole house, from top to bottom with just six everyday household products (the super six):

1. white vinegar
2. bicarb soda
3. eucalyptus oil
4. borax
5. washing soda
6. laundry soap or dishwashing detergent



Throw in a few knitted cleaning cloths or some \$2 shop microfibre cloths and you have a cleaning kit to rival any chemical cleaners you can buy.

There's something to be said for using simple products to clean your home. Apart from the pride I feel in having a clean home for my family there's the pride in knowing that the products used are as safe as can possibly be for them, for our furnishings and for our environment. It's also the feeling of satisfaction that comes from knowing I haven't washed hundreds of dollars down the drain.

How much money goes down the drain or into the garbage bin in the average household? Waste doesn't just happen in the kitchen. It can be using too much of something or using the wrong thing for a particular job. It can be using what we believe are convenience products when there are better, cheaper alternatives that are just as convenient.

The Cheapskates washing powder is a classic example. So many people like the idea of cutting their laundry cost to around \$10 a year, but they don't make the powder because they think it's too hard.

It takes under 5 minutes of your time - yes, really - and the tiniest bit of elbow grease to grate the soap and mix it with the washing soda and borax. The main reason they give is that it will be too hard to grate the soap. I've grated chocolate that's been harder!

And how convenient is it to spend 5 minutes and not have to repeat the process for another year? No lugging heavy boxes home each week. No overpowering scents to make you sneeze and itch. No

spending hundreds of dollars for the pleasure of lugging, sneezing and itching. Now that's convenient.

It's just as convenient to make other cleaning products. Window cleaner, bath and basin cleaner, floor cleaners, carpet cleaners, oven cleaners can all be made using the super six above.

You'll find the recipes and instructions for making these and lots of other household cleaners in this book.

## Cleaning House the Cheapskates Way

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I certainly can't afford a cleaning lady, so I'm stuck cleaning my house myself. But even that's getting expensive! So how can I clean my house on a budget?

It seems like there is always a new cleaning product that will supposedly eliminate dirt and grime from your house...for a price. You could go broke trying to keep up with the latest duster/sweeper/cleaners. Happily, cleaning your house may still take up your time, but it doesn't have to use up your money.

### **Do a Little Bit Each Day**

Have you ever wondered how those BOs (born organized) keep their homes so spic'n'span? They do a little every day, without fail. A quick swipe with a duster, picking up the papers, straightening the tablecloth as they pass keep their homes clean and tidy. Daily maintenance cleaning saves both time and money. By doing a little bit each day, you keep the job from becoming overwhelming, and you don't need to spend the whole weekend tidying up or use strong cleaning products to get rid of accumulated grime.

### **Make Our Own Cleaning Products**

We all know that a lot of commercial cleaning products are not only toxic, they're expensive! Fortunately, you can make some "green" cleaning supplies with common household products. Miracle Spray, our all-purpose cleaner, for instance, can be made from mixing a few common household products with water. This will clean benches and cupboard doors, finger marks off walls, basins and toilets (and the recipe is on page XX). You can even mop the floor with it! Recipes for making other kinds of cleaners can also be found in the following chapters.

### **Reusable Cleaning Products**

Although throwaway products like dusting pads and disposable mop heads may seem practical, they cost a lot of money and generate a lot of waste. Instead, consider simple, cheap microfibre cloths. Microfibre cloths can be used without any products to dust furniture and blinds. They can also be used for cleaning floors, glass and other surfaces. When the cloths get dirty, simply toss them in with the rest of your laundry. Use pantyhose to clean shower screens and bath tubs and as a gentle

scourer on precious crystal, glassware and china. Old socks make great dusters for venetian blinds and plantation shutters. Just slip your hand into the sock and wipe over the slats.

## **Natural Air Fresheners**

To make your home smell clean and fresh, don't rely on commercial deodorizers. You can achieve a more natural effect by placing a bowl of dried flowers on an end table or by simmering cinnamon sticks in water on your stove. To deodorize problem areas like garbage disposals, use citrus peels. Clear stale odours from a room with a saucer of white vinegar. Left overnight it will absorb the stale odours leaving the room fresh and clean. And of course, open those windows and doors! Let the breeze blow through on warm, sunny days.

## **Save Time as Well as Money**

Get the whole family involved. There are many chores children can do. Make a chart and enlist everyone's help to get the house clean quickly. Have a five minute pick-up at the same time each evening, when everyone picks up and puts things away for five minutes. You'll be amazed at how much easier it will be to keep your house tidy and organized in just five minutes a day. We also have a rule: if it's left out, it's not wanted and gets donated. I keep a box in the laundry and anything left lying around goes into the box. On a Friday morning, if there is anything in it, I empty the box and take the contents to the op shop. It only took two trips to get everyone to put their belongings away.

## **Simplify**

You don't need a separate product for every job, no matter what the ads tell you. Most of the time all-purpose cleaners work just fine. Bicarb soda, white vinegar, washing soda, laundry soap, borax, and eucalyptus oil will clean just about anything. These few basic ingredients should be the only things in your cleaning caddy.

## **De-clutter**

Spend 15 minutes a day decluttering. The less junk you have, the less you have to clean, and the more space you have to put things away. When you can put things away properly, you can see at a glance what you have, saving you a lot of money on buying because you can't find things. You'll be able to clean properly and quickly and maintain that clean without clutter.

# **Meet the Super Six**

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By keeping a store of very basic and inexpensive ingredients in your cleaning cupboard, you can save hundreds of dollars a year and as a bonus you control the chemicals that you and your family come into contact with. Using these old fashioned cleaners won't take you any more time than the off the supermarket shelf type, and you may even become a bit healthier if you need to put a little more elbow grease into the cleaning. Your hip pocket, your family and the environment will thank you.

*Bi-carbonate Soda* (bi-carb or baking soda) – is a powerful cleaning agent on its own, even more powerful when combined with other materials.

*Borax* - used as a stain lifter, it's in the Cheapskates Washing Powder, can be used as a carpet cleaner and as a pest control treatment. It is toxic, so keep it away from children and pets. It will also damage plants, so beware when using it in the garden.

*Eucalyptus Oil* –can be bought at supermarkets, chemists, health food and hardware stores. Use eucalyptus oil to remove sticky residue, as an inhalant and a disinfectant or a cleaner.

*Laundry soap* - in the cleaning aisle, this is a plain, hard soap, often yellow in colour.

*Vinegar* – is made from fermented apples, grapes, sugar cane, malt or wine. It is an acid and a mild disinfectant.

*Washing Soda* – buy it in the supermarket under the brand name Lectric Soda. It is a good water softener.

With these six products you can clean your entire home, inside and out, from top to bottom.

Making your own cleaning products takes only a few minutes. All the ingredients in these recipes are readily available at your local supermarket, health food shop or hardware store. And they are all very inexpensive.

Together they combine to make effective and safe household cleaners. If you were to cost out the time it takes to make up a bottle of cleaner and price of the ingredients then compare that costing with how much you spend on commercial cleaning products, you'd be amazed. The difference can be hundreds of dollars a year – for only a few minutes of your time!

## MOO Cleaning Products that Won't Break the Budget

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### **Brick Cleaner**

I use this to clean the bricks around our combustion heater and to clean the brick splash back in my kitchen.

1 part white vinegar  
1 part ammonia  
1 part borax

This mixture removes stains and leaves bricks sparkling clean.

## **Carpet Deodoriser**

500g box bicarb soda  
Clean margarine container and lid

Punch small holes all over the lid of the margarine container to make a shaker. Put the bicarb in the container, put on the lid and use it to sprinkle carpets once a week. Leave 20 -30 minutes (go clean the bathroom or have a cuppa) and then vacuum up. Carpets are cleaned and refreshed and smell good. You can add a few drops of essential oil, but make sure it's the real stuff, if you want to add a fragrance. I don't bother just sprinkle and vacuum. Works just as well as the bought ones and costs much less. One 500g packet lasts me about a month if I use it every week in the family room and hallway so cheap carpet freshener at 35c a week.

*Contributed by Anne Fergusson*

## **Cheapskates Washing Powder**

This has to be the cheapest and best value laundry detergent around.

1 bar soap, grated  
1 cup washing soda (Lectric Soda)  
1/2 cup borax

Mix together and store in a sealed container. Use 3 scant teaspoons per load for a top-loader and 1 scant teaspoon per load for a front loader.

You can use up the small slivers of toilet soap you collect if you like, ordinary bath soap or laundry soap. This recipe is ideal for using up all the leftovers you collect in the family bathroom. This detergent won't produce masses of suds, but it will get your clothes clean.

### **Optional:**

Give the washing powder an extra boost if you wash really dirty or greasy clothes by adding one small box of bi-carb soda to the mix.

## **Cleaning Burnt Pots**

Placing baking soda in a burnt pot or pan with water and heating the pan can assist in dissolving burnt on food.

## **Cloth Nappy Pre-soak Solution**

1 cup bicarbonate soda  
1/2 cup cloudy ammonia  
4 litres warm water

Combine ingredients in a plastic bottle (two 2 litre milk bottles work well), shaking thoroughly to mix. To use: pour desired amount into nappy bucket or sink. Soak dirty nappies overnight or at least two hours, before washing. Wash nappies as usual.

## **De-clog Drains**

Clean your drains. No matter how careful you are your drains are a trap for grease and grime and other small bits of rubbish that all stick together to cause a clog if you don't clear them regularly. To help dissolve scum and hair in sluggish bathroom basin and bath drains, or oil and grease in the kitchen and laundry, pour a mixture of 1 cup salt, 1 cup bicarb soda and ½ cup white vinegar into the drain. Then let stand for 15 minutes and flush with 4 litres boiling water followed by flushing hot tap water down the drain for 1 minute. You can repeat this process if necessary. Hint: Salt will keep small roots from taking up residence in your pipes.

## **Dish Drops 1**

An old 1L empty dishwashing liquid squirt bottle  
2 cups very hot water  
1 tablespoon grated pure soap (Velvet)  
1 tablespoon washing soda  
Extra water to top up bottle at the end

In a heat proof kitchen jug, place the grated soap and the washing soda. Add the hot water and stir carefully until it is completely dissolved. Allow to cool for a few minutes. Carefully pour the soap mixture into the squirt bottle. Top with extra water. It will set into a yellowish gel in about 4-6 hours. Once set, put the lid on tight and give it a really good shake to break up the gel. A small squirt (per sink full) into running water is all that is needed. Again, it is not overly bubbly but works well and is extremely cheap to make.

## **Dish Drops 2**

1.1 litre water  
50g soap - grated  
120mls glycerine

Prepare your containers. This makes about 1.5 litres. Combine the water and grated soap in a double boiler. Gentle heat until the soap melts and the water mixes into the soap and becomes clear and runny. Remove from heat and add glycerine.

Bottle the liquid and use about a teaspoon in half a sink full of water.

## **Eliminate Funky Fridge Odours**

Bicarbonate soda has many uses and one of the most common is to deodorize your refrigerator. Place an open box of bicarbonate soda in the back of your refrigerator and this will absorb odours, giving your refrigerator a clean, fresh scent.

## **Eucalyptus Spray Cleaner**

Instead of buying commercial household surface spray cleaners which contain harmful chemicals for people and our planet, take an empty 500-750ml spray bottle and add 1 tablespoon of pure



eucalyptus oil. Fill up to top with water from the tap. Voila, a pleasant smelling, hygienic, economical and non-toxic household cleaner. Use on all surfaces. A couple of tablespoons of eucalyptus oil into a bucket of water makes for an excellent cleaner for wooden floor boards.

*Contributed by Susie, Brighton East*

## **Fabric Softener**

Most water in towns and cities is hard water which is alkaline. Instead of expensive fabric softener (or even the cheaper refill with water versions) use one tablespoon of vinegar (a mild acid) in your final wash as a way of balancing the alkaline water. A cheap 2 litre bottle of vinegar will last 100 washes - much more than a 2 litre bottle of fabric softener! The vinegar is very diluted so leaves no scent but if you like a scent, just add a drop or two of your favourite essential oil to the vinegar.

*Contributed by Moira, Latham*

## **Floor Cleaner**

1 cup of white vinegar in a bucket of hot water will hygienically clean your hard floors in one go. No need to rinse, just mop and let the floors air dry.

## **Golf Ball Cleaner**

2 tablespoons cloudy ammonia

1 cup warm water

1 tablespoon washing soda

Mix well. Scrub white golf balls with the solution, using a soft- bristled brush. Soak about 15 minutes the scrub with a toothbrush if needed. Rinse well and dry.

*Contributed by Greg Morris*

## **Homemade Carpet Spot Cleaner For short Pile Carpet**

My carpet cleaner generously gave me this tip for cleaning my carpet (short pile) instead of trying to sell me an expensive bottle from his business.

1 litre water

3 teaspoons white vinegar

3 teaspoons woolmix (any kind)

Instructions:

Mix together and put in a spray bottle and spot clean away!

*Contributed by Natasha, Mendooran*

## **Homemade Oven Cleaner**

The cheapest and easiest way to keep your oven clean is to put 4 tablespoons of sodium bicarbonate in a big spray bottle add a little hot water, shake the living daylight out of it to dissolve, then fill to the top with cold water and just spray in the oven. If you keep it wet (spray everyday) it will slowly

dissolve the muck and it will all fall to the bottom of the oven as a black powder. Too easy. I know it's hard to believe, but it really is this easy. I didn't believe it until I tried it, but it does work. It will take quite a while to get the oven clean if it is dirty, but once it is clean, this method will keep it that way.

*Contributed by Anne*

## **Insect Deterrent**

Wipe over benchtops, sinks, tiles, cupboard doors and shelves with undiluted white vinegar to deter ants, cockroaches and other annoying pests. Spray directly onto cockroaches to kill them - a nuclear explosion may not kill them but a good squirt of vinegar will!

## **Liquid Dishwasher Detergent**

1/2 cup liquid Castile soap  
1/2 cup water  
1 tsp fresh lemon juice  
3 drops tea tree oil  
1/4 cup white vinegar

Mix together all ingredients. Store in a squeeze bottle and use 1 tbsp in the rinse cycle and 1 tbsp in the automatic soap dispenser for normal wash. This is for a 12 place setting size dishwasher. If your dishwasher is larger you will need to adjust the amount you use. You can get Castile soap from your local health food shop or from a bulk soap warehouse.

*Contributed by Catherine, Croydon*

## **Miracle Spray Recipe**

1.5 litre water (1 cup boiled)  
300ml vinegar  
60ml dishwashing liquid  
25ml eucalyptus  
3 dessertspoons "Lectric" soda (washing soda)

Mix washing soda with about 1 cup boiling water to melt, add remainder of ingredients, pour into 2 litre bottle (I use the vinegar ones). That's it folks!!!

### **To Use:**

This nearly fills the 2 litre bottle, then I decant (don't you just love that word) into spray bottles for benches and laundry, and refill old toilet cleaner bottles to squirt under the rim in the loo etc. It's also good to spray on the floor on tough stains, you know the stuff you dropped when cooking that dried. I originally got the recipe from another site and just tweaked it a bit. I love it, as I try to minimise the use of chemicals around the house. With the collars and cuffs, try to spray and leave to soak for a few minutes works best I've found, so I spray as I sort, then do the whites second rather than first load to give the spray a chance to work.

*Contributed by Joyofquilting*

## **Natural Orange Surface Cleaner**

Put fresh orange peels in an air tight mason jar. Cover the peels with white vinegar up to the top. Put the jar up high somewhere and mark it 'do not touch', just in case little hands get into it!. Leave the peels for 10 days up to 14 days. Strain the liquid into a spray bottle, or back into another mason jar for storage, throw away the peels. This makes a fantastic natural surface spray, combining the vinegar and power of the orange oil from the peels. You can use it straight or dilute with some water. It works great all around the house!

*Contributed by Jacqui Antoine*

## **No More Ironing!**

Invest in a spray bottle that delivers a fine mist. Take your crumpled item of clothing and put it on. Spray a fine mist over it and smooth the crumples with the palm of your hand. The wrinkles will fall out. For more persistent wrinkles or linen spray more water on the item. A tip for the back of a shirt, spray the back of the item and put it on and lean forward. It sounds a little odd but it works! A friend was recently worried about having to iron while she was on a cruise and I told her about my trick. She took an empty misting bottle and had not a care in the world. The only thing it won't work on is adding a crease to a shirt sleeve, but.... I have tried it and if you pinch the sleeve carefully it can be done.

*Contributed by Luana Atger*

## **Odour Neutralizer**

1 part vinegar

5 parts water

In a spray bottle mix vinegar and water. Spray around the house as an air freshener or odour eliminator. The vinegar neutralizes any odours in the house, especially cigarette smoke. To eliminate very stale odours, sit small saucers or dishes of vinegar in each room and close the door. Leave overnight and next morning the odour will be gone. Pour the vinegar down your drains or onto weeds to dispose of it.

## **To Clean Your Rangehood Filters**

Fill your laundry trough up half way with hot water; add half a bag of Lectric Soda (generally found on the bottom shelf with the cleaning products, in all good supermarkets). Immerse your filters and watch the grease dissolve before your eyes. Rinse in hot water to remove any residue. If the filter is very dirty you may need to soak it a couple of times. This tip saves time and money as washing soda is cheap and there is no hard scrubbing.

*Contributed by Jo, Ringwood*

## **Pots and Pans**

Clean the copper bottoms of pots and pans by sprinkling with salt and then gently rubbing with a cloth soaked in white vinegar. Rinse well and dry with a soft cloth.

## **Rust Remover**

2 tablespoons salt  
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Make a paste with salt and lemon juice. Apply the paste with a dry cloth to the rusted area of household tools and appliances. Place the item in the sunshine for at least two hours. Rub out the rust with cloth. Rinse with cool, clean water and dry. This mixture will work on cotton fabrics, plastics, vinyl, canvas and china. Test it on an inconspicuous corner if you're not sure your rusty item will stand up to the lemon juice and salt combination.

## **Sinks & Taps**

Immerse a damp cloth in white vinegar to wipe any chrome surfaces clean. You can also soak any chrome items in the vinegar. A bicarb soda and water mixture is also great on chrome surfaces and to clean ovens. To clean an oven, scrub it with bicarb soda and water. Leave the cleaning solution overnight and wipe clean the next day. Bicarb soda on a damp sponge is a good, gently scouring powder that won't scratch delicate surfaces.

## **Scouring Powder**

Sometimes a cleaning job just needs to be a scrubbing job. This scouring powder is easy to make, does a wonderful job at cleaning and is less abrasive than commercial scouring powders.

1 cup bi-carb soda  
1 cup borax  
1 cup salt

Blend and store in container.

## **Showerheads**

Clean a gunked up shower head by filling a plastic bag with vinegar. Put the bag over the showerhead so it is immersed in the vinegar and tie it in a knot or secure it with a rubber band. Leave to soak overnight. In the morning remove the plastic bag and turn the hot water on and let it run for 3 minutes. The showerhead will be sparkling clean and de-gunked.

## **Softest Washing on the Line**

Pour 1 cup of white vinegar into the washing machine with the final rinse – your washing will be soft and odour-free and your washing machine's 'internal organs' will stay clean and healthy too – no more buildup of detergents in the hoses etc.

## **Sparkling Clean Tiles**

Dampen a cloth with straight white vinegar and use to wipe over kitchen and bathroom tiles to leave them sparkling clean and streak free.

## **Super Strength Shower Cleaner**

I tried this shower cleaner once and I was convinced. It's the only cleaner I use on our showers and bathtub now. This recipe makes 500ml and is more than enough to clean two showers a week for a month, for the grand cost of just 40 cents!

1 cup white vinegar  
1 cup dishwashing liquid

Warm the vinegar in the microwave for 40 seconds.  
Slowly stir in the dishwashing liquid, mixing until it is thoroughly combined with the vinegar.  
Pour into a 500ml spray bottle.

To use: Spray showerscreen, tiles and base liberally with the Super Strength Shower Cleaner. Wipe over with a wet cloth. The soap scum and grime will wipe away, no scrubbing needed. Rinse the shower with cool water and you're done!

## **Toilets 1**

For a sparkling clean toilet, flush and then pour 1 cup of undiluted white vinegar around the bowl and rim. Leave for 10 minutes or so, brush and flush!

## **Toilets 2**

To clean a toilet and remove hard water stains and scale pour  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup citric acid (available at the supermarket or health food shop, but cheaper online) around the toilet bowl and into the bottom. Leave overnight. The next morning brush and then flush. The hard water stains and scale will be gone and your toilet will sparkle.

## **Washing the Washing Machine**

I put 2 cups vinegar through a cold wash cycle in my washing machine about twice a year to clean the gunk out of it. I'm also really fussy about cleaning the lint filter after every load. Sometimes there's a lot of fluff and stuff, sometimes not. Even my kids know to clean the lint filter after they've done their washing else Mum goes nuts. I've had my washing machine for almost 17 years and it's still going strong, only replaced the timer and it gets used at least once a day. Its a Simpson by the way.

*Contributed by Anne*

## Weed Whacker Spray

This spray is ideal for paving and driveways. Putting it in a spray bottle lets you get just the weed and not any of your precious plants. Best of all it's safe to use around pets and the family. Oh, and it costs around 30 cents to make, cheaper than any weed spray you can get at the garden centre.

1/2 cup vinegar  
2 tablespoons dishwashing liquid

Place in a clean, empty spray bottle and shake to combine. Spray the weeds in cracks and crevices around the outside of your house. The vinegar causes the weeds to die off and the soap assists the vinegar in adhering to the weeds.

## Window Cleaner 1

1/2 cup white vinegar  
4 litres warm water

Just mix and scrub. When washing windows, using newspaper is best.

## Window Cleaner 2

I love this window cleaner. It does a great job on really dirty, dusty windows, leaving them sparkling clean inside and out. Best of all it only costs 4 cents (yes, you read it right) to make a 500ml bottle – those commercial products just can't compare.

1/2 tsp liquid soap (detergent)  
3 Tbsp. vinegar  
2 cups water  
1 drop blue food colouring (optional)

Blend well and store in spray bottle.

## A Basic Knitted Dishcloth

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I love my knitted dishcloths. They are incredibly tough on stubborn kitchen "gunk" yet gentle on my good china and glassware. They are also very therapeutic to knit, easy too. I use cotton or bamboo to knit my dishcloths, which may seem expensive. The advantage is that they outlast bought sponges, can



be bleached (if necessary), stand up to prolonged use and once they've been used in the kitchen and passed on to the laundry and bathroom they are put in the garage to use on the cars, where they are the best thing for scrubbing bugs off the duco without chemicals or damaging the paintwork. Even a beginner can knit a dishcloth; this basic pattern is in simple garter stitch and can be finished in one or two nights in front of the television.

**You will need:**

3.75mm knitting needles

1 ball 8 ply cotton\*

**Pattern:**

Cast on 44 stitches.

First row: Slip first stitch, knit to end. Turn.

Second row: Slip first stitch, knit to end. Turn.

Repeat these two rows another 42 times, making 88 rows in total.

\*Note: I use Bernat handcrafter cotton to knit my dishcloths. You can use any knitting or crochet cotton for these dishcloths. If you can only get 4 ply yarn, either use smaller needles or use two strands of yarn to knit.

# What is a Cheapskate?

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Cheapskate -  
a person who is wise with their money and lives life  
debt free, cashed up and laughing

Ok, that isn't the official definition of a Cheapskate, but it is mine. Over the years I've been asked many times what a Cheapskate is and that answer is simple.

\*A Cheapskate is economical in the use of money, goods and consumable items.

\*A Cheapskate avoids unnecessary expense of money or of anything else that is to be used or consumed.

\*A Cheapskate is sparing, not extravagant or lavish, but they don't deprive themselves of needs or wants.

\*A Cheapskate lives by the creed of: Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship . Benjamin Franklin.

\*A Cheapskate always gets the most from every dollar.

\*As a Cheapskate, frugality is always virtue!

But the thing that really sets Cheapskates apart from spendthrifts is the choices they make.

A Cheapskate chooses to live the Cheapskates way. They choose to save money on the things that aren't important to them so they have the money to enjoy the things that are.

Want to know more about living the Cheapskates way? Sign up for the Living the Cheapskates way e-course [here](#).

If you're serious about living life debt free and cashed up, you need a Platinum Cheapskates Club membership. With a Platinum membership you'll have all the tools, encouragement and support you need as you live life the Cheapskates way.

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