

## How to Live a Caviar Life When You Have a Tuna Fish Budget

By Nicholas Pell

**Y**ou see the lifestyles of the rich and famous on the television every day. And while you want a piece of that (who doesn't?), your family budget just doesn't allow for the kind of luxury you'd like; or does it? You might be surprised at just how well you can live on very modest means. Here are some ways you can start living the high life on a Main Street budget.

### Entertain Yourself Without Breaking the Bank

Ellie Kay, the author of *Lean Body, Fat Wallet* and the mother of seven, raised her kids to be frugal but also to live well. One thing that she's learned is that you can get cheap movie tickets from an unlikely source: Costco, where a ten pack of tickets can sometimes go for about \$8.50 per ticket.

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"People on a caviar budget often take in live entertainment," she says. The place to find deals on that include TravelZoo and Groupon. Her whole family was able to go out to a murder mystery for \$20 apiece -- \$30 less than the usual price. For that they got both entertainment and a meal. It even turned out that her son was the murderer; that's the type of memory that no amount of money can buy.

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## Streamline Your Life, Beef Up Your Budget

Kay points out that nearly everyone has stuff lying around that goes unused.

"Maybe you didn't trade in your last iPhone, or you've got an amazing bike you never seem to ride," she said. Not only are these things taking up space, but they also often have costs associated with them. This allows for a dual opportunity to maximize your budget: you can cut costs by getting rid of items you're not using that come with high maintenance costs, while also having a brief windfall from the money you net from selling the item.

"You're freeing up cash to pay other bills like student loan debt," she says. While this might not sound like a "caviar lifestyle," it, in turn, allows you spend money that you were once spending on bills on other things.

## Saving for the Future

A program most people aren't aware of is the Individual Development Account. It's a program available to low-to-moderate income people saving for a specific goal. Goals can include going to graduate school, getting job training or even buying a home. The best part? The money you put away is matched at 2 to 1, 3 to 1 and sometimes even more than that. Kay raises this as a way for people on a tuna fish budget to start saving for caviar homes and education.

## Traveling Like a Millionaire

Ainslie Waldron, the author of *Luxury Globetrotting on a Staycation Budget*, quickly corrects us when we ask her about traveling on a budget.

"I don't travel on a budget -- I travel in luxury on a budget," she says. She goes on at least one big trip and several smaller ones throughout the year. This year she's planning on hitting up Gallipoli for ANZAC Day, then heading to the Greek Islands and Italy before making her way to Northern Europe. So how does she

do it on a budget?

Rather than renting a hotel room or a house, she trades homes with people. She stays in homes with great balconies, lots of high-quality furniture, fully-equipped kitchens, swimming pools and the like. What's more, oftentimes people leave her with items like skis and bicycles, as well as the apparel she needs to use them.

First, Waldron finds the people online. From there, she shoots emails to as many people as possible. Google Earth helps her get a good look at the home before she moves in. When people get back to her, she gets to know them, finally talking a bit on Skype to get a sense of what kind of person she's dealing with. People engaging in home swaps can either do simultaneous or non-simultaneous swaps, staying at, or letting someone else stay at, their second home. This has allowed Waldron to stay at posh beach houses and mountain villas.

She also does her best to maximize air miles and points to travel in luxury to Europe. "It's a long flight from Australia to Europe, so we like to fly in first class," she says. It takes a little extra effort from the air miles to finding the cheapest flight, but at the end of the day, it's worth it.

"I still like to be in luxury when I'm flying home," she says. ■