

Best budgeting apps for university students

Four apps to help save money—and one to help spend it

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Before you can save your money, you need to track your spending. That’s the most common budgeting advice from personal finance experts. But keeping a spending journal can be impractical—do you really want to yank out a notebook for every coffee purchase? Fortunately for students, there are now personal finance apps that make it easy to track, plan and manage your spending. Here are five of the best:

[You Need a Budget \(YNAB\)](#): This app not only syncs with bank accounts and credit cards, but offers helpful coaching as you work through the budgeting process. The Wirecutter, a consumer site, tested 50 different budgeting tools and [concluded](#): “[this] is the only budgeting app we’d spend our own money on.” It records your goals, displays progress and allows you

to access the information from any device. There's a small monthly subscription, but it's money spent well.

Spendee: Free for iOS and Android, this app allows users to set a budget that automatically deducts current expenses and—for those with a part-time job—it can be set to refresh after every pay period. It also provides a graph to show where the money is going. There are paid versions that allow tracking of multiple budgets but most students could survive with the free basic edition.

Wally Lite: Another free app, this makes it easy to compare incoming cash to outgoing expenses. It's also ad-free and features an option where users can take a picture of a receipt and attach it to a logged purchase.

Dollarbird: What's unique about this app is its interface. Instead of a balance sheet, users are shown a calendar which allows them to keep track of big expenditures that might be coming in the future. (You know, maybe a fancy dinner isn't a good idea right before the rent is due?). Furthermore, it has built-in AI that learns your spending over time, making it easier to categorize individual purchases. Once again, there are both free and paid plans but most students will do fine with the unpaid version.

Tab: So, you ordered a salad and a pop but your friends had steaks and wine. And yet, when the bill arrives, everybody pays the same amount. This app avoids that budget-sucking unfairness. You can take a picture of the bill and then identify which person consumed what dishes. Then, it automatically calculates each person's fair share.