



## REBAJAS

# Making the most of the sales

The Sales periods are a great time for bargains to be had, but a time too for prudence unless you want to spend the next six months paying for a shopping splurge.

Most of the seasonal sales have already started on January 7, and even earlier in large shops or cities like Madrid. Be aware that rebate, promotion, discount, offer and clearance are not synonymous. With all of them you get a cheaper product, but your legal rights may be different.

## What to look for

With discounts, only the cost of the items purchased decreases, but our rights as consumers remain intact. Items or garments offered for sale must

have been previously on sale in the shop. The dates of the sales, which each store can choose, must be displayed in the stores in a place visible to the public, even when the store is closed. Prices should appear clearly, both the previous and the discounted prices. The method of payment is the same as for non-discounted goods. And, although the shop may include modifications in some conditions (return, etc.), you must always have been warned! It's also important to find out whether they will allow refunds. Make sure you keep all the documentation of proof



Photo: jaylopez.freemages.com

↑ Bargains galore, but don't go to town!

of purchase, such as invoices, and keep brochures or other information including screen prints of online offers. As far as possible, it's advisable to buy in shops that are members of the Consumer Arbitration System.

## Returns

Are only legally obligatory if there is a fault with the item, however, the law gives freedom to each business "to choose its own policy for the termination of the contract (return or exchange of the product). In practice, most establishments will allow you to change your purchase.

## GAS BONO

## Help with energy bills

As residents, many expats are also entitled to help with their regular bills.

You may already be aware of special reduced charges for electricity in certain cases, but a novelty this year is help towards gas bills for cooking, heating and hot water etc. Whether you have natural gas or bottled, if you fall within certain categories, you may be entitled to help with your gas bill. The measure is aimed at those in most need, for example: large families – those with three children or more, pensioners and households where the family income is around €12,000 per year or less (this may depend on whether or not the family group includes children). Basically, they are the same parameters as those necessary for help with electricity bills, so if you've been turned down for that, you won't get the gas assistance.

Obviously Canarian residents in our milder climate won't get as much help towards heating as those living in the north of Spain, and the payment will apparently be made directly into your bank account via the Ministry for Ecological Transition. All those who are already in receipt of help with electricity will automatically receive help with gas. Unfortunately, if you haven't already got the electricity aid, you won't get your gas help until 2020, but better late than never.

If you think you should be getting assistance, check with your local social assistance department at the Town Hall, who should be able to guide you through the maze and apply now! You may need to take a translator. ■

## MORE PROTECTION FOR TENANTS

### Rental law changes

The new changes apply to all contracts signed from December 19, 2018 and are not retroactive.

The measures are supposedly designed to protect the tenant and energise the rental market. The former is possible, the latter, unlikely. From now on, the minimum period of a rental is five years, even if the contract that is signed is only for 12 months. If the owners are a legal entity, that period extends to seven years. Only two months rental may now be required as a deposit and guarantee and the costs of the contract and any legal fees must be borne by the landlord. Whilst it is expected that the new law will stabilise rents, we believe it will do little to encourage landlords to put empty properties on the market.

Those who rent to tourists should also be aware that the measures have modified the Horizontal Property Law: it is no longer necessary for all owners to be against an apartment or house in a development being used as a tourist dwelling, but it will now be enough for three fifths of the owners to oppose it. ■

## TRAVELLERS' RIGHTS

# Abusive flight clauses

We're not just talking about the latest wannabe cheap flight airlines, Iberia, British Airways, Air France, KLM and Emirates all include this practice in their contract conditions.

The Supreme Court has now declared null and void three clauses included in the sale of airline tickets and those affected can claim to obtain between €200 and €650 of compensation. If you think you have a claim against your flight company for missing a connection, even though you are travelling with different companies for example, or for



Photo: J. Ludeasz/Wikipedia

↑ Top airlines include abusive ticket clauses

missing your flight altogether, check out the Flight Complaint Website. At the very least you must be reimbursed the Airport tax which the airline only pays for the number of passengers on board.

This final ruling from the Spanish Supreme Court, has put one more guarantee in place for travellers, thus giving judges a clearer legal framework, "which favours the passenger, who can claim and obtain compensation," says the Director of Communication of Flight Complaint Javier López. ■

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