

The Car Buyer's Cheat Sheet

7 things to know before you sign anything — from Driveonomics

1 The sticker price is only the start

True cost = price + interest + insurance + fuel + maintenance – resale value. A "cheap" car with high insurance can cost more per month than a pricier one. Always run the full 5-year number.

2 Get pre-approved before you shop

Walk in with your own financing and the dealership has to beat it instead of setting it. Even a 1% lower rate saves hundreds over the life of the loan.

3 Price insurance before you buy

Two cars with the same sticker price can differ by \$100+/month to insure. Get a quote on the exact car before you commit — not after.

4 New cars lose ~20% in year one

Depreciation is the biggest hidden cost of a new car. A 2–3 year old car has already taken that hit — you pay less and lose less.

5 Keep the loan short

Longer loans mean lower payments but far more interest — and you can end up owing more than the car is worth. Shorter term, less total paid.

6 Negotiate the out-the-door price

Talk total price, not monthly payment. Monthly numbers can hide extra fees, add-ons, and longer terms. Get every figure in writing before you agree.

7 Run your real number first

- Gather your quote: price, rate, term, down payment.
- Plug it into the free calculator at driveonomics.com.
- See your true 5-year cost — then decide with confidence.

driveonomics.com

The honest calculator for people with quotes in hand. Free, no sign-up, no tracking.

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