

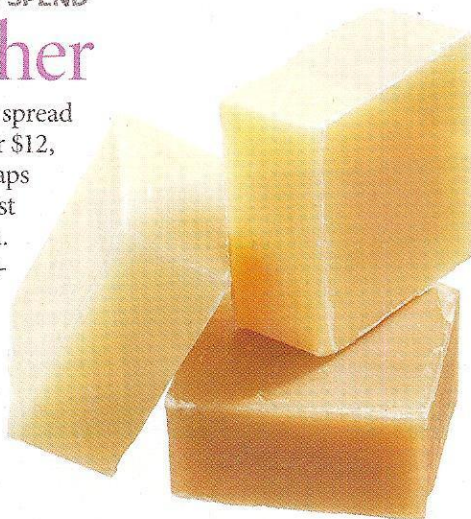
DOLLARS AND SENSE
Fake out

The BBC recently reported that one in 50 £1 coins in the U.K. is a forgery. So what's in our wallets? According to the RCMP, 141,000 fake bills were discovered in 2007, mostly phony \$20 and \$50 notes. Consumers should check money for security features – a holographic stripe, the bill's number in raised ink, and a watermark portrait – before accepting it, since knowingly passing counterfeit money is illegal. You won't receive a real bill in exchange for your counterfeit one, either. "Unfortunately, once you accept a fake bill," says Inspector Paul Collins, the officer in charge of counterfeit and identity fraud for the RCMP, "you're stuck with it."

THE BEST \$12 YOU'LL EVER SPEND

Get in a lather

This Valentine's Day, why not spread the love around the globe? For \$12, this set of three all-natural soaps will directly benefit the poorest populations in southern India. Ten Thousand Villages, a non-profit shop dedicated to marketing ethical products, makes sure the artisans are earning enough to build a better future. Plus, the gentle scents of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves will have you singing in the shower.



SHOP AROUND

SHAMMY SAVVY

The dirt on wiper-uppers

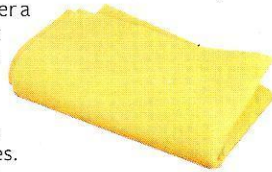
ShamWow absorbent towels, \$20 (8 cloths)

On TV, in the hands of Vince the sales guy, the rayon-type ShamWow looks like the messiah of dishrags.

Pros: The orange ShamWow holds a mighty amount of water – two and a half cups – and is so fluorescent, you could find it in the dark.

Cons: Despite its claims, this rag won't dry a sweater and is too itchy to use after a shower. It also drips a fair amount.

Best for: Big messes.



J Cloth, \$3 (8 cloths)

Invented in Canada in 1966, these rayon-based sheets have longevity but are cheap enough to be disposable when they get too grubby.

Pros: Thin sheets give you great grip when cleaning up both wet and dry messes. They're treated with an antibacterial agent to cut down on odours and germs – which could also be a con if you're trying to lighten your chemical load.

Cons: Rough use can lead to rips, and the cloths will get stained and stinky, although they can be washed as you would a normal tea towel.

Best for: Down-and-dirty cleaning.



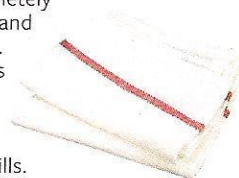
Ikea Tekla tea towel, 49 cents

Like many Ikea goods, this cotton towel is basic (though we do appreciate its festive red trim).

Pros: Completely serviceable and inexpensive.

Cons: It gets really filthy, really fast.

Best for: Everyday spills.



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