



TARIFFS, TRADE, AND YOUR FINANCES: SIMPLE WAYS TO STAY AHEAD

From groceries to electronics, you've likely noticed prices going up—and staying up. While different factors influence the cost of everyday items, trade tensions and tariffs are part of the picture. But what does that mean for your personal finances, and how can you protect your budget when global markets feel unpredictable?

What's Going on With Tariffs?

Tariffs are essentially taxes on imported goods. When one country imposes tariffs on another's products, the costs of those goods typically rise—first for businesses and eventually for everyday consumers like you. Recently, the U.S. has adjusted and added tariffs on a variety of products, including automobiles, consumer electronics, apparel, and appliances. In response, trading partners may do the same, leading to a cycle of higher prices and less predictability.

The result? A more expensive shopping cart and tighter monthly budgets for many households.

How Tariffs Affect Your Wallet

While you might not be tracking global trade news, you probably do feel its ripple effects. You might notice:

- **Higher prices at the store** for goods that rely on imported materials or are imported entirely.
- **Delayed product availability** for items in demand.
- **Price fluctuations** that make it harder to plan your monthly expenses.

These impacts can feel incredibly frustrating—especially when you're already working hard to stick to a budget or manage debt. There are steps you can take to cushion the effects of these changes, starting with:

1. Revisit Your Budget Monthly

Inflation and trade shifts can cause price hikes quickly. Review your budget regularly so it reflects real-time expenses. If you need help getting started, a [budgeting worksheet](#) can make it easier to track where your money is going—and where you can adjust.

2. Shop Strategically

If imported items are getting more expensive, focus on buying local when you can. Local produce, small business goods, and U.S.-manufactured items may be less affected by tariffs, and you're also supporting your community.

3. Delay Big Purchases (When Possible)

If you've been planning a major purchase that might be impacted by tariffs—like a car, appliance, or electronics—it could be worth waiting or shopping used. Prices might stabilize, or you may find better deals if you wait.

4. Build a Buffer

Even small savings add up. Try setting aside a little each paycheck in an emergency fund. A cushion gives you breathing room when prices fluctuate and helps reduce the stress of unexpected expenses.

5. Track Tariff-Related News

Tariff changes often impact specific industries and products—knowing what's coming can help you time purchases, explore alternatives, or adjust your spending plan before prices go up.

6. Get Support Sooner Rather Than Later

If rising costs are stretching your budget thin, don't wait until it becomes a crisis. Ask your financial institution to see what tools and resources they provide. You can also connect with GreenPath for free financial counseling whether your goal is to modify your budget, save more, or tackle debt.



Recommended Resource

[Navigating Financial Uncertainty](#)

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