

COLLECTING CANADIAN TIRE - PART 3 GIFT CARDS / PROMOTIONAL CARDS

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INTRODUCTION / HISTORY

Collecting gift cards is a great way to expand and diversify our Canadian Tire collections. It's easy to get started, there is a lot of variety and it doesn't require much space or investment.

The actual term is Cartodorology *n.* The collection and study of gift cards and of materials relating to their history and use. [Greek *carta* card + Greek *doro* gift + Latin *ology* study of]

The gift card is a descendant of the good, old-fashioned, paper gift certificate which had been in use since the 1930's. Gift cards were first introduced in the mid 1990's and these "electronic" gift certificates were built using technology borrowed from prepaid phone cards.

The hobby of collecting gift cards is constantly growing as collectors have begun to appreciate the enormous variety and aesthetics of the cards themselves. Gift cards are not just logo bearing pieces of plastic anymore.

Canadian Tire introduced their gift cards in 2002 and like many innovations; most people did not foresee their value as a collectible item. Many of the early cards are becoming harder to find and command higher values.

Their gift cards are redeemable at over 480 Canadian Tire Stores, 400 auto centres and 250 gas bar locations coast to coast.

IDENTIFICATION

Most gift cards have multiple issues within a given variety and located on the back of the card, usually in the bottom right

corner is the batch number and date making it easy to identify exactly which card you have. (see figure below)



Batch Number

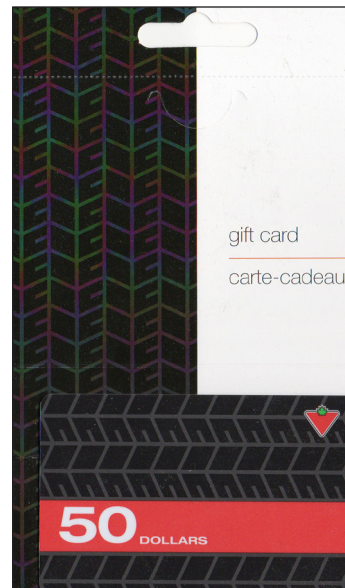
Date

CONDITION

Collecting gift cards is a lot like collecting many other items such as stamps and coins, the Uncirculated or Mint condition cards will always retain a premium value as compared to used ones, however, used gift cards are certainly collectible and valuable as well.

An uncirculated or mint card is a perfect card, as when it was new. Colours have the original brightness, no blemishes and in unswiped condition, with no scratches from use.

Gift cards can be collected with or without the original cardboard backer card.



COLLECTING CANADIAN TIRE - GIFT CARDS - continued

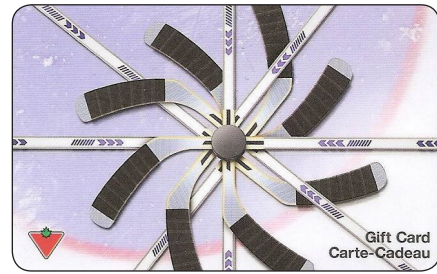
GIFT CARD TYPES

The two main groups of cards are Preset (disposable) and Reloadable. Preset cards are loaded with a specific amount of money that coincides with the denomination printed on the card

itself. A reloadable card is one that does not necessarily have a preset amount and money can be added to the cards balance.



Preset or Disposable



Reloadable

PROMOTIONAL CARDS

These are usually time limited special offer cards designated for a preset amount. As an example, they may have been

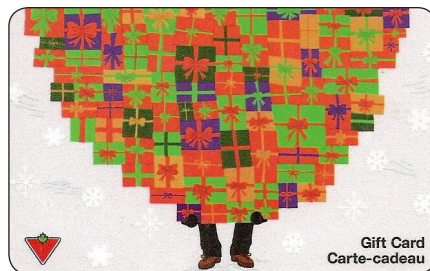
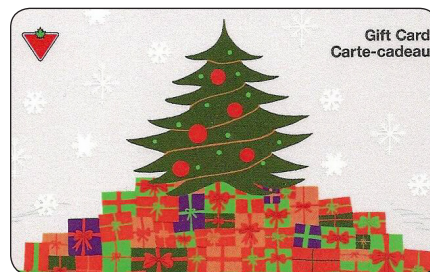
issued as a promotion wherein you would receive a \$10 card in exchange for a \$50 in store purchase.



PUZZLE CARDS

These cards are also referred to as a collection series and the cards will usually interconnect to form a larger picture.

Canadian Tire has only issued one such series to date.

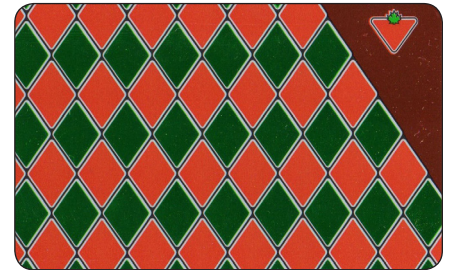
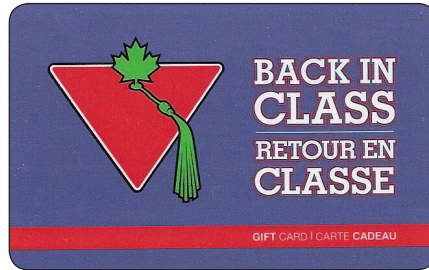


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EVENT / OCCASION CARDS

These cards may apply to an event or occasion and are usually only available for a limited time during the year.

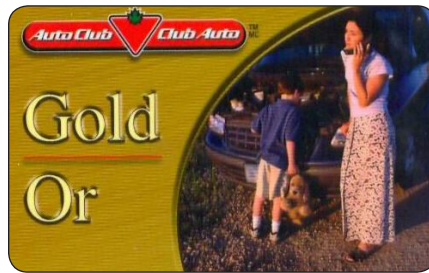
Seasonal cards also fall into this category.



AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE PLANS

These cards apply to Canadian Tire automotive service plans and are further categorized as "Roadside Assistance", "Auto Club" and "Club Auto". One interesting point regarding

these cards was that some were personalized with the vehicles licence plate number.



AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE SPECIALS

Service special cards were issued for a specific prepaid service such as an oil change, wheel alignment or even a ser-

vice package. Most of these particular cards bear the names "Service Auto" and "Auto Service".



SPECIAL PROMO CARDS

A much thinner plastic card or plastic coated cardboard card intended for single use promotions. These cards were not

as widely collected making them very desirable to complete a collection and commanding higher values.



COLLECTING CANADIAN TIRE - GIFT CARDS - continued

HARDER TO FIND CARDS

Two of the most rare and sought after cards are the Sandy McTire "Electronic Canadian Tire Money" gift cards. Issued in

\$10 and \$100 denominations for a special promotion only, there are currently only 3 known examples of the \$100 card.



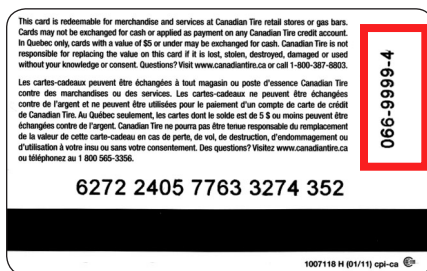
VARIATIONS / ERRORS

There are presently very few variations of gift cards and errors are extremely rare. Some of the newest cards issued have

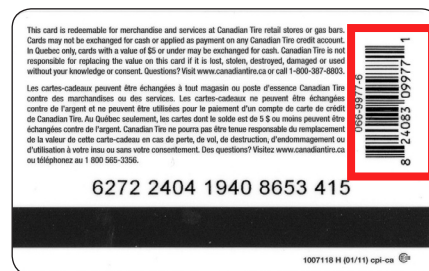
"small digit", "large digit" and "barcode" variations as shown below.



Small Digits



Large Digits



Bar Code

RESOURCES

The *Canadian Tire Gift Card Collector's Guide* is a comprehensive guide including full colour pictures and up to date price lists covering gift cards, promotional cards and automotive

cards. Ordering information for this guide can be found on the Club website www.ctccc.ca or in the ad section of this newsletter.

STORAGE

Gift cards should be stored in some form of device to protect them from scratching, staining or discolouring. Archival quality plastic sleeves are available for individual cards and in multiple

card sheets that can be used in binders. Be sure to avoid displaying cards in direct sunlight to avoid fading of colours.

GOOD COLLECTING PRACTICES

There does seem to be some controversy in other gift card collecting circles whether or not collectors should help themselves to items marked "of no value unless activated".

The best policy is to always ask, as the store may load a minimal amount on the card for you. For example, if you use a \$5 no fee card to purchase \$5 worth of goods in the store, ultimately you will still get the gift card for free for your collection.