Make URL Coupons Work for Guests and Cached Sites

Troubleshooting · https://wpfactory.com/docs/woocommerce-url-coupons-guests-caching/

If a URL coupon works for logged-in users but not for guests, or fails on a heavily cached store, the fix is almost always in how the session and data storage are configured in Coupons & Add to Cart by URL Links for WooCommerce. This article walks through the free settings that make coupon links reliable for everyone. Every option here is free.

Symptom

- A coupon link applies the discount when you are logged in, but does nothing for a guest (not logged in) visitor.
- The coupon works on a staging site but not on the live, cached site.
- The discount briefly appears, then the cart looks empty again (common with page caching plugins).

Cause

Applying a coupon needs a WooCommerce session. Guests do not always have one started yet, and full-page caching can serve a cached copy of the page before the session is created, so the coupon never gets a chance to apply. The plugin has several options that force a session early and change where coupon data is stored, which together solve this.

Fix: work through these settings in order



See every feature and the pricing on the URL Coupons plugin page.

View plugin →

All of these are on the **Advanced** and **General** sub-tabs at **WPFactory > Coupons by URL** (also reachable at **WooCommerce > Settings > URL Coupons**). Change one at a time and re-test as a guest in a private browser window.

1. **Keep Force session start on.** On the **General** sub-tab, **Session > Force session start when a URL with the coupon key is accessed** is on by default. It starts a guest session as soon as a coupon link is opened. Leave it enabled.
2. **Turn on the earlier session start.** If guests still miss the coupon, tick **Force session start earlier and everywhere**. This starts the session sooner in the page load, which helps on cached sites.
3. **Switch the main hook.** On the **Advanced** sub-tab, change **Main hook > Hook** from **WP Loaded** to **Init** (or back), then re-test. Different themes and hosts fire these at slightly different times.
4. **Store data in a cookie.** On the **Advanced** sub-tab, set **Data storage type** to **Cookie**. Cookies survive page caching better than sessions on some hosts.
5. **Enable Javascript reload.** Also on **Advanced**, tick **Javascript reload**. It reloads the page once via Javascript when a coupon is detected in the URL, so a cached first response does not block the coupon. This works best with **Data storage type** set to **Cookie**.

6. **If you use WP Rocket,** tick **WP Rocket: Disable empty cart caching** to stop an empty-cart page being cached and served after the coupon is applied.

Options reference

Label	Option ID	Default	Free/Pro
Force session start	`alg_wc_url_coupons_force_start_session`	Yes	Free
Force session start earlier and everywhere	`alg_wc_url_coupons_force_start_session_earlier`	No	Free
Main hook	`alg_wc_url_coupons_main_hook`	wp_loaded	Free
Data storage type	`alg_wc_url_coupons_data_storage_type`	session	Free
Javascript reload	`alg_wc_url_coupons_javascript_reload`	No	Free
WP Rocket: disable empty cart caching	`alg_wc_url_coupons_wp_rocket_disable_cache_wc_empty_cart`	No	Free

Still not applying?

- Test as a true guest in a private or incognito window. A logged-in admin session can hide the guest-only problem.
- Exclude the cart, checkout, and any coupon landing page from full-page caching in your caching plugin.
- If the coupon should apply only after a product is added, that is the **Delay coupon** feature, not a bug. See the guide on delaying a URL coupon.

Need a hand?

If coupons still will not apply for guests after these steps, our team answers every ticket on the URL Coupons support forum. Tell us your caching setup and host so we can point you to the right combination.

Related articles

- URL Coupons: Additional Tips
- URL Coupons: Troubleshooting Specific Issues
- How to Translate URL Coupon Text with WPML and Polylang
- How to Set a Redirect URL Per Coupon
- How to Delay a URL Coupon Until a Product Is Added