



*Retail*

*United States | 2018*

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# 2018 Retail Holiday Survey

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*Retail Research Point of View*







#### Methodology

Survey questions were asked of more than 1,000 shoppers in the U.S. The survey was conducted in October of 2018.



**Tis' the season to be shopping...**  
and shoppers are making their lists and checking  
them twice

# holiday survey



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## 1. Men will spend comparatively more than women

44.4% of consumers will spend over \$500 on gifts this year, compared to 44.1% last year. 23.8% will spend between \$250 and \$500, compared to 24.3% in 2017. Men will spend comparatively more this holiday than women. 30.6% of men will spend over \$750 on gifts, while only 26.0% of women will do the same. More women will keep moderate budgets of between \$250 and \$750 (44.4% of women vs. 36.8% of men). For non-gift holiday purchases, 65.2% will spend less than \$250; another 15.5% will spend \$250-500, and 19.3% will spend over \$500.



## 2. Consumers will divvy up their shopping between online retailers and stores

The line between online and physical retail continues to be blurred, with holiday shoppers opting to split their shopping between e-tailers and bricks-and-mortar. A little less than half of holiday shoppers will do most of their purchasing online. Many of these shoppers will still head to stores for some of their purchases. The rest of consumers will primarily shop at physical retailers, with department stores as the most popular retail category (21.1% of shoppers). Discount stores were another popular choice, particularly with lower-income consumers, 26.8% of whom plan to make discounters like Walmart or Target their primary destination.

This split between online and physical shopping reflects the merging of all shopping channels that has been happening in retail. The role of the retail store and center will continue to transform from a transactional model to an immersive and experiential one. That being said, value remains king. Mass merchandisers like Target and Walmart, and off-price retailers like Marshalls and HomeGoods remain strong performers. Retailers and centers that proactively offer experiences that shoppers are looking for or value that consumers need will win.



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## 3. Amazon, Walmart and Target are universally popular with holiday shoppers

The top 5 retailers at where consumers plan to shop are: Amazon (22.1%), Walmart (15.8%), Target (12.3%), Macy's (4.3%) and Best Buy (4.1%). While the top 3 remained the same regardless of age, income or gender, there were a few key differences in the #4 and #5 choices.

Lower-income consumers plan to do more shopping at JC Penney than other groups. Kohl's was a popular choice for those earning between \$50K-\$100K, as well as with women and younger Millennials (18-24). Relatively more seniors plan to shop at Nordstrom than other age groups. The electronics mecca, Best Buy, was a much more popular choice for men than women.





Image Source: Shutterstock

#### 4. Consumers plan to get their holiday shopping done earlier this year

More than one-third of holiday shoppers, 34.4%, plan to start before Thanksgiving compared to 29.9% last year. Another 28.6% plan to start on Thanksgiving weekend—somewhat less than in 2017. Fewer shoppers will delay checking off their gift lists. Approximately 16.9% will start shopping within 2 weeks of Christmas, less than last year where 18.3% started during that period.

#### 5. High-income shoppers will start early

There is a clear difference in which shoppers will begin early. Higher income shoppers plan to get started over 1 month before Christmas. 37% of shoppers earning over \$75,000 will start before Thanksgiving. Another 28.1% will start between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday. Only 13.7% of higher-income shoppers will start shopping within 2 weeks of Christmas. On the other hand, consumers earning less than \$25,000 will begin later. Over 30% will start within 2 weeks of Christmas; 26.8% will start during Thanksgiving weekend and 25.8% will get started before Thanksgiving. Regardless of income, a good portion of consumers—14%—plan to start shopping on Black Friday.



## 6. Nearly 75% of shoppers will do some research before buying

Regardless of where they purchase, 38.9% of holiday shoppers will head online before deciding what and where to buy. More than 28% will research both online and in-store before purchasing. A high proportion—nearly 20%—of younger Millennials (18-24) will do their holiday shopping research in-store. Less than one-quarter will not do any research prior to buying, with older Boomers and Seniors less likely to research.

## 7. Shoppers will be whipping out their phones this holiday

As tech becomes even more central to how we live, mobile devices will play a significant role in holiday shopping. Mobile use for holiday shopping will explode this year. More than twice as many shoppers will make purchases via their mobile devices compared to last year (50.3% vs. 22.2%). Another 39.1% will look for deals and discounts, compared to 21.9% in 2017; 34.5% will look at product reviews, compared to 19.1% last year. More than 21% will check store inventory before heading out, compared to 14% last year. Slightly less than 10% will make a payment with their phones in-store, compared to 6.6% in 2017. Gen X shoppers are more likely to use their phones to order online compared to other age groups. A higher percentage of younger Millennials (18-24) will check store inventory and make in-store purchases on their phones. Boomers are most likely to check product reviews on their phones before buying.

How will you use mobile?	2018	2017
Order online	50.3%	22.2%
Look for deals, coupons or lowest prices	39.1%	21.9%
Look at product reviews	34.5%	19.1%
Get gift ideas/holiday inspiration	30.0%	14.1%
Check store inventory	21.9%	14.0%
Make a payment inside store	9.7%	6.6%
N/A	7.4%	2.1%



## 8. Millennial women will flock to department stores, Boomer women will head to discounters

While around half of consumers will head online for the bulk of their holiday purchases, there were notable differences in which physical stores consumers will visit. Department and discount stores are popular choices with women shoppers this holiday with 22.9% and 13.1%, respectively. However, 33.3% of young Millennial women will do most of their shopping at a department store, while 17.4% of younger Boomer women will opt for discount stores. More men will head to electronics stores (8.8% to 3.1%) and jewelry stores (2.5% to 0.6%).



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## 9. Holiday shoppers with fewer dollars to spend will head to stores

Shoppers with both lower income and lower gift budgets are heading to stores, particularly discounters. Roughly 62.1% of those with income less than \$25,000 and 55.9% with income \$25,000-\$50,000 will head to stores to shop. Approximately 26.8% of shoppers with income less than \$25,000 will shop at discount stores. This makes sense, since discount shoppers named HomeGoods, Marshalls and TJ Maxx among the top stores they plan to visit.

Conversely, those with higher budgets and higher incomes are more likely to shop online. Only 37.9% of shoppers with income over \$100,000 will do most of their shopping in stores. Big spenders – shoppers with gift budgets of over \$1,000 – also plan to do more shopping at department stores and electronic stores than those with lower budgets.



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