



Now in Retail

2025 U.S. Holiday Purchase Intentions

KEY FINDINGS

October 2025

Copyright 2025 Circana, LLC ("Circana"). All rights reserved. Circana, the Circana logo, and the names of Circana products and services are trademarks of Circana. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



Table of contents

2025 Holiday Purchase Intentions: Key Findings

Holiday Retail Outlook by Marshal Cohen **3**

What Consumer Spending Will Look Like **6**

Shopping Plans **10**

Influencers and Perceptions **14**

About the Study **22**

- Objectives and Methodology
- Notes
- Definitions



Holiday Retail Outlook

by Marshal Cohen
Chief Retail Advisor



Circana's Holiday Retail Outlook By Marshal Cohen

Prioritization and unpredictability are at the core of U.S. consumer intentions for the 2025 holiday season.

Consumer resiliency endures as shoppers plan to spend more this year amid expectations of higher prices.

- **More than 8 in 10** holiday shoppers **expect prices to be higher** as a result of tariffs/import regulations, and the number of shoppers **planning to spend more** this holiday shopping season **has increased** once again. The average planned holiday spend is 3% higher than last year.
- **Prioritized spending and practical gifting are both evident** in the mixture and inconsistency of growth and declines in both purchase and spending intentions across categories. **Beauty, tech, and home have the biggest opportunities** to capture holiday purchases, but apparel and toys will face challenges.
- **Holiday shoppers reveal their cost-conscious thinking**, as free shipping, value, and sales top their list of things that will influence where they shop this season. However, the number of **consumers who plan to self-gift stabilized at 21%**, same as last year.
- **More consumers are planning to travel this holiday season.** Fewer Christmas meals will be had at their own home, and more will be at a restaurant. Nearly one-third of people having a holiday meal at home indicate that some, if not all, of the meal will be ordered pre-cooked from a restaurant or grocery store.

This holiday season will be challenging to decipher as shoppers are prepared to make adjustments in how and when they shop.

- **Timing will play a critical role** this holiday season as more shoppers plan to get started earlier in November to avoid possible future price increases. More than a third of holiday shoppers say they will take advantage of more deals this year, with a growing number having their sights set on Black Friday for the best deals. Fewer will be waiting till the last minute to get their shopping done.
- **Price is a variable at the center of the season.** More than 6 in 10 holiday shoppers say that food and grocery costs will have an impact on holiday shopping, and 31% plan to buy fewer items as a result of increased prices at retail.
- **Social media has the potential to significantly influence the holiday shopping season**, with a growing number of shoppers likely to make purchases based on recommendations from popular influencers and celebrities.
- **Economic and political influences remain.** Holiday shoppers are split on their feelings about the state of the economy but are feeling generally good about their personal finances at the time of this survey. However, more consumers say political issues will impact what retailers they choose to shop.

Holiday Projections:

2025 holiday spending is expected to be similar to last year's results, falling between a 1% decline and 2% growth in dollars. However, unit sales may fall by as much as 2.5% during the traditional November and December holiday shopping period.

Circana's Holiday Retail Outlook

By Marshal Cohen

"The volatility of consumers is evident in their feelings about the 2025 holiday shopping season, which means the flow of the season will be less predictable."

Retail performance sets the stage for a rocky start to the season

U.S. retail sales trends, including discretionary general merchandise and consumer packaged goods (CPG), are in a period of "invisible inflation," where diminishing demand trends are offsetting higher prices and giving the appearance of retail sales stability. Consumers no longer have the same purchasing power they had a year ago. Early fall promotions fell flat, and even if year-over-year sales begin to pick up through October, it is important to remember the soft comparisons that last year's election brought.

Consumers need a break – a quest for value, convenience, and holiday spirit

Holiday shoppers are seeking out the best deals to offset rising prices, embracing the convenience of shopping on their smartphone, and looking at the holiday season as a break from everything going on in the world. Consumers are overwhelmed. Consumers are distracted. That distraction, and the methods shoppers plan to enlist to help mitigate those feelings, are limiting the potential for critical impulse purchases and seasonal splurges. Marketers need to find a way to help consumers on their quest and alleviate their distractions.

Purchasing pullback does not equal a lack of desire for product

While consumers are buying less overall, and holiday shoppers are planning on buying fewer items to offset higher prices, that doesn't mean they won't spend when presented with the right product. High-end, innovative technology and entertainment products are having success, as are affordable splurges like beauty. There is significant pent-up demand for new and relevant products – the key to becoming a consumer priority this holiday season.



“

“Holiday 2025 will be full of surprises and challenges – from comparisons to the 2024 election impact and continuous economic uncertainty to the influence of social media and the spirit of the holiday season.”

Marshal Cohen

Chief Retail Advisor, Circana

What Consumer Spending Will Look Like

How much will they spend?

What will they buy?



Shoppers intend to spend more this holiday season, up 3% vs last year.

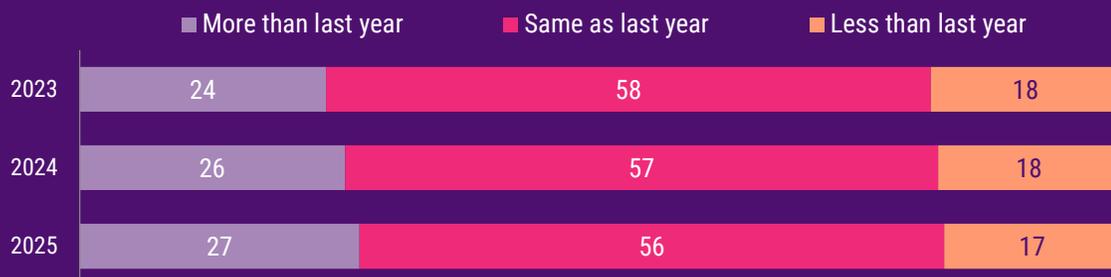
Plan to Spend on Holiday Shopping (Mean among total respondents)

2023 | \$754

2024 | \$771

2025 | \$796

Holiday Spending Intentions % Among Total Respondents



Over **40% of shoppers with children** plan to **spend more** this year compared to last year, while only **19% of shoppers without children** intend to spend more.



Millennial shoppers are more likely to think they will spend more this year than last, along with Gen Z. **Gen X and boomers are much more likely to stick with the same level of spend as last year.**

While more consumers plan to purchase within tech, they are moderating their spend vs. last year.



There is very little movement in 2025 for intent to purchase, with **most categories** expecting to be purchased at rates **similar to last year**. **Beauty (+3.7%)** and **tech/electronics (+3.2%)** see the **largest increases** from last year.

Top Types of Planned Physical Gifts

% Among Total Respondents

1	Clothing/Accessories: 56%	
2	Tech/Electronics: 38%	▲
3	Beauty: 33%	▲
4	Entertainment: 30%	
5	Home: 29%	
6	Toys/Baby: 28%	
7	Food or Beverages: 23%	
8	Liquor/Wine: 19%	
9	Pet supplies: 15%	



Clothing **39%**

Mean Spend (\$) Among Planned Purchasers

1	Tech/Electronics: \$851	▼
2	Clothing/Accessories: \$490	
3	Home: \$378	▲
4	Beauty: \$247	▲
5	Entertainment: \$218	▲
6	Toys/Baby: \$170	▼
7	Food or Beverages: \$161	▼
8	Liquor/Wine: \$146	▲
9	Pet supplies: \$115	



Categories with the most **positive average spend** versus year ago: **beauty** — including **makeup, hair, and skin products** — along with **home products**.

Food/beverage experiences remain the most popular intended intangible gifts.

Certificates to experience-dedicated websites (+4%) and memberships to gym/fitness classes (+3%) see the largest increases from last year.

Experiences/Intangibles

% Among Those Who Plan to Purchase an Experience/Intangible Gift



57% of consumers plan to purchase an **experience/intangible gift**, up 2 points from last year.



21% of consumers plan to purchase a **subscription box or service as a gift to someone else**, up 6 points from last year.

Shopping Plans

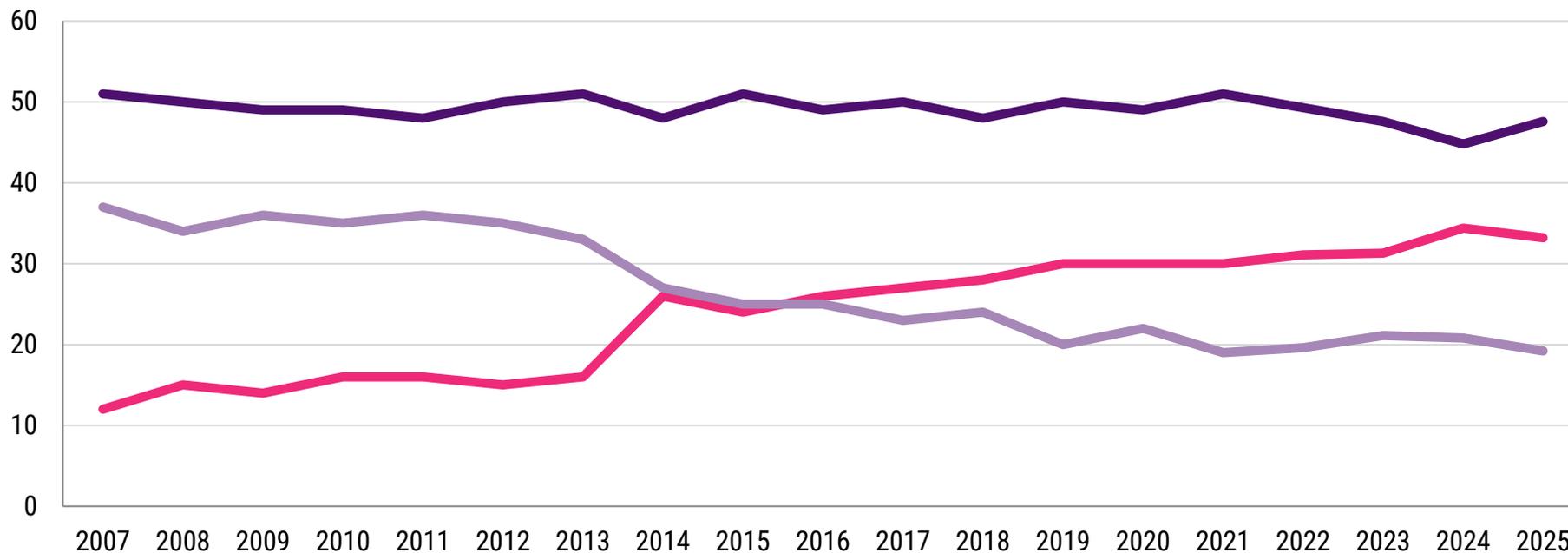
When, how, and where will consumers do their holiday shopping this year?



There is an increase among shoppers who plan to start shopping before Thanksgiving this year.

Plan to Start Shopping

% Among Total Respondents Providing a Response

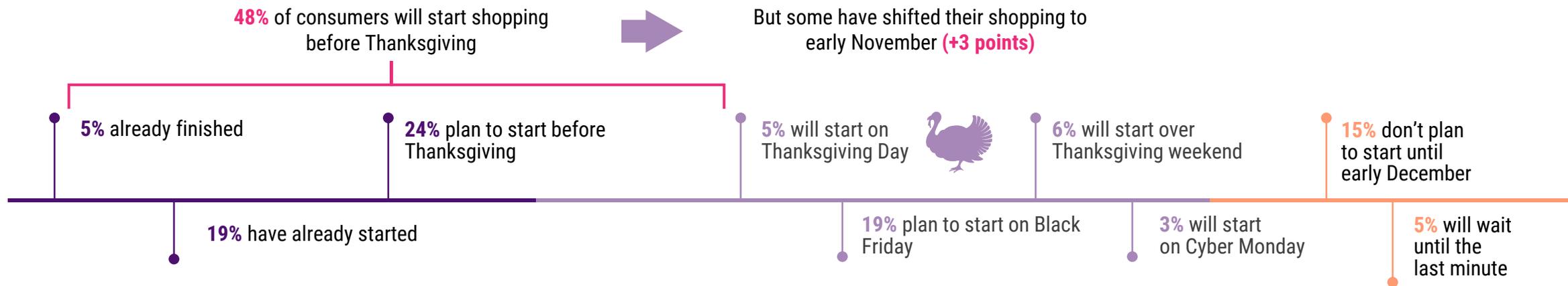


Early
Before Thanksgiving

Mid
Thanksgiving Day/Black Friday/
Thanksgiving weekend/Cyber Monday

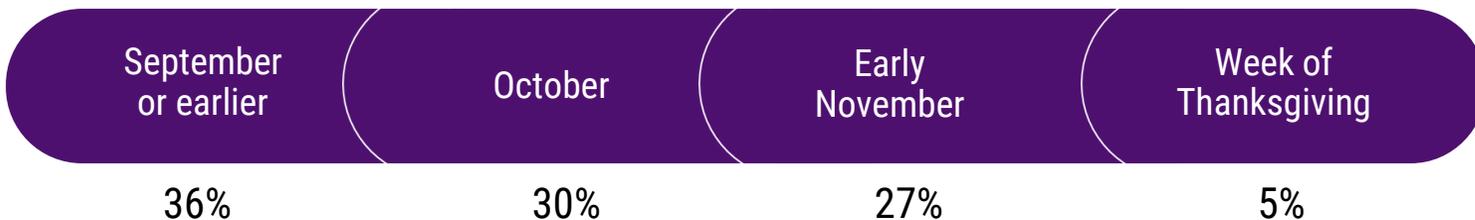
Late
Early December/last minute

Holiday shoppers plan to begin early this year and believe Black Friday has the best deals.



When Will Early Shoppers Start?

% Among Consumers Planning to Start Shopping Before Thanksgiving



23% of consumers stated **Black Friday** is the day they can find the best deals for holiday shopping.



Last year... Black Friday remained the top shopping day in Q4, both in-store and online.

Source: Circana, Checkout Omnichannel Tracking

Q12. When will you begin your holiday shopping?
 Q12a. Specifically, when before Thanksgiving did you/will you begin your holiday shopping?
 Q12.d During which of the following time periods do you feel you will get the best deals possible?
 Source: Circana, Annual Holiday Survey, October 2025

More consumers will use their smartphones to shop this year, seeking convenience.

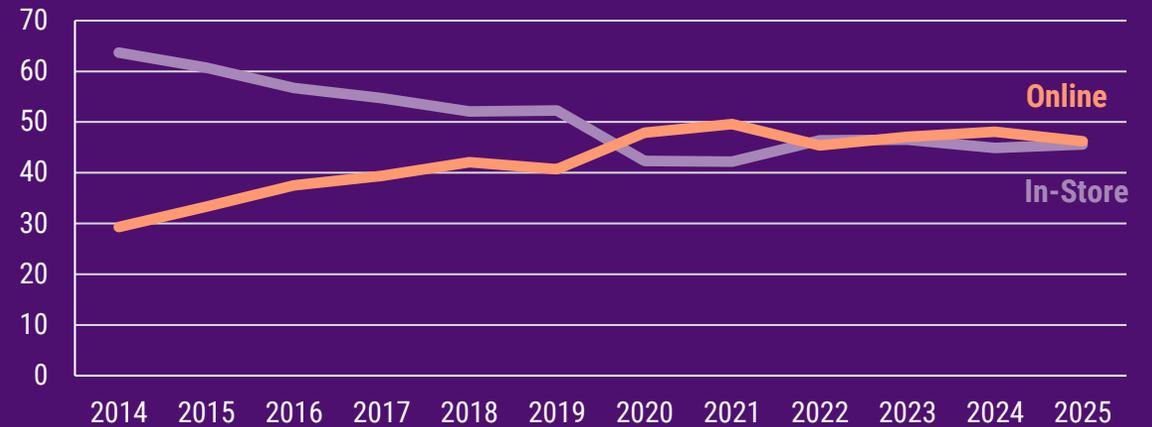
Plan to Shop Online for Holiday
% Among Total Respondents



47%

of consumers are using smartphones most often for holiday shopping online
(+4 points from last year)

Share of Planned Shopping: In-Store vs. Online
% Among Total Respondents



31%

of consumers compare prices online before shopping in a store

Q8a. Do you plan to do any of your holiday shopping online this year?
 Q9b. Approximately what percent of your holiday shopping do you plan to do ... ?
 Q9c. Which type of device do you use most often when doing your holiday shopping online?
 Q10. Which of the following statements, if any, describe YOU when holiday shopping?
 Source: Circana, Annual Holiday Survey, October 2025

Influencers and Perceptions

Do the economy and today's political environment affect consumers?

What role does social media play in shopping behavior?

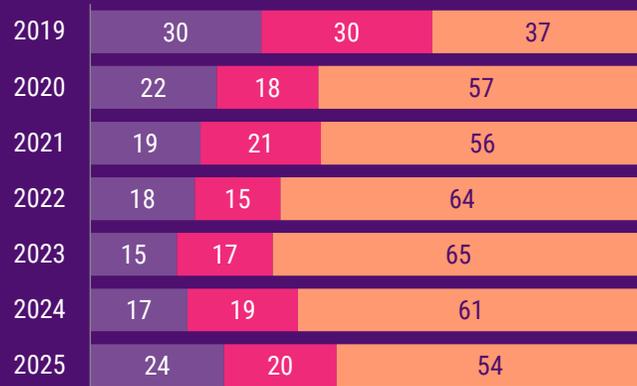
Are consumers getting into the holiday spirit?



Holiday shoppers feel more confident about their personal financials and the economy.

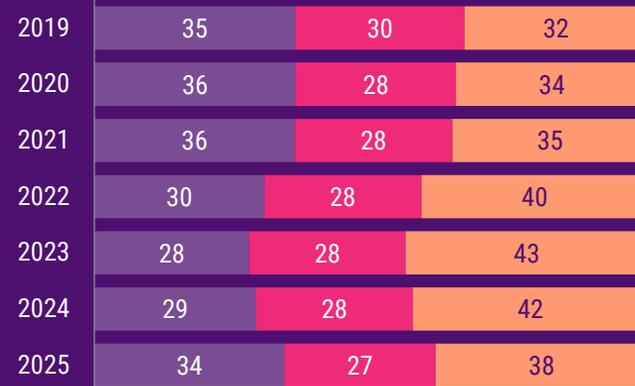
State of the Economy % Among Total Respondents

■ Excellent/Very Good ■ Good ■ Fair/Poor



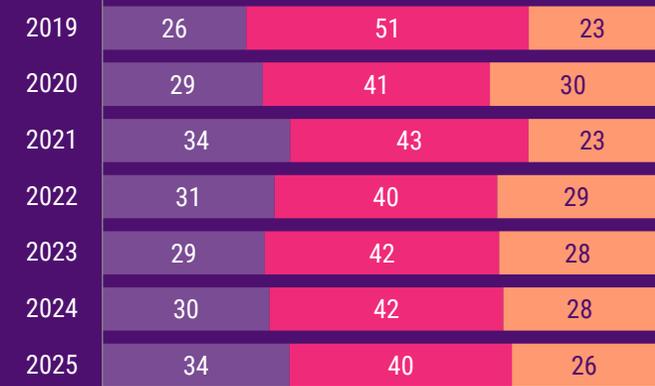
Personal Financial Situation % Among Total Respondents

■ Excellent/Very Good ■ Good ■ Fair/Poor



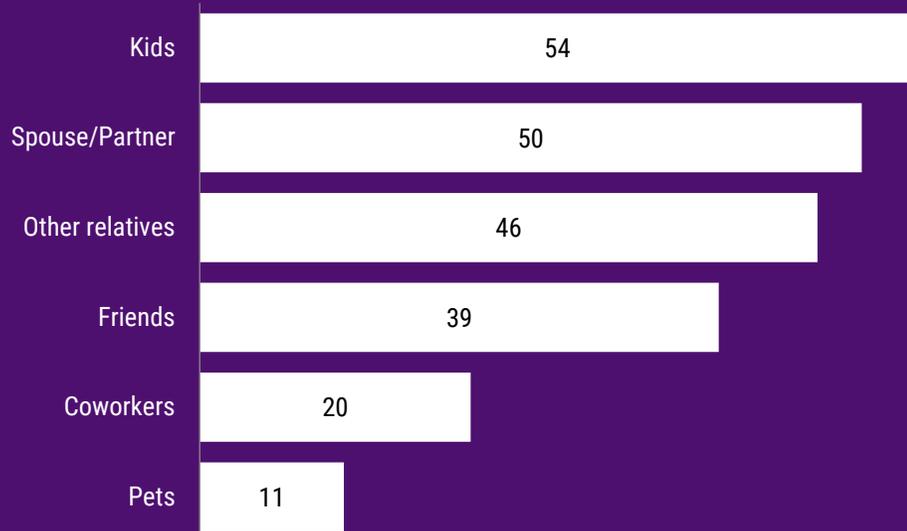
How Will This Impact Spending? % Among Total Respondents

■ Spend More ■ Spend the Same ■ Spend Less

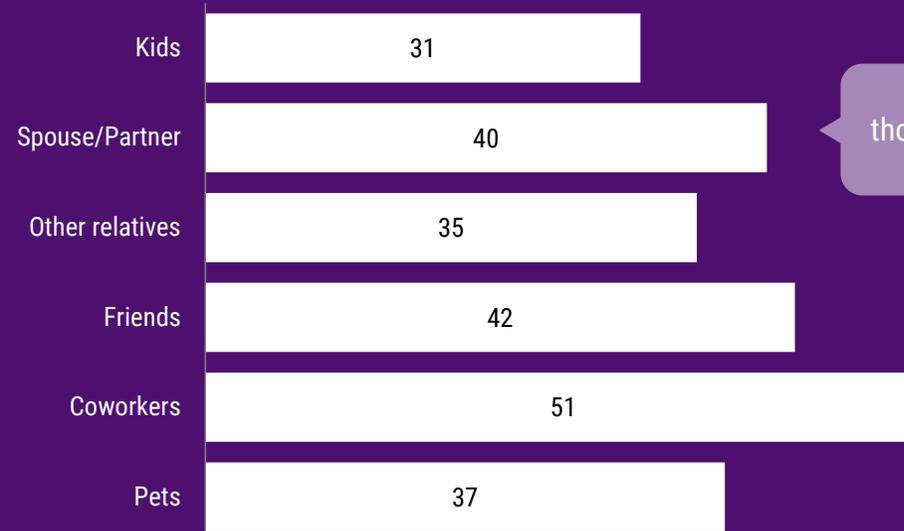


Shoppers are more likely to spend less on their spouse/partner this year than their pets.

Who Will Shoppers Will Buy for This Year
% Among Total Respondents



Who Will Shoppers Spend Less on This Year
% Among Those Buying For Each Group



How to read: 40% of those buying for a spouse plan to spend less

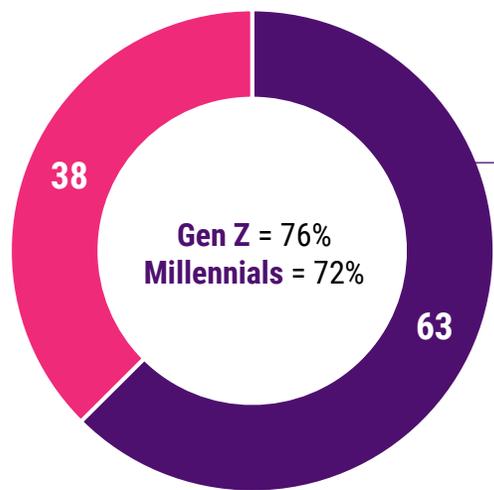
54%
Of consumers plan on spending less on someone

Shoppers will be impacted by food/grocery costs and most expect tariffs to increase prices this year.

Impact of Food/Grocery Costs on Holiday Purchasing

% Among Total Respondents

- Will have an impact
- My spending on groceries/food won't impact how much I spend on gift-giving for the holidays



21%

Will buy less gifts

27%

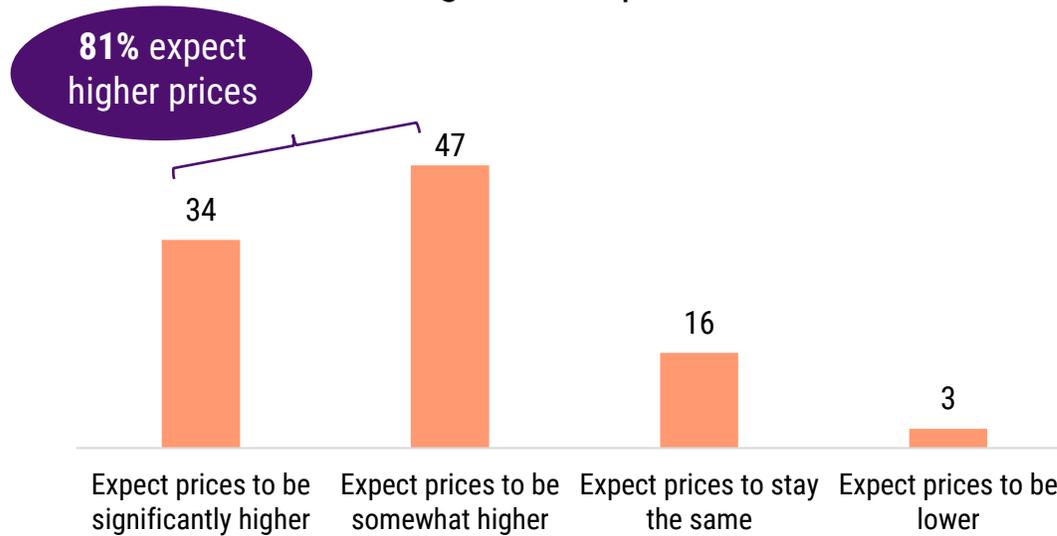
Will buy the same amount of gifts but will spend less on each one

21%

Will buy more "off brand" items

Impact of Tariffs on Holiday Purchasing

% Among Total Respondents



Boomers: 85% expect prices to be higher (Top 2 Box)
Millennials: 76% expect prices to be higher (Top 2 Box)

Holiday shoppers will be primarily driven by sales/promotions to save money this season.

Plans to Save Money This Holiday Season

% Among Total Respondents



Attitudes and perceptions impact behavior.

Consumers feel the holidays provide a break and that giving to those less fortunate is important.



69%

of consumers feel that giving to those less fortunate than themselves is an important part of the season – **3 points higher than last year and the highest in four years**



68%

of consumers say the holidays provide a break from everything going on in the world – **3 points higher than last year**



30%

of consumers didn't make a purchase this year in hopes they would get it as a gift or find it on promotion during the holiday – **2 points higher than last year**



44%

of consumers will start their holiday shopping earlier in the season than they normally would – **4 points higher than last year**



36%

of consumers say they are more likely to purchase from retailers that support causes important to them – **4 points higher than last year**



24%

of consumers say political issues will impact what retailers they choose to shop at – **3 points higher than last year**

Q11. Which of the following, if any, will influence where you shop this year for holiday gifts? Q21. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

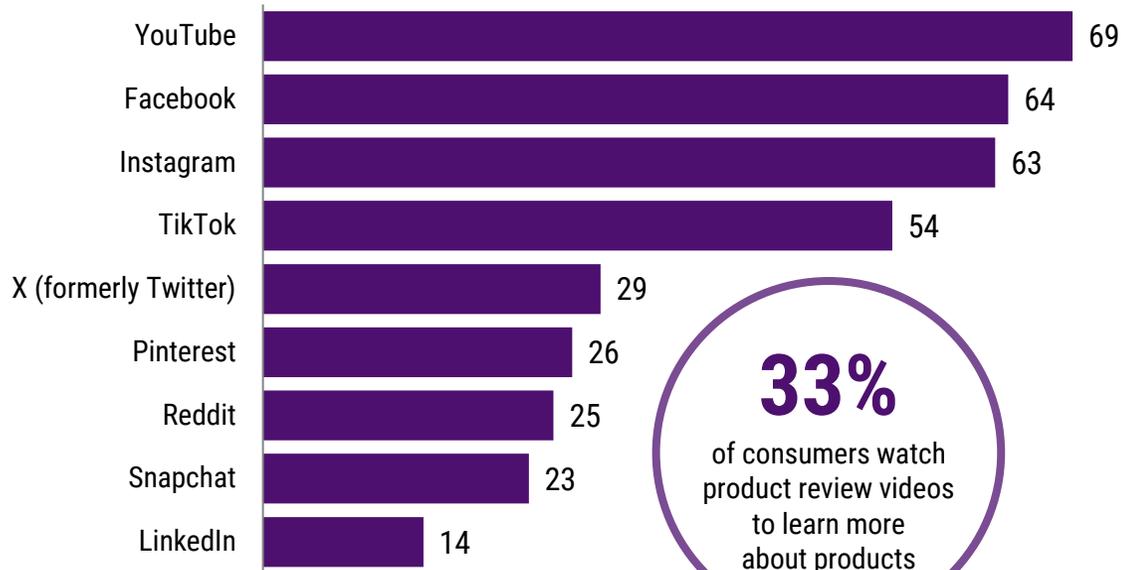
QC1 Please read the statements that follow and tell us how much you agree with each.

Source: Circana, Annual Holiday Survey, October 2025

YouTube and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms for researching products.

Platforms Plan to Use

% Among Those Planning to Use Social Media for Pre-purchase Research



33%
of consumers watch product review videos to learn more about products

DOES WHO OR WHAT YOU FOLLOW MATTER?

Social media's influence on purchase behavior at the holidays is significant. **32% of consumers** say they **follow brands on social media**, while **22% follow retailers on social media**.



60% of those who follow **popular bloggers/influencers** are likely to make a purchase based on their recommendations, **up 3 points** from last year. **49%** of those who follow **celebrities on social media** are likely to make a purchase based on their recommendations, **up 5 points** from last year.

Q11aa. Which of the following social media platforms do you plan to use to learn more about a product before you make a purchase this holiday?

Q11a1. Which of the following describes how you currently use social media to learn more about products?

Q11a2. This holiday season, how likely are you to make a purchase, or decide against a purchase, based on recommendations and/or reviews from each of the following?

Source: Circana, Annual Holiday Survey, October 2025

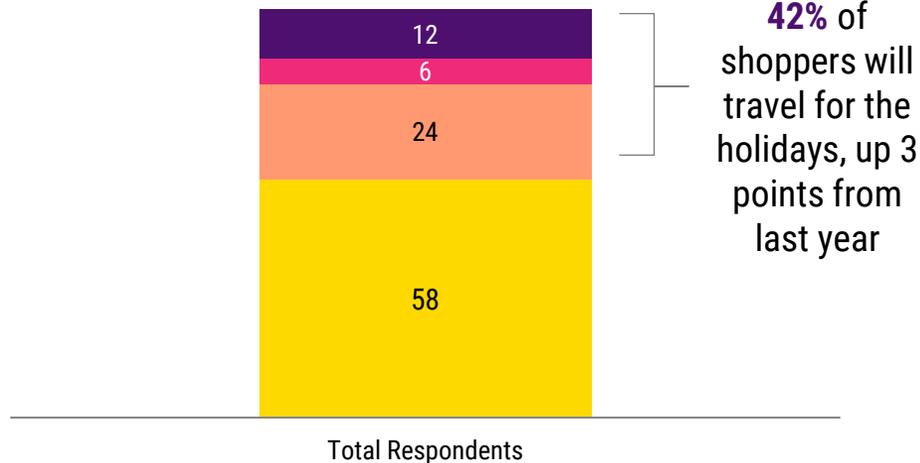
Restaurants are influencing holiday meals.

1 in 3 who intend to eat at home will be ordering at least some of the meal pre-prepared from outside sources.

Plan To Travel During The Holiday Season

% Among Total Respondents

- Stay in a hotel, a rental house, or some other paid accommodation
- Stay in a second or vacation home owned by me
- Stay with friends or family
- Will not be traveling



55% of consumers plan to eat their Christmas meal at home, **down 3 points** from last year. Dining at a restaurant is **up 2 points** to 8%.



23% of consumers say some of the meals they intend to eat at home will **be ordered pre-cooked from a restaurant or grocery store**; **9%** say the meals at home will be **entirely ordered from a restaurant or grocery store**.



12% of consumers plan to stay in a hotel, rental house, or other paid accommodation during the holidays.

About the Study

Objectives and Methodology

Notes

Definitions



Study objectives and methodology

Objectives

1

To understand U.S. consumers' holiday 2025 spending intentions.

2

Where applicable, to compare current intentions to prior-year results, reveal trends, put results in perspective, and compare findings among demographic and socioeconomic cohorts.

Methodology



An online survey was fielded to an online consumer panel in September 2025.



The survey was fielded to a U.S. representative sample.



The results of 3,595 completed 2025 surveys are presented in this report.

A few notes about reading this study

01

All numbers found in data tables, graphs, and charts **represent percentages (%)** unless otherwise indicated.

02

No data is presented where **bases are below n=100**.

03

Data represents **2025 survey results** unless otherwise indicated.

04

All surveys were **conducted in English**. For that reason, the Hispanic segment should be viewed as representing only **acculturated** populations.



Supercategory definitions



Beauty

Fragrances/perfumes
Makeup
Skincare products
Hair products



Clothing/Accessories

Bags
Clothing
Fashion jewelry
Fine jewelry
Footwear
Luggage
Small personal accessories
Sunglasses
Watches



Automotive Products



Food or Beverage



Circana.



Entertainment

Books (print or digital)
Movies/DVDs
Music
Video gaming systems/games



Home

Small appliances
Major appliances
Home/holiday decorations
Home improvement products
Home textiles
Housewares



Liquor/Wine



Office Supplies



Sporting Goods or Equipment



Tech/Electronics

Accessories for cell phones
Camera/video cameras
Desktop computers
E-readers/other tablets (not iPads)
Fitness activity trackers
Headphones
iPads
iPhones
Notebook/laptop computers
Smartphones (not iPhones)
Smart home devices
Smartwatches
TVs
Voice-assisted devices
Other electronics/computer peripherals



Toys/Baby

Toys
Baby products/supplies (non-food)



Pet Supplies