

Holiday Spending Plans Are Down For the Second Year in a Row

Americans are trimming back their holiday spending plans for the second year straight, marking a significant decline in retail prospects from the peak year of 1999.

Those who buy holiday gifts estimate they'll spend an average of \$775 this year, down slightly from an inflation-adjusted \$826 last year, and down farther – a \$155 per-person drop, on average – from \$930 in 1999.



Average spending plans on holiday gifts
Adjusted Average (2001 dollars)

11/11/01	\$775
12/3/00	\$826
12/12/99	\$930
12/6/98*	\$768
12/5/94	\$763
12/6/93	\$788
12/18/92	\$769
12/15/91	\$808
12/2/90	\$802
10/15/89	\$912

*1998 and previous by Gallup

Declining consumer confidence helps explain the trend. In late 1999, a near-record 54 percent of Americans called it a good time to buy things; that declined to 49 percent late last year and 45 percent now in the weekly ABC News/Money magazine poll. The ABC/Money Consumer Comfort index, based on combined ratings of personal finances, the national economy and the buying climate, is now -4 on its scale of +100 to -100, compared to +29 at about this time in 2000 and 1999 alike.

The outlook for retailers still can change, however: Traditionally the holiday shopping season doesn't start in earnest until after Thanksgiving. And 13 percent of Americans say they aren't yet sure how much they'll spend.

REGION – Holiday spending plans are more robust in the Northeast and South than in the West and Midwest. Westerners report the biggest drop in spending plans: \$707 this year compared to an adjusted \$918 last year. In the most recent ABC/Money poll, only 39 percent of Westerners called it a good time to buy things, 7 to 10 points lower than in other parts of the country.

Men on average say they'll spend slightly more than women, while larger and higher-income households also plan to spend more. And naturally, having kids is a major factor. Planned spending jumps from under \$700 in one- and two-person households to \$867 in three-or-more person households.

	Average spending plans - 2001
Men	\$802
Women	\$749
Northeast	\$857
South	\$847
West	\$707
Midwest	\$681
Household Size:	
One	\$612
Two	\$696
Three+	\$867
Under \$50,000	\$558
Over \$50,000	\$858

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone November 7-11, 2001, among a random national sample of 1,030 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:
<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

Media Contact: Lauren Kapp, (212) 456-2478, lauren.kapp@abc.com

Here are the full results:

115. Roughly how much money do you think you personally will spend on holiday gifts this Christmas season?

	Under \$100	\$100- \$249	\$250- \$499	\$500- \$999	\$1000 or more	No op./Don't celebrate/DK	Mean	Adjusted Mean
11/11/01	6	16	16	25	22	14	\$775	\$775
12/3/00	2	18	16	25	23	15	\$798	\$826
12/12/99	4	19	16	25	28	9	\$869	\$930
12/6/98*	8	14	22	25	24	7	\$702	\$768
12/5/94	9	19	23	20	22	7	\$634	\$763
12/6/93	8	17	20	27	19	9	\$639	\$788
12/18/92	10	18	20	24	19	9	\$605	\$769
12/15/91	7	19	22	24	20	8	\$617	\$808
12/2/90	7	19	23	25	17	9	\$588	\$802
10/15/89	4	15	25	23	18	15	\$634	\$912

*1998 and previous, Gallup