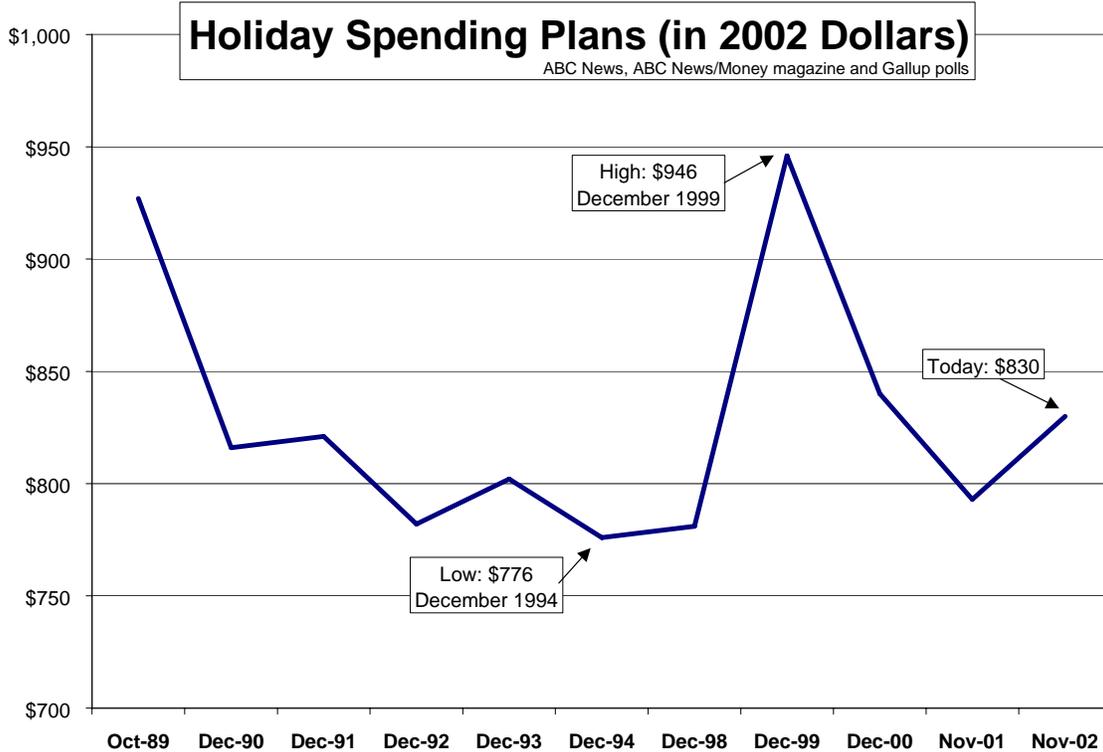


Americans' Holiday Spending Plans Level Off

Americans' holiday spending plans leveled off this year, reversing a two-year decline in the amount of money people plan to spend on gifts, but still a far cry from its peak in 1999.

Consumers on average estimate they'll spend \$830 on gifts for the holidays this year, compared to an inflation-adjusted \$793 last year and \$840 in 2000. It hit \$946 in 1999, the most in polls dating back to 1989.



Average spending plans on holiday gifts		
	Adjusted Average	Change
	(2002 dollars)	
11/24/02	\$830	+\$37
11/11/01	\$793	-\$47
12/3/00	\$840	-\$106
12/12/99	\$946	

Overall consumer confidence, measured by the weekly ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, is lower now than it was last year. But Americans are less

pessimistic about the direction of the economy: At about this time last year, 48 percent thought the economy was getting worse; now it's 38 percent. Also, after bottoming out in late October, views of current economic conditions have inched ahead more recently.

The day after Thanksgiving is the traditional start of the holiday shopping season.

BIG SPENDERS – Income, household size and the presence of children are major factors in holiday spending plans. Higher-income Americans naturally have some of the deepest pockets: Those in households earning \$50,000 or more plan to spend an average \$1,002, compared to \$669 in lower-income households.

People with kids at home estimate they'll spend an average of \$1,052, compared to \$747 among those without children at home. And spending plans jump as household size increases: from \$597 in single-person households to \$759 in two-person households and \$925 in households with three or more people.

Regionally, Midwesterners plan on spending the least (\$726), Westerners the most (\$874).

	Average spending plans - 2002
Men	\$ 859
Women	\$ 804
West	\$ 874
South	\$ 862
Northeast	\$ 850
Midwest	\$ 726
Household Size:	
One	\$ 597
Two	\$ 759
Three+	\$ 925
Kids at home	\$1,052
No kids at home	\$ 747
Under \$50,000	\$ 669
\$50,000+	\$1,002

METHODOLOGY - This ABC News survey was conducted by telephone Nov. 20-24, 2002, among a random national sample of 1,042 adults. The results have a three-point error margin (\$71 on the mean). 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: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934

Full results follow.

52. 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*
11/24/02	8	14	17	26	27	8	\$830	\$830
11/11/01	6	16	16	25	22	14	\$775	\$793
12/3/00	2	18	16	25	23	15	\$798	\$840
12/12/99	4	19	16	25	28	9	\$869	\$946
Compare to**:								
12/6/98	8	14	22	25	24	7	\$702	\$781
12/5/94	9	19	23	20	22	7	\$634	\$776
12/6/93	8	17	20	27	19	9	\$639	\$802
12/18/92	10	18	20	24	19	9	\$605	\$782
12/15/91	7	19	22	24	20	8	\$617	\$821
12/2/90	7	19	23	25	17	9	\$588	\$816
10/15/89	4	15	25	23	18	15	\$634	\$927

*Adjusted to 2002 dollars using Inflation Calculator at <http://www.bls.gov/>

**1998 and previous by Gallup. In Gallup data answers above \$5,000 are recorded as \$5,000; in ABC data answers above \$9,999 are recorded as \$9,999. In both, answers of 0 are not included in the averages.

END