

MARKETING

Luxury takes experiential approach to Easter

March 29, 2018



Harrods hosted in-store events around Easter. Image credit: Harrods

By SARAH JONES

Leading up to Easter, luxury brands are helping consumers prepare for the holiday with promotions that focus on elevating celebrations.

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From food for a feast to festive attire, retailers are seeking to provide shoppers with the products they need. While consumers will shell out significant sums on physical goods, research finds that spending on leisure activities around Easter is growing while sweets and novelty items are losing some of their attraction.

"Easter is pretty unique as far as promotional holidays go," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, SC. "It falls during a relatively light promotional period in the calendar year and gives brands the opportunity to reactivate their audience in a way they likely haven't been able to do since the winter holidays.

"Easter resonates globally and has a relatively long period of relevance, like Christmas before it, making it really attractive for brands to design promotions around it," he said. "They can keep them running longer than other single-day holidays like St. Patrick's Day, for example.

"As far as promotional holidays go, it really has a lot in common with Christmas, and brands have been taking advantage of that a lot recently."

Hop to it

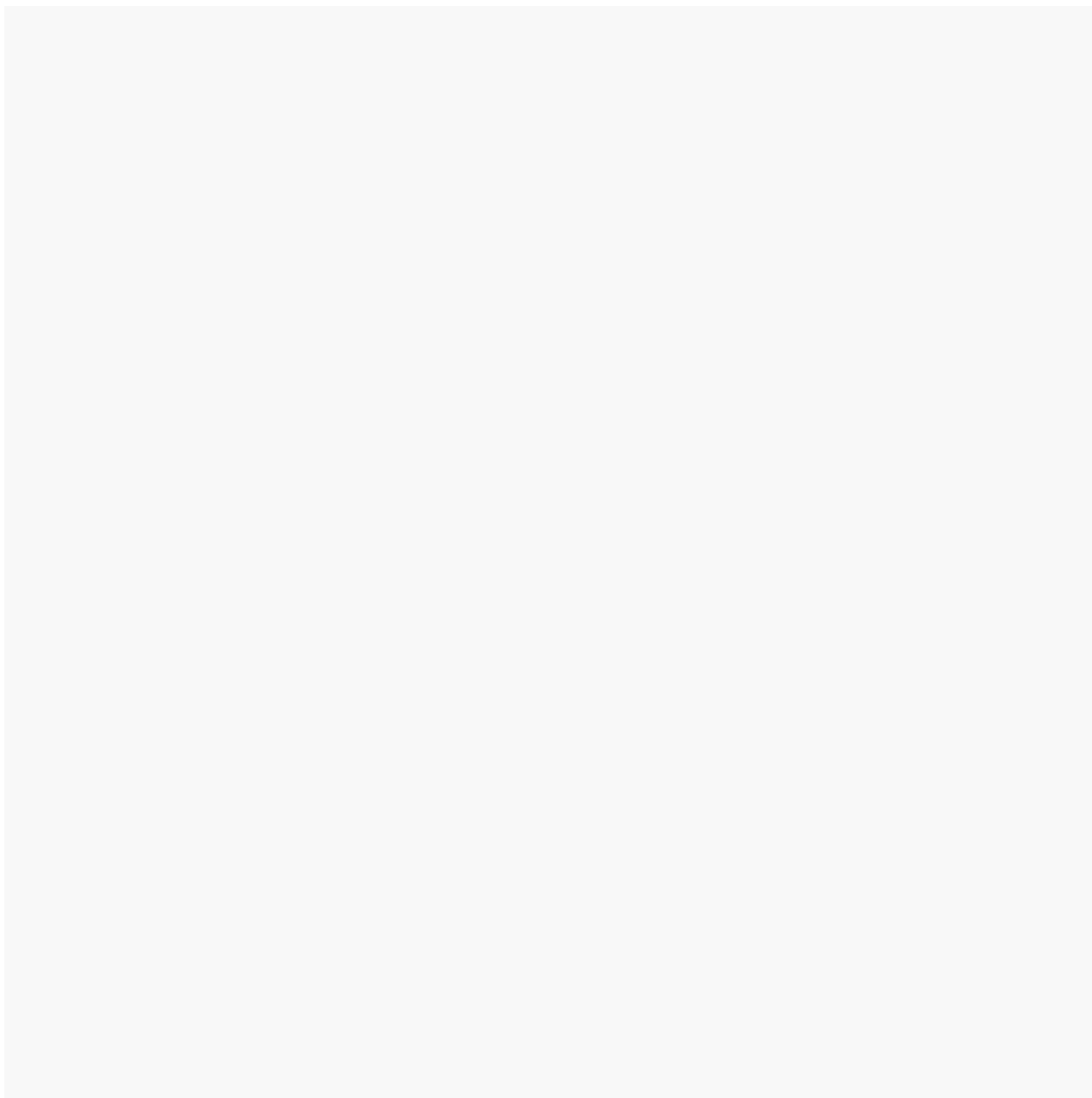
According to the National Retail Federation, Americans will spend a total \$18.2 billion for Easter this year, marking the second highest for the holiday since the organization began its survey in 2003.

Consumers are projected to spend about \$5.7 billion on food, with clothing coming in second at \$3.2 billion.

More than three-quarters of U.S. residents will be celebrating Easter. About 60 percent of respondents will be cooking a meal or visiting family and friends for the holiday.

As consumers prepare to host dinners or brunches, retailers are helping them get ready to entertain.

Fortnum & Mason's Easter Provisions hamper is stocked with wines, condiments, sweets and teas.



Easter is the highlight of spring when the daffodils are in full bloom and chocolates are hidden in the garden! To mark the season, bring family and friends around an undoubtedly delicious feast of our hand-picked savoury delights, wine, tea and much more, all waiting to be devoured. #Easter #Hamper #Wicker #GiftBasket #Fortnums | FortnumAndMason.com

A post shared by Fortnum & Mason (@fortnums) on Mar 12, 2018 at 7:00am PDT

A Harvey Nichols email invited shoppers to "screw the diet" with everything from an Artisan du Chocolat golden pineapple chocolate egg to a Sugarfina basket.

Armani Dolci also spotlighted its treats, including the traditional Italian dessert Colomba.

Taking the Easter egg to the extreme, some brands whipped up confectionary creations with extravagant designs and ingredients.

Per Tatler, Corinthia Hotel created a Baccarat-inspired egg made to look like crystal.

Harrods worked with artist Camille Walala to transform eggs into works of art. Limited to 12, the eggs were hand painted with bold designs.



Harrods' partnership with Camille Walala. Image credit: Harrods

Fortnum & Mason's 1.4 kg Colossal Egg is five eggs in one, with different layers of chocolate.

While gifting is less common for Easter than holidays such as Christmas or Valentine's Day, a number of brands shared present options.

Waterford promoted personalized crystal pieces, including rosary beads or a Celtic cross.

Harrods hopped to the Easter theme by promoting Loewe's rabbit-shaped handbags and Stella McCartney children's items with bunny motifs.

Russian jeweler Fabergé put an elegant spin on the traditional egg hunt, making it a high-class event in time for Easter. The winner of the global contest will receive a golden egg pendant ([see story](#)).

"It's important to have a presence and engage with customers, but it's easy to stray a little too far during Easter," said Evan Magliocca, brand marketing manager at [Baesman Insights & Marketing](#), Columbus, OH. "Brands need to make sure they stay within their messaging and brand parameters."

"Some brands move away from that during holidays like Easter, and it's disjointed to the customer when they do," he said. "Fabergé having a digital egg hunt is perfect. It aligns to customer expectations, provides a fun way to interact with the brand and gets their messaging across to customers."

Experiencing Easter

GlobalData found that U.K. consumers' portion of spend on leisure activities is significant, with about 40 percent of money spent tied to experiences rather than retail.

The research firm suggests that retailers find ways to win spend on non-retail categories, such as prompting consumers to dine in-store.

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Harvey Nichols (@HarveyNichols) [March 27, 2018](#)

Easter gifting, such as cards or presents, is not commonplace in comparison to other seasonal events such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, meaning that the proportion of Easter spend dedicated to retail is lower," said Eleanor Parr, retail analyst at GlobalData, in a statement. "Given the Easter event includes two bank holidays along with the annual Easter break for school children, consumers have more time and the inclination to pursue leisure activities."

Luxury brands have taken this experiential mindset to heart.

In celebration of Easter, chocolatier Charbonnel et Walker teamed with the Royal Academy and Hotel Caf Royal to offer a sweepstakes. The prize includes a stay at the hotel and a VIP access to the exhibition "Charles I: King and Collector."

Harrods teamed with a number of designers to offer in-store activities for children such as face painting, egg hunts, crafts and entertainment.

At Selfridges, Kurt Geiger is appealing to kids with opportunities to craft their own decorations or cards.

"Experiences are all about value to the customer and values to the brand," Baesman's Mr. Magliocca said. "They don't need to be a massive investment, experiences simply need to provide a tangible benefit to the customer while getting the brand's values across through messaging.

"The best way to think of experiences is through the customer's lens," he said. "What would you want if you were the customer? It's a simple question, highly effective and still underutilized."

Hotels are planning indulgent brunches, afternoon teas and dinners.



Hotels are offering opportunities for family time. Image credit: Shangri-La Hotels

Others are taking new slants to traditions. For instance, Shangri-La Maldives is hosting an underwater egg hunt in its lagoon.

Along with focusing on the day, some brands looked beyond the holiday to engage consumers. Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong is promoting a full-day retreat in its spa and fitness center to recuperate from all the chocolate.

"Experience is key when it comes to promotions, regardless of whether they are being put on by a hotel or a retailer," Flugel Consulting's Mr. Rains said. "Designing experiences around a promotional holiday requires equal understanding of both the holiday and the market.

"Every holiday has an identity. That's why they resonate so strongly with the market," he said. "That identity can be anything from a color palette and tone to established personalities and identities.

"Secondly, you have to understand the market and how they experience the holiday. This will help you design offerings that enhance that experience."