

RESEARCH

US holiday 2025 retail spending up 3.9pc: Mastercard

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Consumers are said to be increasingly merging ecommerce and bricks-and-mortar shopping experiences. Image credit: Mastercard

By ZACH JAMES

Across the board, expenditures during the festive season surged, according to the latest findings from global payment technology company Mastercard.

During the holiday season, retail spending in the United States rose by 3.9 percent. This figure was assisted by rising results both in-store and online, as well as increased demand for various key product segments, such as apparel and jewelry.

"Consumers demonstrated flexibility and confidence this season, shopping early, leveraging promotions and investing in meaningful experiences and wish-list items," said Michelle Meyer, chief economist at the Mastercard Economics Institute, in a statement.

"They also blended online and in-store shopping to find the best deals and maximize convenience."

The latest findings from Mastercard's SpendingPulse macroeconomic analytics department are based on preliminary results from Nov. 1 to Dec. 21, 2025. The figures exclude automotive sales and are not adjusted for possible currency inflation.

Festive delights

With shoppers dealing with the effects of adverse global economic factors, value-seeking behavior was on the rise.

During the busy two-month period, consumers increased their in-store spending to the tune of 2.9 percent, with sales generated by ecommerce platforms growing by 7.4 percent year-over-year. The company's experts cite maximized convenience and promotional participation for this bump to blended holiday retail experiences.



Consumers were said to be shopping smart and savvy when on the hunt for gifts. Image credit: Mastercard

By the end of the seasonal surge, expenditures on apparel had jumped by 7.8 percent, attributed to both cold-weather necessities and gift-giving alike. This behavior was prevalent across channels, with bricks-and-mortar results up by 7 percent and online sales increasing by 8.5 percent.

Eating out also saw a surge in activity, with restaurant visits generating 5.2 percent more than during holiday 2024. Meanwhile, jewelry sales received a 1.6 percent boost as consumers were said to be strategically timing their diamond-encrusted presents.

During the beginning of the holiday shopping season, participation in Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales reached their highest levels in several years, despite planned expenditures dropping across the board due to increased adoption of value-seeking strategies, according to global consulting group Deloitte ([see story](#)). From MasterCard's new findings, it is clear that this trend and its accompanying momentum carried throughout the remainder of the year.

Moving forward

While festive shopping saw increased results, with a chunk of the success attributed to experiential offerings, other related business segments struggled to appeal to a customer base that is increasingly pulling back from non-essential purchases.

Ahead of the end of the year, American travelers stated their intention to cut their holiday travel budgets by up to an 18 percent y-o-y drop ([see story](#)).



Across income groups, people planned fewer flights and hotel stays during the lucrative period. Image courtesy of Raffles/Natalie Paul/Team Laird

While the high-end travel space is expected to quickly rebound ([see story](#)), the fashion industry is expected to struggle moving forward, with a sizable portion of industry leaders foreseeing the macroeconomic situation worsening over the next 12 months ([see story](#)).