

## US Holiday Spending Hits Record as Inflation Eases



US retail sales hit record growth during the recent holiday season as the cost of goods went down and the job market improved.

Consumers shelled out \$964.4 billion over the November-to-December period, a 3.8% increase compared with 2022, the [National Retail Federation](#) (NRF), which bases its numbers on figures from the US Census Bureau, said Wednesday. That total fell within the federation's initial prediction of a 3% to 4% rise to between \$957.3 billion and \$966.6 billion.

“Consumer spending was remarkably resilient throughout 2023 and finished the year with a solid pace for the holiday season,” said NRF chief economist Jack Kleinhenz. “Although inflation has been the biggest concern for households, the price of goods eased notably and was helped by a healthy labor market, underscoring a successful holiday season for retailers.”

Online sales increased 8.2% to \$276.8 billion during the holiday months, coming within the organization's forecast of a 7% to 9% rise to between \$273.7 billion and \$278.8

billion. Meanwhile, sales for the full year grew 3.6% to a record \$5.13 trillion, the NRF noted.

December sales gained 5.6% year on year to \$709.9 billion, and were up 0.6% from November, according to the US Census Bureau data. In November, sales advanced 0.3% month on month.

Seven of the nine categories the NRF monitors saw growth over the two-month festive period. The clothing and accessories segment — which includes jewelry — rose 3%, the NRF reported. Sales fell in the building-materials and garden-supplies segment, as well as in the home-furnishings division.

*Image: People exchanging holiday gifts. (Shutterstock)*