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Consumer pulse Holiday 2026 infographic



October 2026

Executive Summary

KPMG surveyed 2,005 consumers across the United States to understand their holiday spending plans and activities

Resilient, but selective

- **Budgets continue to expand:** average holiday spend rises from $747 to $783, while travel increases from $742 to $798
- **Essentials absorb incremental dollars:** groceries (+27%) and gas and maintenance (+21%) record the strongest planned increases
- **Selectivity remains visible:** gaming (-10%) and toys (-11%) face the sharpest pullbacks

Smarter, value-led shopping

- **AI supports comparison shopping:** price comparison (37%), promotions (33%) and reviews (33%) lead expected use cases
- **Value shapes retailer choice:** mass retailers lead at 75%, while discounts and sales are the top selection attribute at 70%
- **Loyalty is conditional:** about one-third may switch for a meaningfully better deal

Wellness reshapes the wallet

- **Self-care enters seasonal behavior:** 32% plan to participate in Dry January, led by improving health and saving money
- **GLP-1 adoption is material:** 23% use or plan to use GLP-1 medications
- **Category spend is shifting:** users expect more spending on groceries (+27%) and holiday entertainment (+21%), but less on alcohol (-37%)

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Despite economic uncertainty, consumers continue increasing holiday budgets while prioritizing essentials and experiences

Consumers remain financially resilient despite mixed income trends

Change in household income

- Increased 47%
- No change 3%
- Decreased 50%

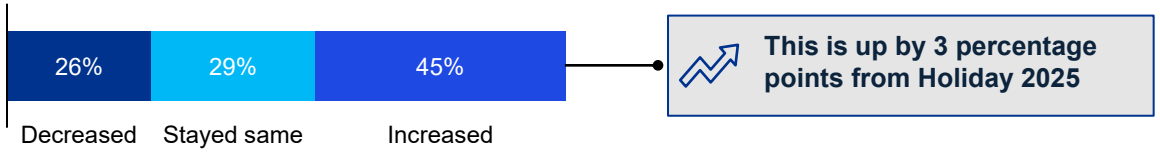
Top reasons behind the increase

- Promotion or new job 56%
- Secondary income source 31%

Consumers continue increasing holiday and travel spendings

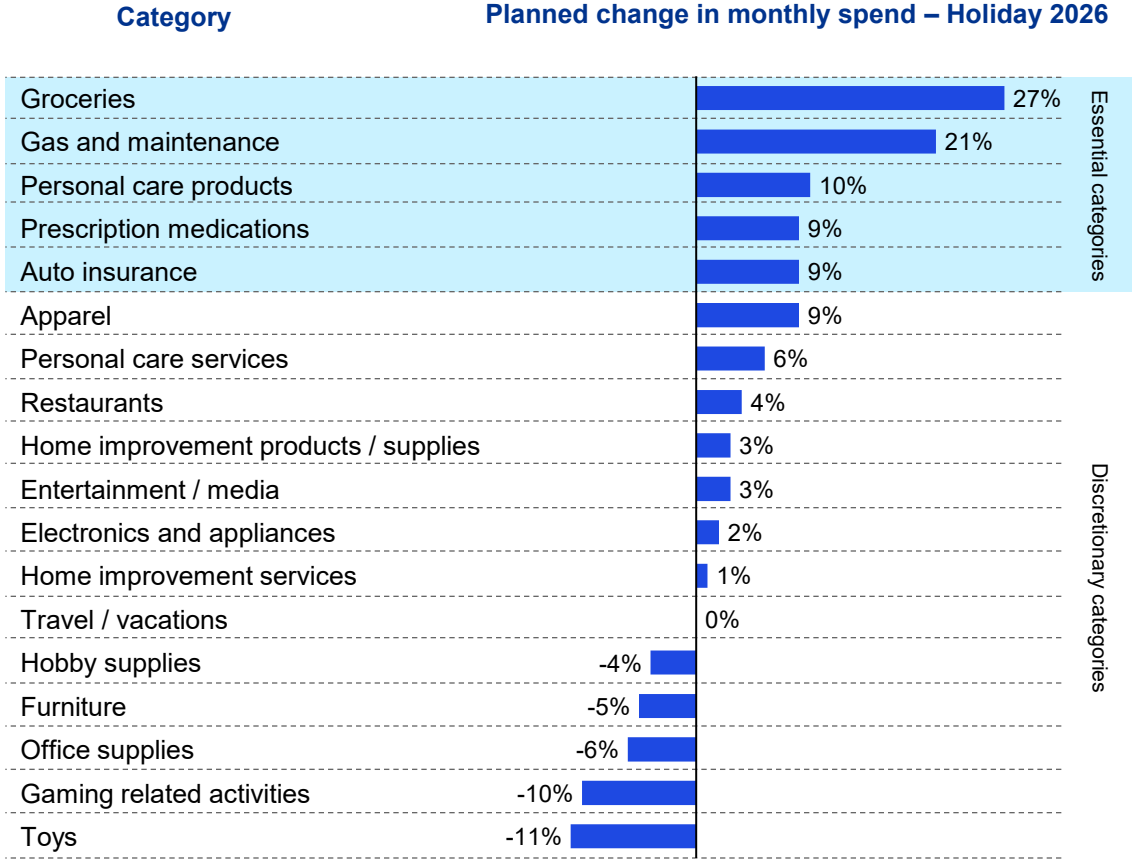
Spending trends	2025		2026	% change
Holiday shopping	$747	→	$783	↑ 5%
Travel	$742	→	$798	↑ 8%

Change in shopping spend



This is up by 3 percentage points from Holiday 2025

Spending growth remains concentrated in essentials



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Consumers are shopping smarter, leveraging AI and value-led retailer choices to maximize holiday spending

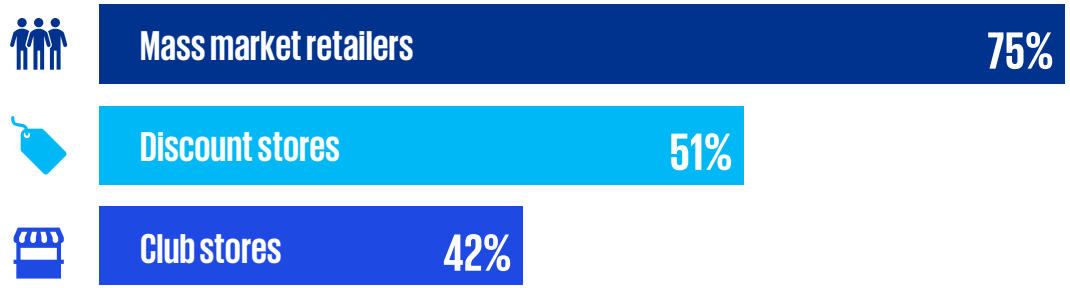
AI is becoming a regular shopping assistant

Expected use of AI tools during holiday shopping

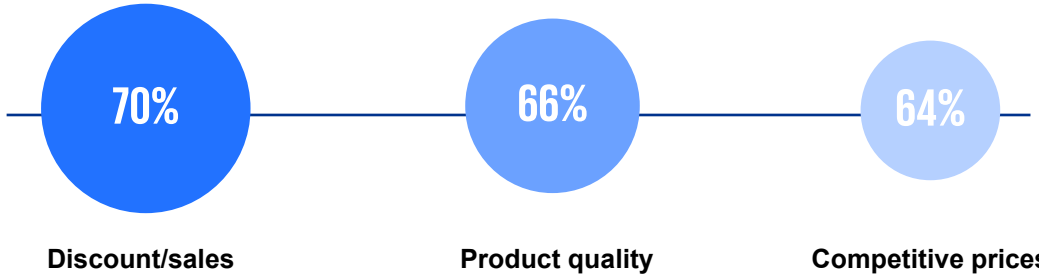


Consumers continue favoring retailers that deliver value

Shopping preference by retailer type



Top 3 attributes impacting the selection of retailer type



~1/3rd consumers plan to generally stay with retailers they trust but may switch if another retailer offers a significantly better deal

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Consumers are directing more spending toward themselves, with wellness increasingly shaping holiday purchase decisions

BNPL supports holiday spending, but cash remains the preferred payment method

Fall 2026	Preferred payment method	Holiday 2026
83%	Cash	68%
80%	Credit card	69%
73%	Debit card	73%
34%	Buy-now, pay-later	21%

Percentage of purchases made using BNPL in Holiday 2026

- **85%** <30% of purchases
- **15%** >30% of purchases

Wellness is becoming a key influence on holiday spending

Dry January participation

32% plan to participate in Dry January

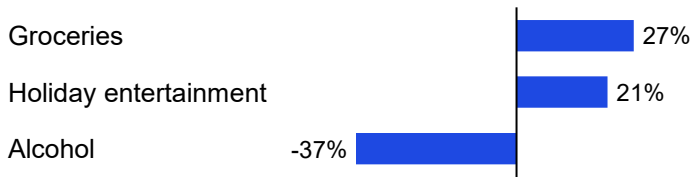
Top 3 reasons to participate

Improve health	51%
Save money	39%
Reduce stress	26%

GLP-1 adoption

23% use or plan to use GLP-1 medications

These respondents plan to



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