

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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The 2009 Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family, gift-giving, reflection and thanks. To commemorate this time of year, the U.S. Census Bureau presents the following holiday-related facts and figures from its data collection.

It's in the Mail

19 billion

Number of cards, letters and packages the U.S. Postal Service expected to deliver between Thanksgiving and Christmas last year. The busiest delivery day was expected to be Dec. 17. On Dec. 15, the Postal Service expected to cancel the largest volume of mail of the season, with 960 million cards and letters processed.

Source: U.S. Postal Service <<http://www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm>>

Rush to the Stores

\$28.2 billion

Retail sales by the nation's department stores (including leased departments) in December 2008. This represented a 40 percent jump from the previous month (when retail sales, many holiday-related, registered \$20.2 billion). No other month-to-month increase in department store sales last year was as large.

Other U.S. retailers with sizable jumps in sales between November and December 2008 were book stores (95 percent); clothing stores (32 percent); jewelry stores (125 percent); radio, TV and other electronics stores (38 percent); and sporting goods stores (62 percent).

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>

14 percent

The proportion of total 2008 sales for department stores (including leased departments) in December. For jewelry stores, the percentage was 18 percent.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

23 percent

The growth in inventories by our nation's department stores (excluding leased departments) from Aug. 31 to Nov. 30, 2008. Thanks to the holiday crowds, inventories plummeted by 25 percent in December.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>

Note: Leased departments are separately owned businesses operated as departments or concessions of other service establishments or of retail businesses, such as a separately owned shoeshine parlor in a barber shop, or a beauty shop in a department store. Also, retail sales estimates have not been adjusted to account for seasonal or pricing variations.

\$24 billion

Value of retail sales by electronic shopping and mail-order houses in December 2008 — the highest total for any month last year.

Source: Service Sector Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/retail>>

16,670

The number of electronic shopping and mail-order houses in business in 2007. These businesses, which employed 268,328 workers, are a popular source of holiday gifts. Their 2007 sales: \$199 billion, of which 44.6 percent were attributable to e-commerce. California led the nation in the number of these establishments and their employees, with 2,493 and 32,971, respectively.

Source: County Business Patterns <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/014105.html> and Annual Trade Survey <<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/2007/table6.xls>>

If you're not sure where to do your shopping, choices of retail establishments abound: In 2007, there were 155,371 clothing and clothing accessories stores; 10,116 department stores; 9,515 hobby, toy and game shops; 30,920 gift, novelty and souvenir shops; 23,756 sporting goods stores; 27,484 jewelry stores; and 10,635 book stores across the nation. The figures shown are for locations with paid employees.

Source: County Business Patterns <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/014105.html>

Christmas Trees and Decorations

\$410 million

Sales by U.S. Christmas tree farmers in 2007.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>>

\$109.3 million

Sales by Christmas tree farmers in Oregon in 2007, which led the nation.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service <<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>>

\$470.3 million

The value of U.S. imports of Christmas tree ornaments from China between January and August 2009. China was the leading country of origin for such items. Similarly, China was the leading foreign source of artificial Christmas trees shipped to the United States (\$28.6 million worth) during the same period.

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>>

Where the Toys are ... Made

94

Number of establishments around the country that primarily manufactured dolls and stuffed toys in 2007; they employed 1,641 people. California led the nation with 17 locations.

Source: County Business Patterns <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/014105.html>

683

The number of locations that primarily produced games, toys and children's vehicles in 2007; they employed 10,708 workers. California led the nation with 112 establishments.

Source: County Business Patterns <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/county_business_patterns/014105.html>

\$3.2 billion

Total value of shipments for dolls, toys and games by manufacturers in 2007.

Source: 2007 Economic Census <<http://www.census.gov/econ/census07/>>

\$4.3 billion

The value of U.S. toy imports including stuffed toys (excluding dolls), puzzles and electric trains from China between January and August 2009. China was the leading country of origin for stuffed toys coming into this country, as well as for a number of other popular holiday gifts.

These include roller skates (\$30 million), sports footwear (\$120 million), golf balls (\$31 million) and basketballs (\$29 million). China leads Canada as the leading supplier of ice skates (\$12 million versus \$5 million), with Thailand ranking third (\$4 million).

Source: Foreign Trade Statistics <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>>

Holiday Names

Place names associated with the holiday season include North Pole, Alaska (population 2,212 in 2008); Santa Claus, Ind. (2,314); Santa Claus, Ga. (250); Noel, Mo. (1,608); and — if you know about reindeer — the village of Rudolph, Wis. (412) and Dasher, Ga. (849). There is Snowflake, Ariz. (5,673) and a dozen places named Holly, including Holly Springs, Miss., and Mount Holly, N.C.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/013960.html>>

Hanukkah and Kwanzaa

50.4%

Proportion of the nation's spuds produced in Idaho and Washington in 2008. Potato latkes are always a crowd pleaser during Hanukkah.

Source: National Agriculture Statistics Service <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>>

\$1.3 billion

The value of product shipments of candles in 2002 by the nation's manufacturers. Many of these candles are lit during Hanukkah and Kwanzaa celebrations.

Source: 2002 Economic Census

<<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/guide/SUBSUMM.HTM>>

New Year's Eve and Day

79,389

The estimated July 1, 2008, population of Champaign, Ill., a place whose name alone may get you into a celebratory mood.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/013960.html>>

\$475 million

U.S. manufacturers shipments of effervescent wines (including sparkling wines, such as champagne) in 2002.

Source: 2002 Economic Census at

<<http://www.census.gov/econ/census02/guide/SUBSUMM.HTM>>

More than 308 million

The nation's projected population as we ring in the New Year.

Source: Population projections

A list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)

Super Bowl

Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)

Women's History Month (March)

Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/

St. Patrick's Day (March 17)

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)

Older Americans Month (May)

Cinco de Mayo (May 5)

Mother's Day

Hurricane Season Begins (June 1)

Father's Day

The Fourth of July (July 4)

Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)

Back to School (August)

Labor Day

Grandparents Day

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)

Unmarried and Single Americans Week

Halloween (Oct. 31)

American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month
(November)

Veterans Day (Nov. 11)

Thanksgiving Day

The Holiday Season (December)

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Facts for Features are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3762; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.