**Shopping**

**The average American will spend $907 for Christmas gifts in 2006. By making only the minimum credit card payment at a 13.9 percent interest rate, it would take more than six years and $ 1,225 to pay off that amount. *(Money, as it appeared in* The Week magazine, December 29, 2006 – January 12, 2007)**

**Americans say they’ll spend an average of $716 on holiday gifts this year – the least since 1989, and a 40% drop from 2005. *(ABC News, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 5, 2008)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Two different approaches to holiday shopping: Grandma: “Whew! I can't believe I waited until December 18th to finish my shopping.” Man: “Have you got your shopping done yet, Earl?” Earl: “I haven't started yet. It's only December 18th.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Most poor people don't shop for bargains. Most rich people don't shop for bargains. But most of the people in the middle do shop for bargains. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I was in a department store and I saw a weird-looking gadget. I asked the young saleslady what it was. She answered, “It doesn't do anything. It's just a Christmas gift!”(Milton Berle, in Milton's Berle's Private Joke File)**

**The busiest shopping hour of the Christmas season is between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve. (Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 95)**

**Naomi Campbell, who studied ballet, was discovered at the age of fifteen while window-shopping in London’s Covent Garden.(Don Voorhees, in *The Indispensable Book of Useless Information, p. 27)***

**It was Christmas and a judge was in a benevolent mood as he questioned the prisoner, “What are you charged with?” he asked. “Doing my Christmas shopping early,” replied the defendant. “That’s no offense,” replied the judge. “How early were you doing this shopping?” “Before the store opened,” countered the prisoner. *(Parts Pups)***

**Dennis says to his Mom while shopping in the crowded store: “Why can’t Christmas come in August when the stores aren’t so crowded?” *(Hank Ketcham, in Dennis The Menace comic strip)***

**Christmas shoppers flocking to a sale at an Ohio department store refused to leave when an electrical fire filled the store with thick smoke. In fact, even as they battled the blaze at Dillard’s in the Great Lakes Mall, firefighters had to block the doors to keep bargain hunters from coming in. “It was amazing,” said Mentor fire Battalion Chief Joe Busher. “Even though there was heavy smoke in there, they all wanted to stay and shop.” (The Week magazine, December 29, 2006 – January 12, 2007)**

**First Woman: “I’m thinking about exchanging the gift my boyfriend gave me for Christmas . . . What about you?” Second Woman: “It’s hard to exchange a discount coupon for Rice-A-Roni.” (J. C. Duffy, in The Fusco Brothers comic strip)**

**Stores hire extra help for the holidays. This way, customers who don't know what they want are helped by people who don't know where it is. (H. K. Simon Co.)**

**I bought my brother some gift-wrap for Christmas. I took it to the Gift Wrap department and told them to wrap it, but in a different print so he would know when to stop unwrapping. (Steven Wright)**

**Doctor: “I’ve patched you up, but in the future, try to avoid dangerous hand-to-hand combat in crowded quarters!” Hagar then says to his wife: “I can’t go Christmas shopping with you anymore, Helga.” *(Chis Browne, in Hagar The Horrible comic strip)***

**The National Retail Federation said holiday sales in November and December rose 4 percent to $994.1 billion compared with the previous year. Small businesses did especially well, with sales rising 4.9 percent. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week, January 31, 2025)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*How many guys still have a lot of shopping to do? Guys, those Chia pets are looking like pretty good gifts right now! *(Jay Leno)***

**According to a study by Ball State, Americans who shop on an empty stomach spend more. It’s just a theory – they weren’t able to find Americans with empty stomachs. *(Jay Leno, 2004)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*People who say money can’t buy happiness just don’t know where to shop. *(Tom Shivers) 5219820***

**The man sees the sign in the window: “Only 26 Shopping Days Till Christmas,” and responds: “Sigh. Only 36 days until the Christmas shopping bills arrive!” (Art & Chip Sansom, in The Born Loser comic strip)**

**With Christmas falling at the end of the week and many offices closed on Christmas Eve, consumers have extra incentive to procrastinate this year. *(Tracy Mullin, president and CEO of the National Retail Federation, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, December 24, 2004)***

**Servant: “Why do you keep putting off doing your Christmas shopping?” Hagar: “Oh, I don’t know. It gets so crowded trying to raid English castles this time of year!” (Dik Browne, in Hagar the Horrible comic strip)**

**On average, retailers expect to get back about 16.6 percent of the total merchandise that customers purchased in 2021, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation and Appriss Retail. That’s a jump from an average return rate of 10.6 percent in 2020. (CNBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 4, 2022)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*At the very least, many retailers now offer free shipping, free returns, and frequent discount codes, all of which promote more buying – and more returns. Last year, U. S. retailers took back more than $100 billion in merchandise sold online. All of that unwanted stuff piles up. Some of it will be diverted into a global shadow industry of bulk resellers, some of it will be stripped for valuable parts, and some of it will go directly into an incinerator or a landfill. (Amanda Mull, in The Atlantic, November, 2021, p. 22)**

**Returns in 2024 are expected to amount to 17 percent of all merchandise sales, totaling $890 billion in returned goods. That’s up from $743 billion in returned goods in 2023. (CNBC.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 20, 2024)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*A Christmas club, a savings account in which a person deposits a fixed amount of money regularly to be used at Christmas for shopping, came about around 1905. *(absolutetrivia.com)***

**After her 90th birthday, my friend Marie found that shopping for Christmas gifts had become too difficult, so she decided to send checks to everyone instead. On each card she wrote, “Buy your own present,” and she mailed them early. Marie enjoyed the usual flurry of family festivities. Only after Christmas did she get around to clearing off her cluttered desk. Under a stack of papers, she was horrified to find the gift checks which she had forgotten to enclose. *(Alice H. Cork, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Girl: “Boy, my Mom sure was Christmas shopping up a storm today!” Heart: “I didn’t see her with any bags. How do you know?” Girl: “Look, feel. Her VISA card’s still warm.” *(Mark Tatulli, in Heart Of The City comic strip)***

**Although my husband and I had finished our Christmas shopping, Orville had to go to a department store to purchase a few household items. As he passed an elderly shopper, the gentleman noted the 30-gallon trash can in Orville's cart and remarked, “It gets harder and harder every year to know what to get her, doesn't it?” (Ruth Lucas, in Reader's Digest)**

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