

Meijer Customer Survey Reveals Kids May be in for Biggest Christmas Surprises

Retailer's customer survey finds 60 percent of shoppers plan to spend less overall except for those closest to them

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Nov. 19, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- While the pandemic has challenged many to scale back their plans for celebrations this year, a recent Meijer customer survey found that some families plan to treat their holiday as an opportunity to reinforce the spirit of Christmas. And that kids may be in for the biggest surprises of all.

"An advantage of our self-quarantine is that we've set aside more money for the holidays," said Jenny Moll in her customer survey response. "We've avoided restaurants and large gatherings hosted by family and friends most of this year to protect our parents, so we want to use that money to spend more on gifts for the kids."

Moll is one of 1,200 shoppers recently surveyed on how the coronavirus pandemic has changed shopping habits, and her plan of repurposing dollars to brighten eyes and smiles is echoed by other participants. This year has caused numerous challenges – virtual learning, missed activities and cancelled events – that significantly impacted children, and have inspired many parents and caregivers to suggest '*they deserve something to look forward to.*'"

"We are beginning to see holiday excitement as customers prepare for their Thanksgiving dinners and continue seeking deals to complete their shopping lists," said Peter Whitsett, Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Marketing. "Our focus is to continue to maintain clean, socially-distanced stores and make sure customers have multiple ways to take advantage of our sales."

The survey confirms that overall customers plan to spend less on gifts this year because with holiday gatherings reduced, they have fewer gifts to purchase. Instead, they plan to prioritize spending on entertaining and gift-giving to those closest to them. Nearly 60 percent of customers indicated they will spend the same on food and gifts this holiday season but will splurge on those closest to them.

Other insights provided by the Meijer holiday shopping survey include:

- **The Size of Gatherings:** The average Thanksgiving celebration expects to host eight people, down from 14 attendees last year. Similarly, Christmas gatherings are expected to shrink from an average of 16 people in 2019 to nine attendees this year.
- **Hosting and Traveling:** More than 55 percent plan on limiting the number of holiday gatherings they attend while one in three customers do not plan on hosting gatherings in their home. According to survey results, more than 40 percent do not plan to travel to visit family and 37 percent will not travel to see friends. Instead, 22 percent of customers expect to use video gatherings to communicate with loved ones.
- **Thanksgiving Shopping:** Customers surveyed plan on doing 74 percent of their shopping in-store this year for their Thanksgiving dinner ingredients, while the rest plan on using pickup or delivery services for their grocery orders.
- **Holiday Shopping:** Customers are split between a heavy shift toward digital shopping and making in-store purchases. Due to the pandemic, Meijer estimates a roughly 400 percent increase for curbside and delivery services in grocery and select general merchandise throughout the holiday season.
- **That's Entertainment:** While customers expect to host smaller gatherings, they also expect to spend the same on food, indicating that people want to put out a full table even with fewer attendees. Survey results state 75 percent of holiday shoppers expect to attend fewer get-togethers where they would traditionally bring food or a gift, but attendees may be confused about etiquette for gift-giving.

Finally, some of the extra holiday budget is expected to be spent on adapting living spaces – both inside and out – to maintain safe distance. The survey finds that about eight out of 10 customers expect to decorate as much or more than last year.

In March, one family in Menomonee, Wis. began stringing up lights and unboxing decorations around their home to signal normalcy and togetherness in response to the pandemic. Social posts of their home quickly went viral, neighbors were inspired to unpack their decorations and, before long, the movement gained international attention. The inspiration spread, and now the idea of decorating more seems to be catching on once again.


"We decided we are going to start decorating for Christmas early, so I plan to buy extra to make both inside and out beautiful this year," said Trisha Shapiro in her survey response. "The kids are really looking forward to it and

I think it could be the family activity that just might make a difference this year."

About Meijer: Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 256 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter [@twitter.com/Meijer](https://twitter.com/Meijer) and [@twitter.com/MeijerPR](https://twitter.com/MeijerPR) or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

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For further information: Joe Hirschmugl, 616-791-3943, joseph.hirschmugl@meijer.com

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