

# Black Friday effect: Weekend sees rise in shoppers

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Shoppers took to stores in big numbers over the holiday weekend, but average spending per person fell as they snapped up bargains — trend retail analysts expect to continue through Christmas.

The [National Retail Federation](#) reported Sunday that Americans spent an estimated \$41.2 billion over the holiday weekend, an amount on par with last year. Store traffic surpassed expectations despite the weak economy. "It was a pretty successful" weekend, said Scott Krugman, NRF vice president. Shoppers, as expected, went for good deals on lower-priced items.

The retail federation says 195 million shoppers visited stores and websites over the weekend, up from 172 million last year, based on a survey of almost 5,000 consumers by BIGresearch. On average, consumers spent \$343.31 per person vs. \$372.57 a year ago, the survey said.

Although the weekend proved that shoppers were willing to spend on bargains, it might not reveal much about the rest of the holiday shopping season. Last year, the weekend after Thanksgiving — the traditional start of the holiday shopping season — was strong and then momentum took a dive. This year, analysts expect retailers to offer continued and varied deals. "Consumers are focused on the most discounted items, and we expect that to continue," says Sapna Shah, of consulting firm Retail Eye Partners. Retailers will "add more promotions and mix it up," she says.

Department stores have hit a winning combination of low prices and good quality, NRF CEO Tracy Mullin says. "Last year, people were turned around by the economy and (crowds) died down quickly," says Tom Aiello, [Sears](#) spokesman. "This year, people are spending more time in the stores and fanning out to other departments."

Leandra Norris, 24, a receptionist from Phoenix, cashed in. She spent \$350 on nine bags of goods, mostly filled with toys and clothing for her children, ages 2 and 4. But she also made unplanned purchases for herself because clothes were "dirt cheap."

Retailers will get another look at the holiday season today with Cyber Monday, the official start of the online holiday season. Almost 97 million people are expected to shop online today vs. 85 million last year, according to a survey for Shop.org by BIGresearch. Almost \$10.6 billion was spent online in November through Friday, a 3% increase vs. the same time last year, says researcher [ComScore](#).

Despite a solid weekend, the NRF still predicts that holiday sales will be down 1% from last year.