



# Have fun and #ShopTheHills

## For selection and bargains, start local Christmas holiday gift shopping early

Some people begin their holiday countdowns the day after the festivities have come and gone. With 365 days until the next celebration, it may seem like one has all the time in the world to complete holiday tasks. But before long, holiday crunch time arrives and some people find themselves rushing around to buy gifts and other essentials.

A 2020 Gallup poll found the average holiday shopper planned to spend \$942 on gifts in 2019. The personal finance site Mint.com from Intuit reported roughly \$729 billion was spent during the holidays in 2019 in the United States - making it the biggest holiday season to date.

Though the pandemic changed the holiday shopping landscape in 2020, a return to normalcy appears to be on the horizon



for the 2021 holiday shopping season. In fact, the adage of "the early bird catches the worm" could help shoppers scoop up gifts and bargains before the holiday shopping rush begins. Individuals who start their holiday shopping early this year may discover there are many benefits to such an approach.

### SPREAD OUT SPENDING

Those who begin shopping well before the holiday season arrives can spread their spending over several months rather than a short period of time. This can make shopping more affordable for those who may have limited financial leeway. It may be easier to swallow spending an extra \$100 per month throughout the year as opposed to having a \$1,000 bill at year's end. With in-store shopping open again, visit local stores to find the perfect gift or see what they have to offer online and arrange for curbside pickup or delivery.

### SHOP SALES

A Coresight Research survey found that more than 25 per cent of shoppers expected to start holiday shopping earlier than usual in 2020, when retailers offered their promo-

tions earlier than normal to compensate for a decline in brick-and-mortar shopping. While it remains to be seen what retailers will do this year, shopping early means people are not beholden only to holiday sales promotions; they can take advantage of major sales throughout the year and retailer-specific sales.

### AVOID DELAYS

Continued pressure on shipping companies as online shopping has become so prevalent inadvertently leads to delays. Couple this with supply chain disruptions due to the pandemic, and certain items may be out of stock or on back order.

"With potential product shortages continuing, if you see something you know you want, go ahead and buy it," said Karl Haller, retail industry expert at IBM Global Business Services.

Getting a head start on holiday shopping is advantageous to shoppers who want to budget, save and ensure items are available. (MCC).



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