



# SIENA COLLEGE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

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## Annual Statewide Poll of Holiday Spending Plans

**NY'ers Less Excited This Year But Say Holidays Cannot be Ruined by Virus  
Half Plan to Hold Spending Under \$500; One Third Will Spend over \$1000; Online  
Shopping Hits New High**

**Nearly 2/3rds Plan 'Different' Thanksgiving; Few Will Travel; 41% To Gather with  
Family & Friends; 40% Zooming on Turkey Day  
Only 14% to Attend Holiday Parties; Most Comfortable with Gatherings of under 10**

**Loudonville, NY** – Fifty-nine percent of New Yorkers, down from 71 percent a year ago, are somewhat or very excited about the upcoming holiday season according to a new statewide survey of consumers released today by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI). While 16 percent say that they are more excited than last year, 41 percent are less excited. Sixty-eight percent say that the holidays will be different but that they cannot be ruined by the virus as the spirit of the season will triumph over the pandemic.

“Over a quarter of New Yorkers are coming into the holiday season saying that no matter how hard they try, the pandemic will take the joy out of the holidays,” according to SCRI Director, Don Levy. “But over two-thirds just won’t let the virus be the Grinch that steals the season this year.”

Virtually unchanged from last year, 49 percent plan to spend under \$500 on gifts during this holiday season. Nearly a third, 32 percent, up from 21 percent a year ago, plan to spend \$1000 or more on holiday gifts. Only 10 percent plan to increase their spending this year while 38 percent are going to spend less and 48 percent plan to spend as they did last year. Thirty-eight percent will conduct at least three-quarters of their holiday spending online this year, double last year’s 19 percent.

“While most New Yorkers are planning to either spend less or hold the line on spending, one in ten are ready for a holiday spending spree as one-third are ready to spend \$1000 or more, a figure we haven’t seen since 2007. Only 23 percent plan to shop locally on Black Friday or Small Business Saturday but nearly half will be shopping online on Cyber Monday this year. We’ve seen online spending grow dramatically since 2008 but today with 19 percent doing at least half of their shopping online and another 38 percent doing 75 percent or more, we’ve hit a new all time high,” Levy said.

Forty-one percent say that due to the virus, Thanksgiving will be very different this year, while an additional 23 percent say the holiday will be somewhat different. Forty-one percent will be gathering with friends or family that do not live with them but a majority, 52 percent, will not. Only 14 percent plan to travel to visit family or friends on Thanksgiving.

“For most, Thanksgiving looks to be different this year. Fewer than half are planning to have uncles, aunts and cousins over and only one in seven plans to travel to family meals on what has historically been one of the top travel days of the year. And as so many of us have gotten used to connecting at work or with friends via online platforms, 40 percent of New Yorkers will include a Zoom song, toast or laugh with those loved ones that are usually around the same table,” Levy said.

Only 14 percent will attend holiday parties during the rest of the holiday season while 19 percent plan to host holiday gatherings this year. Sixty-four percent say that they are comfortable attending a small holiday party in a home that includes no more than 10 people, but only 10 percent are comfortable attending a party at a friend’s home where over the course of the evening more than 50 people drop in. Half of New Yorkers say that they are comfortable going to an outdoor event at which people celebrate the holidays. Only 16 percent would be comfortable going to a work party with over 25 people and 26 percent would attend a gathering at a restaurant at which everyone is seated for the entire event.

“Sixty-seven percent, down from at least 70 percent each of the last nine years, plan to put up a Christmas Tree in their home. Similar to the last two years, but down about 10 points from the previous 10 years, two-thirds of New Yorkers will be making charitable donations and only 23 percent, the lowest we’ve seen in 13 years, will be volunteering any of their time this holiday,” Levy said.

“For so many New Yorkers, 2020 has been a difficult year. Today, unfortunately 54 percent think that the worst of the coronavirus pandemic is still to come. But two-thirds have vowed to not let COVID-19 ruin the holidays. Belief in Santa has fallen a bit this year to only 26 percent after being at or above 30 percent for nine years. Still, looking to the future, 85 percent of state residents are hopeful that 2021 will be a better year than 2020 has been,” Levy said

**The SCRI survey of Holiday Spending Plans was conducted November 4-10, 2020 by random telephone calls to 803 New York adults via landline and cell phones. Telephone sampling was initiated by asking for the youngest male in the household. Telephone sampling was conducted via a stratified dual frame probability sample of landline and cell phone telephone numbers (both from ASDE Survey Sampler) from within New York State weighted to reflect known population patterns and by education. Data from the telephone sample was statistically adjusted by age, race/ethnicity, region and gender to ensure representativeness. SCRI reports this data at a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4$  points including the design effects resulting from weighting. The Siena College Research Institute, directed by Donald Levy, Ph.D., conducts political, economic, social and cultural research primarily in NYS. SCRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, call Dr. Don Levy, Director Siena College Research Institute, at 518-783-2901. For survey cross-tabs: [www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research](http://www.Siena.edu/SCRI/research).**



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**Siena College Holiday Poll Trends – November 2020**

As the holiday season begins, would you say you are very excited, somewhat excited, not very excited or not at all excited about the upcoming holiday season?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>VERY EXCITED</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EXCITED</b>	<b>NOT VERY EXCITED</b>	<b>NOT AT ALL EXCITED</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>
2020	17	42	23	15	3
2019	34	37	18	10	1
2018	26	40	21	13	1
2017	33	34	17	15	2
2016	26	36	19	18	2
2014	23	35	23	18	0
2013	28	44	14	13	1
2012	26	41	18	15	0
2011	22	45	20	12	1
2010	24	45	18	13	0
2009	22	42	19	17	0
2008	24	39	25	12	1

Compared to last year (past years), do you plan to spend more money on holiday gifts, less money or about the same?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>MORE MONEY</b>	<b>LESS MONEY</b>	<b>ABOUT THE SAME</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW</b>
2020	10	38	48	4
2019	17	26	54	3
2018	15	33	50	1
2017	9	28	61	2
2016	9	31	57	2
2014	7	32	59	1
2013	10	29	57	4
2012	13	33	53	2
2011	7	34	55	3
2010	4	37	57	2
2009	4	48	45	3
2008	5	53	41	1
2007	8	35	54	2

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What is the total amount of money you plan to spend on gifts this holiday season?

DATE	\$0- \$299	\$300- \$399	\$400- \$499	\$500- \$599	\$600- \$699	\$700- \$799	\$800- \$899	\$900- \$999	\$1000+
2020	32	12	5	11	3	2	2	2	32
2019	30	13	9	11	5	5	2	3	21
2018	32	13	8	14	5	3	2	3	19
2017	29	12	9	13	3	3	2	2	26
2016	31	11	9	13	4	2	4	3	24
2014	31	11	11	11	5	4	2	3	23
2013	28	12	8	13	5	2	3	3	25
2012	23	10	10	14	4	3	3	3	29
2011	27	14	9	13	3	4	3	2	26
2010	26	13	14	11	4	2	4	3	23
2009	30	13	11	11	4	3	2	3	23
2008	28	11	10	13	4	4	3	3	23
2007	21	11	8	14	5	3	3	2	33

What percentage of your holiday shopping is done online?

DATE	NONE	0-25%	25%-50%	50%-75%	75%-100%	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2020	22	9	9	19	38	4
2019	18	15	24	21	19	3
2018	24	16	19	20	20	1
2017	28	18	17	16	19	2
2016	33	16	17	15	18	1
2014	34	16	19	17	13	1
2013	33	20	18	18	10	2
2012	43	21	16	12	7	1
2011	43	21	14	13	9	0
2010	45	29	16	7	2	1
2009	51	22	15	7	4	1
2008	51	28	12	5	2	1

This year will you be making any donations of money, food or gifts to charitable organizations that focus on the needy during the holiday season?

DATE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED
2020	66	26	8
2019	63	25	12
2018	68	31	1
2017	76	22	2
2016	76	20	4
2014	75	23	3
2013	76	20	4
2012	77	19	4
2011	77	20	3
2010	77	19	4
2009	72	20	7
2008	77	21	1
2007	81	17	2

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Do you plan to volunteer any of your time this holiday season for organizations that help people during the holidays?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>
2020	23	72	5
2019	32	56	12
2018	31	68	1
2017	36	62	3
2016	37	60	3
2014	36	62	2
2013	33	63	4
2012	39	58	4
2011	31	66	3
2010	33	63	4
2009	30	65	4
2008	37	62	1
2007	34	65	1

Do you put up a Christmas Tree in your home for the holiday season?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>
2020	67	31	1
2019	72	26	2
2018	72	28	0
2017	70	29	1
2016	72	28	1
2014	70	30	0
2013	73	27	0
2012	75	24	1
2011	75	25	0
2010	74	26	1

(If put up Christmas Tree) Do you have a real tree or an artificial tree in your home?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>REAL TREE</b>	<b>ARTIFICIAL TREE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>
2020	33	65	1
2019	34	65	1
2018	31	69	0
2017	42	58	0
2016	38	61	1
2014	38	61	1
2013	42	57	1
2012	39	60	1
2011	40	59	1
2010	42	58	0

Would you say you believe in Santa Claus or not?

<b>DATE</b>	<b>BELIEVE</b>	<b>DO NOT BELIEVE</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/REFUSED</b>
2020	26	72	3
2019	30	66	4
2018	31	68	1
2017	33	66	1
2016	32	65	2
2014	30	68	1
2013	30	69	1
2012	37	62	1
2011	30	69	1
2010	30	69	1