

# More than Just Deals: Singles' Day Is Introducing New Shopping Experiences in China

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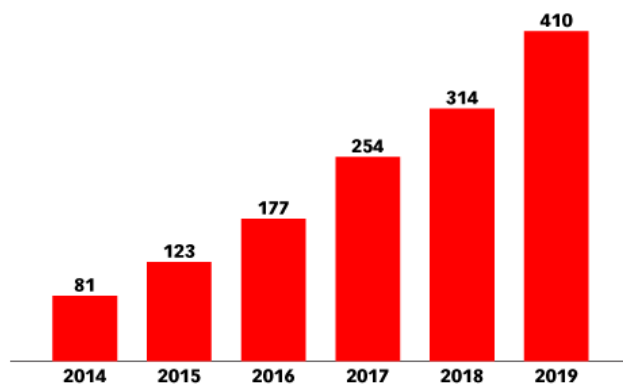
**C**hina's Singles' Day is no longer just a discount shopping event, as participating digital giants are now leveraging livestreams, new product launches, and novel technologies to enhance customer engagement and the buying experience.

Every year, Singles' Day (also known as 11/11) gets bigger—both in terms of sales and reach. In 2019, the day's gross merchandise volume (GMV) across platforms in China reached RMB410 billion (\$59.34 billion), according to [Bain & Company](#). That's quite an increase from 2014, when GMV was RMB81 billion (\$11.72 billion).

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**Total 11/11\* Retail Sales in China, 2014-2019**  
billions of Chinese yuan renminbi

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Note: \*a promotional shopping event that occurs annually on or around Nov 11, also known as Singles' Day

Source: Bain & Company, "Will COVID-19 Change Singles Day?" Oct 27, 2020

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## Exclusive Launches

While deals and savings are still top of mind for consumers when it comes to Singles' Day, new product launches are also driving many to the shopping event this year, where both Alibaba and JD.com are anticipating a huge influx of product debuts and exclusive collections.

One such example is [Taylor Swift's product launch on Tmall](#), which will showcase merchandise for the singer's 2020 album "Folklore," available only in China for a limited time before hitting the market globally. Additionally, the Jordan Brand is using the event to release its new [Air Jordan 6 WMNS "Singles' Day"](#) sneaker.

## A Focus on Payments

Part of this year's event will put the spotlight on Ant Group's Alipay. The Alibaba fintech affiliate's IPO—the world's largest—was originally slated for early November but has since been [suspended](#). Still, the company is betting big at this year's Singles' Day, offering shoppers special promotions and vouchers when they buy from small businesses—most of which suffered huge financial blows due to the pandemic.

## Entertainment, but Make It Virtual

In the past, Alibaba invited celebrities, including Nicole Kidman, Mariah Carey, and Pharrell Williams, to make appearances on 11/11. This year, “retailtainment” will remain at the heart of the festivities, with livestreamed fashion shows and pre-event galas. Alibaba, as well as other major players—JD.com, Pinduoduo, and Suning—have secured partnerships for their shows to be broadcasted on TV and streamed online amid continued social distancing measures.

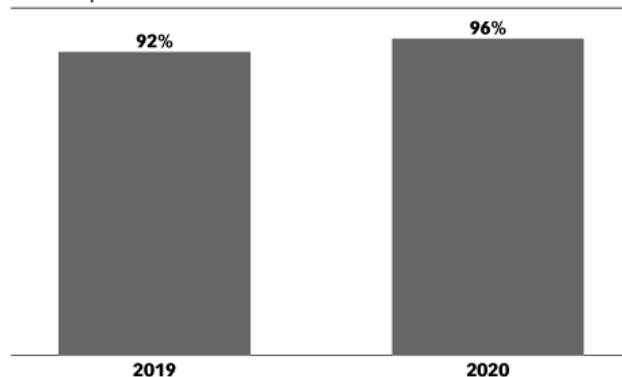
## All Eyes on Tech

Singles’ Day is a must-see for tech watchers, as many of China’s digital giants have used past events to highlight retail tech, including virtual reality (VR) shopping, QR code payments, and livestreaming commerce.

A few years ago, Alibaba introduced a Pokémon Go-like game called “Catch the Cat,” which featured a virtual cat who drew shoppers to brick-and-mortar stores where they could earn points. This year, a new version will be introduced with more ways to customize and interact with the cat.

According to [AlixPartners](#) data published in October 2020, 96% of adults surveyed planned to participate in 11/11 this year, vs. 92% in 2019.

**Adults in China Who Participate in 11/11\*, 2019 & 2020**  
% of respondents



*Note: 2020 n=2,029 ages 18+; \*a digital shopping promotional event that occurs annually on or around Nov 11, also known as Singles’ Day*  
*Source: AlixPartners, “Eastern Promise: Will Singles’ Day 2020 prove to be a beacon of hope for global retail and brands?” Oct 28, 2020*

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What's more, 39% said that they would spend more in 2020, while only 15% planned to spend less.