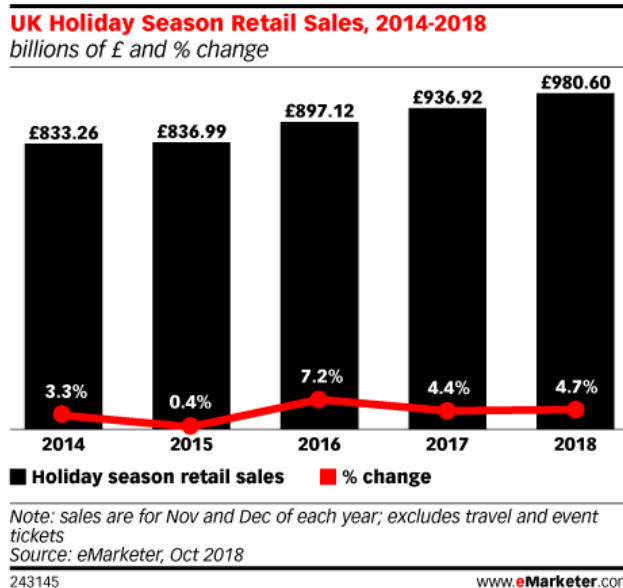# UK Holiday Sales to Hit Nearly £100 Billion

Ecommerce to exceed 20% of all retail holiday sales

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eMarketer Editors

The UK holiday shopping season is on pace to hit two major milestones this year. The holiday season, which eMarketer defines as November and December, is the most important retail period in nearly all major European markets.
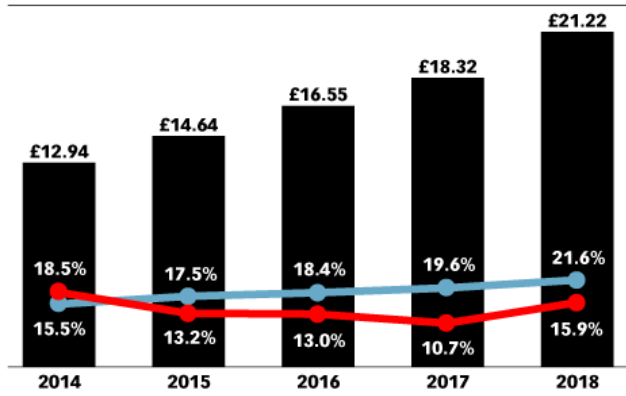

UK Holiday Season Retail Sales, 2014-2018
billions of £ and % change

Year	Holiday season retail sales	% change
2014	£833.26	3.3%
2015	£836.99	0.4%
2016	£897.12	7.2%
2017	£936.92	4.4%
2018	£980.60	4.7%

Note: sales are for Nov and Dec of each year; excludes travel and event tickets
Source: eMarketer, Oct 2018
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This year in the UK, total holiday sales will jump 4.7% to reach £98.06 billion ($126.26 billion). The strong spending will be fueled by low

unemployment, low inflation and strong wage growth in the UK, despite ominous daily headlines warning of Brexit and economic uncertainty.

Though the bulk of spending still takes place in the weeks leading up to Christmas, the holiday shopping period in most European countries starts earlier each year. While Thanksgiving is not a public holiday in the UK, many consumers will shop on Black Friday. And because of the lack of a physical holiday, digital channels play a much bigger role than they do in the US. However, there are signs that UK consumers are losing interest in Black Friday, partly because they feel that significantly better discounts can be found at other times.

"Consumers are increasingly ambivalent about how they buy things. They still spend more in-store than they do online, but they're quick to go to a retailer's website if that's the best option at the time. In the run-up to Christmas, when there are no public holidays in the UK, digital options are particularly appealing," said eMarketer senior analyst Bill Fisher.

UK Retail Ecommerce Holiday Season Sales, 2014-2018
billions of £, % change and % of total retail holiday season sales

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Retail ecommerce holiday season sales	£12.94	£14.64	£16.55	£18.32	£21.22
% change	15.5%	13.2%	13.0%	10.7%	15.9%
% of total retail holiday season sales	18.5%	17.5%	18.4%	19.6%	21.6%

Note: sales are for Nov and Dec of each year; includes products or services ordered using the internet, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; excludes travel and event tickets
Source: eMarketer, Oct 2018
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Another major milestone this year is the percentage of shopping that will be done online. UK holiday ecommerce will jump nearly 16% this

year to £21.22 billion ($27.33 billion). That represents 21.6% of total holiday sales, the highest percentage ever.

"The UK benefits from a robust system for fulfilling orders, allowing for multiple delivery options—including home delivery with package tracking, and buy online, pick up in store," said Fisher.