



SHOP

LOCAL

for the
HOLIDAYS

Join the Movement

Shopping locally during the holiday season is a win-win for both consumers and businesses.

When you shop at your local establishment, you're actually helping more than the owners.

You're also funding community projects and helping keep your region clean and attractive.

That's because larger portions of money spent with local businesses stay in the area compared to when you shop with a large retailer or online. So do your part this holiday season by supporting those who keep our communities going. Shop local and watch your money have a big impact on your area.

SUPPORT WITH YOUR DOLLAR

If you're looking to make a difference this holiday season, consider devoting a specific portion of your shopping budget to small businesses.

While there's no arguing that online shopping can be convenient, spending all of your budget online can cripple your local economy. If you just can't live without the online shopping experience, check to see what kinds of online product offerings your local businesses offer. You can even shop locally online, as local restaurants, artisan shops and businesses have shifted their models during COVID-19 to being able to handle more online orders.

SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORS

According to a study by

Michigan State University, small local businesses are the largest employers nationally, creating two out of every three new jobs, and employ 52% of the nation's employees.

Since 2003, small businesses have added 5.1 million new jobs to the economy. By shopping locally, you can help your business community expand into hiring more employees.

Your dollars can help more people find jobs around your area, which will help your local economy grow stronger and stronger.

SUPPORT GIVING

A 2019 U.S. Small Business Administration survey found that 75% of small business owners donate some portion of their profits — about 6% on average — to charitable organizations each year.

Most times, those charities are headquartered in your community. Every time you shop local, a portion of your dollars may also be donated to a local charity.

This can be critically important during the holiday season, when many charities are in need of funding and volunteers.



Small Business Saturday

During the past 10 years, Small Business Saturday has evolved from an organic idea to a fully developed movement. Your local business owners depend on this special Saturday to market their products and services, while also attracting new customers into their stores.

Sandwiched between Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday is the perfect event for local entrepreneurs and business owners to show the community why their offerings are needed.

If you haven't supported your local business owners on Small Business Saturday, consider starting a new tradition this year and watch as your contributions help your local business community grow.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY BACKGROUND

American Express launched Small Business Saturday in 2010 coming off the heels of the Great Recession. Held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Small Business Saturday was built to encourage people to "shop small"



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and bring more holiday shopping exposure to small businesses across the country.

In 2019, shoppers came together to support their local communities more than ever. The 10th Annual Small Business Saturday hit a record high with an estimated \$19.6 billion in reported spending.

The next Small Business Saturday is Nov. 28, 2020, so be ready to get out there and show your support.

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY STATISTICS

Your support can have a big impact. Check out these statistics from the Small Business Administration.

- There are 28.8 million small businesses in the country.
- Small businesses account for 99.7% of all businesses in the U.S.
- Small businesses accounted for 64% of new jobs created in the U.S. between 1993 and

2011.

• Franchised small businesses employ roughly 8 million people, and make up 40% of all American retail jobs.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

One of the best ways you can help local businesses is not waiting until Small Business Saturday to open your wallet. Get out and shop or dine at a local small business, and don't forget to invite friends to shop

with you.

Your local business owners depend on busy weekends throughout the year to fund their dreams. By showing your support, you can help them keep their businesses afloat, hire more employees and keep your local business community strong.

Find new small businesses in your community through the American Express Shop Small Map at ShopSmallNow.com.

Support Artisans and Eateries

Small businesses across America have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As shopping restrictions have been put in place across the country, local businesses have found themselves getting creative in selling their goods.

One of the best ways you can support your local business community is by purchasing items from local artisans and restaurants.

SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISANS

Some of the most talented people in your community are artisans creating handmade — or even customized — gifts for people on your shopping list.

You may find artisans partnering with local businesses to sell their products at a storefront versus opening up their own display space. When you shop locally, you give these artisans the exposure and financial support they need to grow their business.

SUPPORT LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND FOOD TRUCKS

Can't decide what to eat this weekend? Search your local



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newspaper or Facebook restaurant groups to find great local options versus settling for chain establishments.

Local food trucks are also an option for enjoying unique cuisine while also supporting small business owners in your community.

These businesses have seen an uptick in business due to their flexibility in being able to

set up at various sites.

Keep your eye out on social media for where food trucks are setting up during the holiday shopping season, and show your support by buying your meals locally.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

What can you expect when you shop with local artisans and restaurants? Great custom-

er service, for one. Many shoppers complain about customer service at the big chain stores during the holidays due to retail employees often being stretched too thin in their work schedules.

With local businesses, you can expect personalized customer service along with the unique food or items you'll find. That's because great cus-

tommer service is the lifeblood of a small business owner.

They are depending on referral business from you and your community members. Many times, small business owners are able to craft and personalize products for their customers. This level of customization is another aspect of great customer service that is so critical for small businesses to deliver.

Volunteer Locally

The holiday season is among the busiest for your local small businesses. One of the most helpful things you can offer to make sure they have a successful end-of-year is you.

Consider volunteering with your local small business or nonprofit offering your expertise to help them grow or serve the community. Depending on what kind of company they run, your local small business owner can always use some type of free help.

Whether it's helping out in the store or offering to make deliveries, there are many ways you can help your small business or nonprofit have a great holiday shopping season.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Here are some questions to consider before offering your services to a small local business or nonprofit organization:

- Do you want to work alongside people or be more of an individual contributor?
- Do you prefer a virtual engagement or something more in the field?
- What specific skills or experience can you bring to the table?
- What type of business or nonprofit would you like to support?



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- Do you know anyone who may be able to give you an opportunity in a business or nonprofit?

GET SOME EXPERIENCE

Are you in college looking for some wintertime work? Approach your local small business or nonprofit about possible internship or volun-

teer roles. You may be able to find some valuable experience while also making a difference in your community.

Nonprofits and other organizations are often seeking people who can help them in specific areas like fundraising, marketing or finances. If you have some of these skill sets — as well as the time to build up

your resume — consider pitching your services today.

BE REALISTIC

Before committing to volunteering within your community, make sure you have the time available to fulfill your responsibilities. Understand what is expected of you and if there will be a specific sched-

ule outlined for your assistance.

Especially during the holiday season, you may find yourself too busy to devote too much time to a steady commitment. Be transparent about what you can offer and keep an open line of communications going with your local business or nonprofit.

Shop Local for Holiday Meals

How do you envision your big family Christmas meal this holiday season? Does it involve a piping hot turkey surrounded by fresh cranberry sauce, carrots and salad? For dessert, are you seeing delectable pies featuring delicious local ingredients and toppings?

If so, then your best bet is to shop local farmer's markets and grocers to give your guests the experience — and the meal — that they deserve. Owners of these establishments depend on local farmers for their produce and meats, ensuring that shoppers can find the freshest, most organically produced ingredients for their special meals.

When you shop locally for your food this holiday season, you're supporting small business owners and farmers in driving access to healthy, fresh items for your community.

THINK FRESH

We all know that fruits and vegetables contain the most nutrition when they are fresh and ripe. So, when you're out shopping for your big Christmas meal, why not shop locally at your farmer's market or organic food mar-



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ket for the perfect ingredients?

Delight your guests with fresh, roasted vegetables or organically raised beef this holiday season. You can even find flowers and artistic table-toppers from local flower shops or artisans to help brighten up your dining room table for your meal.

Fresh is always better, and

your local businesses are able to deliver some of the best food and decorations for your holiday festivities.

LOCAL FARMER'S MARKETS

One of the best places to find fresh local food is your local farmer's market, which are found to have a positive effect on total agricultural

sales across the country, according to EcoWatch, an environmental news outlet.

The Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture advises that because food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to your plate, it's actually more environmentally friendly to shop for your food locally. That's because food

transportation requires the use of large amounts of fossil fuels which causes air pollution and trash buildup from extra packaging.

Keep this in mind when you're considering shopping locally or at a chain. Every time you support your local market or grocer, the farmers and business owners in your area will benefit.

Don't Forget your Pets

Pet owners across the world are sure to purchase gifts for their favorite furry friends this holiday season. Pets, after all, offer us companionship and humor throughout our lives. So, why wouldn't they make your holiday shopping list?

Odds are, you've got a great local business in your community that is ready to spoil your cat or dog this holiday season. Hunting down gifts for your dog or cat can be as simple as dropping into a local pet shop or finding out what they have online.

PETS ARE PART OF THE FAMILY

A recent survey by Rover, an online pet store, surveyed 2,000 dog and cat owners in the U.S. and came away with these results:

- 80% of pet owners plan to purchase a gift for their pets this season.
- 68% of owners plan to buy multiple gifts for their pets.
- 55% of owners plan to spend at least \$25 on their pet for holiday gifts.
- 20% of pets will receive more gifts than human members of the family.
- 77% of owners said they will include their pets on holiday family traditions.



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Given these numbers, there's no doubt pets will be spoiled by their owners this year. If you fall into this category, remember that shopping at your local pet shop can actually keep money in your community and pay for things like dog parks and other infrastructure needed

by the pet owner community. Local businesses in this space are depending on customers like you to keep their businesses thriving for years to come.

GIVE THE GIFT OF GROOMING

If you have a special pet in

your life, maybe a custom grooming is the best gift you can give. Check in with your local pet grooming shop to see what kinds of services they offer. There may be opportunities to pamper your pet with a wash and conditioning, as well as a nail trimming or haircut.

You may also be able to purchase special shampoos and conditioners that allow you to do your grooming from home. Check online to see what your local pet groomers offer to make your shopping experience convenient, while also supporting your local small business community.

How to Safely Visit Festivals and Events

With the impact COVID-19 has made on our social lives, many of us are excited to head back out to gatherings in our region. These can include concerts, sporting events, festivals or farmer's markets.

Given the current climate around the COVID-19 pandemic, many festivals and events may be canceled this year, so be sure to stay up to date on festival social media pages for the most relevant news.

If you do have events planned in your community, there are many reasons to be enthusiastic. But there are also many important factors that we should consider before heading out the door.

Keep an eye out for local festivals and events leading up to the holiday season. These are great places to support local businesses while also getting some items

crossed off your shopping list.

CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

With the COVID-19 pandemic, you can't be too careful when it comes to attending public festivals or events. Follow these recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to make sure you stay safe:

- Practice frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub your hands until dry.
- Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid handshakes, fist bumps and high-fives at meetings and sporting events.
- Use of cloth face coverings, especially

in times when physical distancing is difficult or during times when you may raise your voice.

COVID-19 RISK FACTORS

According to the CDC, the risk of COVID-19 spreading at events and gatherings increases as follows:

Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events and gatherings.

More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not share objects and come from the same local area.

Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.

Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.