

Consumer Spending

Listeners' Purchasing Habits Reflect Lifestyles

NPR listeners seek products and services that they perceive will enhance their quality of life. At times, this entails a sense of indulgence. Always, NPR listeners are more deliberate consumers than the average American.



Shopping at both big-box and luxury retail stores.

NPR listeners exhibit extreme diversity in their shopping patterns. Defying easy stereotypes, they hardly shun big-box retail establishments—to the contrary, more than half shopped at Walmart in the past three months, and 46% shopped at Target. The popularity of these stores, along with places like Costco and Bed Bath & Beyond, demonstrates that NPR listeners are practical and savvy consumers, and appreciate value.

At the same time, their affluence also makes them much more likely to visit stores that cater to a higher-end clientele. These include, for example, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Crate & Barrel, Macy's and Pottery Barn.

Luxury department stores like Nordstrom's and Saks Fifth Avenue are also popular among a particularly wealthy subset of the NPR audience.

Listeners are fond of e-commerce.

Listeners don't limit their purchasing to physical establishments. They are significantly more likely than the general population to benefit from the convenience of Online shopping; 56% have done so in the past year. This behavior extends to nearly all product and service categories, including airline tickets, clothing and apparel, tickets to performances, and computer software.

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Apparel. NPR listeners spend more on apparel than the average American. This is especially true for men's clothing, reflecting the audience's slightly male skew. Purchasing data for women's clothing more closely reflects the American average (though listeners are more likely to buy women's raincoats and parkas than one might expect).

Insurance. The vast majority of NPR listeners purchase auto insurance, and four in five also have homeowners insurance. Fifty-nine percent (59%) have medical insurance from their place of work. Also, listeners are 22% more likely than the national average to hold some form of life insurance.

Books. In addition to spoken word, NPR listeners have an appreciation for the written word. Listeners are more likely to purchase books in almost all genres. The most popular categories included novels (29%), mysteries (17%), and children's books (17%).

Music. Forty-five percent (45%) of all NPR listeners purchased music in the past year. Classic rock, country music, alternative, classical, and jazz are the most popular genres.

Toys. Thirty-four percent (34%) of NPR listeners bought toys or games in the past year. Listeners favor board games, educational toys and games, and toys and games that are electronic in nature.

Vehicles. NPR listeners are more likely to spend more than the average American when purchasing an automobile. Ford is the most popular manufacturer (21%), followed by Toyota (19%), Chevrolet (18%), and Honda (17%).

NPR listeners are more likely than the average American to favor imported automobiles. The NPR audience has an especially high concentration of imported luxury car owners, including Mercedes or Volvo.

Alcohol. NPR listeners enjoy consuming alcohol, and do so more than the average American. In the last 6 months, 50% drank beer, 49% drank wine, and 50% consumed distilled liquor.

Fast Food. NPR listeners are as likely as the average American to eat at fast food restaurants. Significant portions of the NPR audience ate at McDonald's (52%) and Burger King (31%) in the past six months. Listeners are more likely than average to prefer eating at Subway and Panera Bread, and they are big fans of Starbucks.

National Chain Restaurants. NPR listeners are more likely than the average American to eat out at many of these establishments. Listeners are more likely than others to favor restaurants such as Applebees (27%), The Olive Garden (21%), Outback Steakhouse (14%), and TGI Friday's (12%).

Home Décor & Remodeling. NPR listeners are not shy about making their homes as comfortable as possible. They are 50% more likely than the national average to buy big ticket furniture that costs more than \$2,500, and equally likely to spend more than \$7,500 to remodel their homes. In addition, one in seven listeners used a housekeeping or maid service in the past year.

Financial Products & Services. Like other affluent Americans, NPR listeners pay attention to personal finance. Investments range from IRAs to securities to US savings bonds. In all cases, NPR listeners are more likely to invest than the general public.

Medical Services. Listeners are more likely than the average American to visit a doctor, and do so with greater frequency. They are also more likely to visit certain specialists, such as allergists or internists, and to seek out alternative health care practitioners. (For example, they were 122% more likely to visit an acupuncturist.)