

# CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS – US – 2023

Brands are already a link to preserving customs and traditions.  
Celebrations are important buying occasions; particular holidays dictate  
spending preferences.



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# Customs And Traditions – US – 2023

## This report looks at the following areas:

- Consumers' dominant culture and how this differs by demographics
- The role of culture and heritage in consumers' everyday life
- Influence heritage plays on attitudes and behaviors
- Holidays celebrated, how consumers celebrate and the role of heritage in holiday celebrations
- Overview of current market conditions impacting how consumers approach holiday celebrations
- Competitive strategies to target consumers of various cultures



Brands are already a link to preserving customs and traditions. Celebrations are important buying occasions; particular holidays dictate spending preferences.

## Overview

The US is made up of a variety of cultures and heritages and the population continues to grow more diverse with each generation. For consumers, their cultural heritage is an important part of their lives that they live out in everyday practices and customs. Brands play a pivotal role in helping consumers keep their traditions alive and transmit them to the next generation. Consumers indicate that they would like to see themselves reflected in marketing materials as well as other cultures different from their own, with the majority (58%), indicating that brands need to recognize more holidays from a variety of cultures.

Brands already play a role in how consumers embrace their culture and heritage, **presenting avenues to further enrich and strengthen the bond with customers.** Foods and holiday

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celebrations are two avenues where brands can showcase and educate on how consumers to use their products to keep customs and traditions alive. Winter holidays are most popular, but brands and marketers face a critical juncture due to cautious spending and the evolving post-pandemic "new normal," requiring revisions and support.

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# Report Content

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Outlook on customs and traditions
- Opportunities

## CONSUMER INSIGHTS

### The customs and traditions consumer: fast facts

#### Consumer segments – dominant culture

- Americans fall into three distinct groups based on which culture is most dominant in their lives
- Consumers' cultural heritage influences everyday life
- Consumers' dominant culture impacts customs, traditions and everyday life
  - Graph 1: dominant culture, 2023
- Demographics play a key role in which culture is more dominant – age and race/ethnicity are particularly impactful
  - Graph 2: dominant culture – NETs, by key demographics, 2023
- Profile of heritage culture-dominant consumer segment
- Profile of equal influence consumer segment
- Profile of American culture-dominant consumer segment
- Use authentic cultural cues to make Gen Zs and Millennials take notice
  - Graph 3: dominant culture – NETs, by generation, 2023
- Foster connections with Gen Z
- Help American culture-dominant consumers cherish past memories, local traditions, while appreciating where they are at right now
  - Graph 4: dominant culture – NETs, by age and race/Hispanic origin, 2023
- Little Miss Nostalgia: spotlight on Rakuten
- Support parents' efforts to reclaim their cultural heritage as they pass on traditions to the next generation
  - Graph 5: dominant culture – NETs, by parental status, 2023
- Help parents raise proud children: spotlight on Honest and Lil' Libros

#### The Role of Culture and Heritage

- Stakeholders must consider an increasingly diverse consumer base with growing cultural awareness
- Culturally relevant campaigns are essential for Hispanic, Asian, and Other consumers as they prioritize preserving their cultural traditions

## Customs and Traditions – US – 2023

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- Graph 6: importance of cultural traditions, by race/Hispanic origin, 2023
- Help with the labor of keeping "la cultura" alive: spotlight on Walmart
- Attract younger diverse consumers by being a reliable resource on holiday celebrations
  - Graph 7: views on learning about holiday celebrations of consumers' cultural heritage, by race, 2023
  - Graph 8: views on learning about holiday celebrations of consumers' cultural heritage, by generation, 2023
- Stand out on social platforms with Gen Z by uplifting authentic voices that educate on holiday celebrations
- Transmission of culture/heritage is important for parents, particularly mothers
  - Graph 9: parents' views on culture/heritage transmission to children, by gender and generation, 2023
- Showcase how families celebrate to speak to mothers, but also culturally curious consumers: spotlight on Truist

### Influence of heritage

- Brands are already a part of how consumers connect to their culture and heritage, there's opportunities to deepen customer relationships
  - Graph 10: life aspects on which influence of heritage is most strongly felt, 2023
- Food plays an important role in helping equal influence and American culture-dominant customers connect to their culture and ancestral homelands
  - Graph 11: culture of heritage influences food/recipes, by dominant culture – NETs, 2023
- Help consumers add familiar cultural flavors to holiday meals
- Traditions made simpler
- For consumers whose heritage culture and American culture have equal influence, religion is interlinked with culture and heritage
  - Graph 12: culture of heritage influences religious/spiritual practices, by dominant culture – NETs, 2023
- Mental health-related brands have opportunities to highlight cultural and religious traditions: spotlight on Calm for Día de los Muertos

### Holiday celebrations

- Holidays offer authentic avenues for connection
- Winter holidays are most important, with cautious spending and a post-pandemic "new normal" prompting revisions and need for support
  - Graph 13: holidays typically celebrated, 2023
- Be a part of the season, marking the transition from fall to winter by focusing on the rituals of the seasons
  - Graph 14: ways of celebrating select holidays – gatherings/parties and decorating, 2023
- We are in the new normal; leverage the power of heritage and culture by honoring new and old holiday traditions in a new post-lockdown normal
  - Graph 15: ways of celebrating select holidays, 2023
- Those who celebrate different holidays spend in distinct ways, understanding these nuances helps create personalized messaging
- Winter holidays, Easter and Thanksgiving are times when older consumers, but especially women, prepare a meal to eat at home

## Customs and Traditions – US – 2023

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- Graph 16: prepare a specific food or a meal to eat at home to celebrate winter holidays, Easter, Thanksgiving, by age, 2023
- Graph 17: prepare a specific food or a meal to eat at home to celebrate winter holidays, Easter, Thanksgiving, by gender, 2023
- Holiday marketing materials can address the extra work that women take on: spotlight on the #sharetheload campaign from Ariel India
- When we #SeeEqual, we #ShareTheLoad
- Food-centric holidays give room to food categories and merchandisers to expand the scope of possibility of flavor and personalize flavors
- Women predominantly offer gifts and greeting cards; convenience and guidance will be a top value proposition for busy and unsure consumers
  - Graph 18: ways celebrating winter holidays and Valentine's Day – buying gifts and greeting cards, by gender, 2023
- Remind consumers of the joy of coming together for the holidays, even if it means messy dinner conversations
  - Graph 19: ways of celebrating Thanksgiving and winter holidays – hosting a gathering/party, by gender and age, 2023
- Take the stress out of hosting at home through convenient innovations
- Encourage decorations and festive attire to speak to women and older segments during Halloween and winter holidays
  - Graph 20: ways of celebrating winter holidays – decorate and festive attire, by age, 2023
  - Graph 21: ways of celebrating Halloween – decorate and festive attire, by gender, 2023
- Chances to win can spur holiday decorating: spotlight on Oreo

### Attitudes toward holidays

- Holidays are an important time for consumers to keep their heritage alive; poignant storytelling can foster connections, inclusion
  - Graph 22: attitudes toward holidays (any agree), 2023
- Brands will need to speak to the importance of gathering with family and friends: spotlight on Allegiant
- Parents are focused on transmission and keeping heritage relevant, highlighting this sentiment will resonate with this demographic
  - Graph 23: parents' attitudes toward holidays – children and childhood traditions, 2023
- Consumers are motivated to spend on holiday celebrations, signals an adjustment in how they spend and discern value
  - Graph 24: attitudes toward holidays – costs and spending, 2023
- Holiday marketing messaging can celebrate the memory of loved ones consumers have lost
- Commercials that honor loved ones that have passed create gripping emotional messages: spotlight on Amazon
- There's room for brands and merchandisers to further representation and expand reach during the holidays through pricing and promotions
  - Graph 25: attitudes toward holidays – brands, 2023
- Holiday pop-ups can help with inclusion and representation: spotlight on Indie Wild
- Gen Zs and Millennials are looking for the mainstream to represent their lived realities
  - Graph 26: attitudes toward holidays – brands (any agree), by generation, 2023

## COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

### Marketing, advertising and innovation

- Celebrate the love for all family members, including pets: spotlight on Reddi-Wip's Ugly Christmas Sweater line for pets and owners
- Lean into regional culture to expand reach: spotlight on Heinz collectible sauces

### Opportunities

- Opportunities to celebrate the taste of home cooking: spotlight on Knorr's Taste of Home campaign
- Poignant commercials about the nerves and work of hosting holiday celebrations: spotlight on Coca-Cola's Ramadan commercial
- Celebrate the Beauty of Togetherness This Ramadan | 1st | Coca-Cola
- Demonstrate and encourage shortcuts that do not skimp on flavor
- Pay tribute and highlight regions and regional traditions: spotlight on Triscuit Cracker's petition to become Michigan's unofficial state snack

## THE MARKET

### Market context

- US economic indicators continue to trend positive as inflation cools
- Increases in DPI along helps maintain consumer spend in spite of uncertainty
  - Graph 27: Disposable Personal Income change from year ago, 2019-23
  - Graph 28: Consumer Sentiment Index, 2019-23

### Market drivers

- Increasing diversity and interest in other cultures will result in wider exposure to new customs and traditions and a desire to "sample"
- Although the US will remain White and non-Hispanic dominant, their share of the total population will continue to decline
  - Graph 29: population share (%), by race and Hispanic origin, 2018-28
  - Graph 30: population size (thousands), by race and Hispanic origin, 2018-28
- US population growth is driven by increasing numbers of non-White and Hispanic individuals
- With each generation, the US population becomes more diverse
  - Graph 31: distribution of US generations, by Hispanic origin, 2023
  - Graph 32: distribution of US generations, by race, 2023
- Fast-growing Asian population – Chinese and Indian, in particular – will drive demand for products/traditions associated with these cultures
  - Graph 33: Asian population, by country of origin/heritage, 2022
- Chinese consumers in America
- Indian consumers in America

- Number of immigrants in the US is at an all-time high
  - Graph 34: number of immigrants (thousands) and immigrants as share of the US population (%), 1850 to 2022
- Notes on immigration and data collection
- Expect more secularity in holiday celebrations as majority Christian population declines while unaffiliated and other religion population grows

### APPENDIX

- Market definition
- Consumer research methodology
- Generations
- Abbreviations and terms



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