

# Christmas Spending Boom for Last Minute Shoppers

Research suggests that last-minute Christmas shoppers are set to spend a whopping £9 billion this week in the final run up to Christmas. The survey, conducted by Sainsbury's Bank, predicts a figure of £9.15bn which although high, is actually £446.6m down on last year's figure for the same period.

Of the total, £1.62 million is expected to be spent using credit cards which equates to around 6.54 million shoppers as opposed to

last year's 8.9 million. Men seem most likely to leave their shopping until the last minute spending on average £257 each in the week leading up to Christmas compared to £174 for women (or does this simply mean we're more generous with our gift spending?...)

The average spend per person this week is likely to be £214, whereas London dwellers end up typically spending £279. The annual bout of extravagant spending can have lingering repercussions however, with only 52% of last minute shoppers expecting to pay off their bill by the end of January. Almost 40% allow 2-3 months to pay off their Christmas debt, with the remainder claiming it will take between 4 months and 1 year to pay off – just in time for next Christmas !

So if you're one of the 'last-minuters', what can you do to keep your Christmas shopping expedition as painless as possible? The golden rule is to avoid the crowds. Plan a shopping day when you can either get out early or stay out late. Crowds are usually smaller just as the shops open in the morning, and during the last week of the shopping season you'll find many shopping centres will stay open late – check the opening times. If you plan ahead, you can steal a jump on the crowds and get a lot more done before things start getting really busy...



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