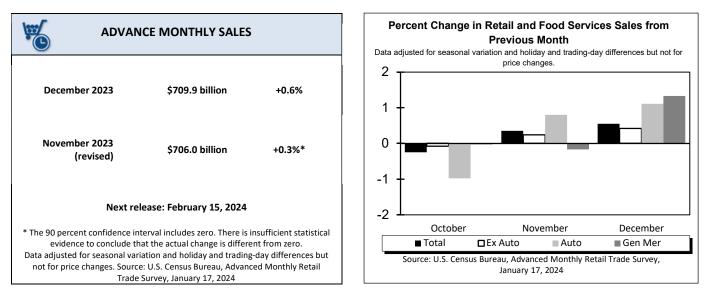# ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES FOR RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICES, DECEMBER 2023

January 17, 2024 — The U.S. Census Bureau announced the following advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December 2023:

ADVANCE MONTHLY SALES

December 2023	$709.9 billion	+0.6%
November 2023 (revised)	$706.0 billion	+0.3%*

Next release: February 15, 2024

* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.
Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, January 17, 2024

Percent Change in Retail and Food Services Sales from Previous Month
Data adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences but not for price changes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advanced Monthly Retail Trade Survey, January 17, 2024

Advance Estimates of U.S. Retail and Food Services

Advance estimates of U.S. retail and food services sales for December 2023, adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were $709.9 billion, up 0.6 percent (±0.5 percent) from the previous month, and up 5.6 percent (±0.7 percent) above December 2022. Total sales for the 12 months of 2023 were up 3.2 percent (±0.4 percent) from 2022. Total sales for the October 2023 through December 2023 period were up 3.9 percent (±0.4 percent) from the same period a year ago. The October 2023 to November 2023 percent change was unrevised from up 0.3 percent (±0.3 percent)*.

Retail trade sales were up 0.6 percent (±0.5 percent) from November 2023, and up 4.8 percent (±0.5 percent) above last year. Nonstore retailers were up 9.7 percent (±1.6 percent) from last year, while food services and drinking places were up 11.1 percent (±2.3 percent) from December 2022.

General Information

The January 2024 Advance Monthly Retail report is scheduled for release on February 15, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. EST. View the full schedule in the Economic Briefing Room: <https://www.census.gov/economic-indicators/>. The full text and tables of this release can be found at <www.census.gov/retail/>.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

The advance estimates are based on a subsample of the Census Bureau's full retail and food services sample. A stratified random sampling method is used to select approximately 4,800 retail and food services firms whose sales are then weighted and benchmarked to represent the complete universe of over three million retail and food services firms. For more information on how data is collected for the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, see our methodology page at: <https://www.census.gov/retail/marts/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Survey Description

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Advance Monthly Retail Trade and Food Services Survey to provide an early estimate of monthly sales by kind of business for retail and food service firms located in the United States. Each month, questionnaires are mailed to a probability sample of approximately 4,800 employer firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey. Advance sales estimates are computed using a link relative estimator. For each detailed industry, we compute a ratio of current-to-previous month weighted sales using data from units for which we have obtained usable responses for both the current and previous month. For each detailed industry, the advance total sales estimates for the current month is computed by multiplying this ratio by the preliminary sales estimate for the previous month (derived from the larger MRTS) at the appropriate industry level. Total estimates for broader industries are computed as the sum of the detailed industry estimates. The link relative estimate is used because imputation is not performed for most nonrespondents in MARTS. For a limited number of nonresponding companies that have influential effects on the estimates, sales may be estimated based on historical performance of that company. The monthly estimates are benchmarked to the annual survey estimates from the Annual Retail Trade Survey once available. The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation and holiday and trading day differences. Additional information on MARTS and MRTS can be found on the Census Bureau website at: <www.census.gov/retail>.

The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data (Project No. P-7504206, Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approval number: CBDRB-FY24-0003).

Reliability of Estimates

Because the estimates presented in this report are based on a sample survey, they contain sampling error and nonsampling error.

Sampling error is the difference between the estimate and the result that would be obtained from a complete enumeration of the sampling frame conducted under the same survey conditions. This error

occurs because only a subset of the entire sampling frame is measured in a sample survey. Standard errors and coefficients of variation (CV), as given in Table 3 of this report, are estimated measures of sampling variation.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the percent change estimate is +1.2 percent and its estimated standard error is 0.9 percent, then the margin of sampling error is ±1.753 x 0.9 percent or ±1.6 percent, and the 90 percent confidence interval is –0.4 percent to +2.8 percent. If the interval contains 0, then one does not have sufficient evidence to conclude at the 90 percent confidence level that the change is different from zero and therefore the change is not statistically significant. Estimated changes shown in the text are statistically significant unless otherwise noted. For a monthly total, the median estimated coefficient of variation is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value ±1.753 x CV x (the estimated monthly total). The Census Bureau recommends that individuals using estimates in this report incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error could affect the conclusions drawn from the estimates.

Nonsampling error encompasses all other factors that contribute to the total error of a sample survey estimate. This type of error can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, mistakes in the recording and coding of data, and other errors of collection, response, coverage, or processing. Although nonsampling error is not measured directly, the Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the process to minimize this type of error.

Weather Information
For information on the impact of weather events on the compilation of this report, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on our website at:
<www.census.gov/retail/marts_weather_faqs.html>

RESOURCES

The Rest of the Consumer Spending Story
Retail and services together represent what's commonly referred to as consumer spending. Quarterly Services Survey (QSS) revenue comprises roughly 2/3 of the personal consumption expenditures component of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The third quarter 2023 Quarterly Services Report was released on November 17, 2023 at 10:00 AM. Learn about historical revenue trends for certain industries going back 15 years and other data, such as in-patient days and discharges for hospitals, by visiting <https://www.census.gov/services/index.html>

API

The Census Bureau's application programming interface lets developers create custom apps to reach new users and makes key demographic, socio-economic and housing statistics more accessible than ever before. <www.census.gov/developers/>

FRED Mobile App

Receive the latest updates on the nation's key economic indicators by downloading the FRED App <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/fred-mobile/> for both Apple and Android devices. FRED, the signature database of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, now incorporates the Census Bureau's 13 economic indicators.

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* The 90 percent confidence interval includes zero. There is insufficient statistical evidence to conclude that the actual change is different from zero.

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Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Total sales estimates are shown in millions of dollars and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS[1] code	Kind of Business	Not Adjusted 12 Month Total 2023	% Chg. 2022	Not Adjusted 2023 Dec.[3] (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	2022 Dec.	Nov.	Adjusted[2] 2023 Dec.[3] (a)	Nov. (p)	Oct. (r)	2022 Dec. (r)	Nov. (r)
	Retail & food services, total	8,332,835	3.2	771,433	712,614	699,313	741,521	684,790	709,890	705,981	703,528	672,336	679,045
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts) ...	6,737,870	3.0	639,545	587,850	569,255	618,540	567,249	573,383	570,975	569,588	548,605	552,090
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	7,678,861	4.7	722,624	660,800	641,187	688,622	627,076	656,721	652,120	647,745	615,394	619,114
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	6,083,896	4.9	590,736	536,036	511,129	565,641	509,535	520,214	517,114	513,805	491,663	492,159
	Retail	7,246,173	2.1	675,361	624,231	606,718	654,825	605,205	615,331	611,454	610,561	587,257	593,927
	GAFO[4]	(*)	(*)	(*)	138,821	126,459	167,477	137,378	(*)	128,894	128,625	126,720	127,850
441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	1,594,965	4.2	131,888	124,764	130,058	122,981	117,541	136,507	135,006	133,940	123,731	126,955
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers .	1,460,770	3.9	121,138	113,460	118,150	112,803	107,151	124,885	123,460	122,435	113,029	116,342
44111	New car dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	94,947	97,251	95,313	88,870	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4413	Auto parts, acc. & tire stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	11,304	11,908	10,178	10,390	(*)	11,546	11,505	10,702	10,613
442	Furniture & home furn. stores	133,597	-5.4	11,355	11,682	10,461	12,241	12,320	10,783	10,897	10,642	11,313	11,514
4421	Furniture stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,565	5,751	6,686	6,892	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4422	Home furnishings stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
443	Electronics & appliance stores	92,557	0.6	10,751	9,266	7,491	9,876	8,438	7,679	7,702	7,844	6,935	7,002
444	Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers.....................................	499,141	-3.0	37,017	40,030	42,230	39,244	40,925	41,665	41,495	41,554	42,644	42,498
4441	Building mat. & sup. dealers	(*)	(*)	(*)	34,546	36,410	33,610	35,575	(*)	35,541	35,591	36,612	36,487
445	Food & beverage stores........................	985,793	2.5	90,381	84,045	81,984	89,483	83,124	83,124	82,924	82,744	82,093	82,386
4451	Grocery stores	885,292	2.5	79,066	75,086	73,668	78,604	74,506	74,591	74,416	74,262	73,945	74,135
4453	Beer, wine & liquor stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,288	5,853	7,801	6,138	(*)	6,046	6,046	5,896	5,942
446	Health & personal care stores	433,120	8.5	40,372	36,937	38,025	37,277	33,651	36,802	37,310	37,389	33,253	34,094
44611	Pharmacies & drug stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	30,739	32,394	29,878	27,848	(*)	31,239	31,450	27,336	28,358
447	Gasoline stations	653,974	-11.5	48,809	51,814	58,126	52,899	57,714	53,169	53,861	55,783	56,942	59,931
448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	312,725	1.6	41,342	29,227	24,438	39,883	28,645	26,611	26,217	25,958	25,506	25,856
44811	Men's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(*)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
44812	Women's clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,847	3,208	4,660	3,888	(*)	3,372	3,349	3,419	3,426
44814	Family clothing stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	13,037	10,679	16,471	12,582	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
4482	Shoe stores	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,296	2,933	4,476	3,389	(*)	3,222	3,227	3,183	3,326
451	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores	103,235	0.4	12,471	9,458	7,972	12,424	9,432	8,691	8,661	8,544	8,610	8,551
452	General merchandise stores..................	874,680	2.6	92,188	77,095	72,913	89,740	76,177	74,032	73,063	73,184	71,666	72,308
4521	Department stores	132,762	-2.7	16,633	12,305	10,341	17,292	12,816	10,927	10,611	10,835	11,235	11,179
4529	Other general merch. stores....	(*)	(*)	(*)	64,790	62,572	72,448	63,361	(*)	62,452	62,349	60,431	61,129
45291	Warehouse clubs & supercenters................................	(*)	(*)	(*)	55,066	53,721	61,810	54,168	(*)	53,514	53,454	51,941	52,641
45299	All oth. gen. merch. stores............	(*)	(*)	(*)	9,724	8,851	10,638	9,193	(*)	8,938	8,895	8,490	8,488
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	185,066	3.2	16,404	15,476	16,396	15,670	14,513	15,772	15,657	15,703	14,752	14,685
454	Nonstore retailers	1,377,320	8.0	142,383	134,437	116,624	133,107	122,725	120,496	118,661	117,276	109,812	108,147
4541	Elect. shopping & m/o houses	(*)	(*)	(*)	124,290	106,714	121,274	111,915	(*)	108,931	107,358	99,324	97,742
722	Food services & drinking places	1,086,662	11.3	96,072	88,383	92,595	86,696	79,585	94,559	94,527	92,967	85,079	85,118

(*) Advance estimates are not available for this kind of business.   (NA) Not available   (a) Advance estimate   (p) Preliminary estimate   (r) Revised estimate

(S) Estimate does not meet publication standards because of high sampling variability (coefficient of variation is greater than 30%), poor response quality (total quantity response rate is less than 50%), or other concerns about the estimate's quality.

(1) For a full description of the NAICS codes used in this table, see <https://www.census.gov/naics/>.

(2) Estimates are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variation and for holiday and trading day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-13ARIMA-SEATS program. The factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted estimates shown in this table. Year-to-date seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated. Adjustment factors and explanatory material can be found on the Internet at <http://www.census.gov/retail>.

(3) Advance estimates are based on early reports obtained from a small sample of firms selected from the larger Monthly Retail Trade Survey (MRTS) sample. All other estimates are from the MRTS sample.

(4) GAFO represents firms which specialize in department store types of merchandise and is comprised of furniture & home furnishings (442), electronics & appliances (443), clothing & accessories (448), sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and book (451), general merchandise (452), office supply, stationery, and gift stores (4532).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, January 17, 2024. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 2. Estimated Change in Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services, by Kind of Business

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, Monthly Retail Trade Survey, and administrative records.)

NAICS code	Kind of Business	Percent Change[1]					
		Dec. 2023 Advance from --		Nov. 2023 Preliminary from --		Oct. 2023 through Dec. 2023 from --	
		Nov. 2023 (p)	Dec. 2022 (r)	Oct. 2023 (r)	Nov. 2022 (r)	Jul. 2023 through Sep. 2023	Oct. 2022 through Dec. 2022
	Retail & food services, total	**0.6**	**5.6**	**0.3**	**4.0**	**1.0**	**3.9**
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	0.4	4.5	0.2	3.4	1.0	3.3
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.7	6.7	0.7	5.3	1.2	5.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	0.6	5.8	0.6	5.1	1.3	4.7
	Retail	0.6	4.8	0.1	3.0	0.7	3.0
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.1**	**10.3**	**0.8**	**6.3**	**0.8**	**6.6**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers ...	1.2	10.5	0.8	6.1	0.7	6.4
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**	**-1.0**	**-4.7**	**2.4**	**-5.4**	**-1.6**	**-7.4**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**-0.3**	**10.7**	**-1.8**	**10.0**	**-0.2**	**7.0**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**.....................................	**0.4**	**-2.3**	**-0.1**	**-2.4**	**0.1**	**-3.3**
445	**Food & beverage stores**...........................	**0.2**	**1.3**	**0.2**	**0.7**	**0.8**	**0.9**
4451	Grocery stores	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.6
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**-1.4**	**10.7**	**-0.2**	**9.4**	**1.8**	**10.1**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**-1.3**	**-6.6**	**-3.4**	**-10.1**	**-1.7**	**-8.5**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**1.5**	**4.3**	**1.0**	**1.4**	**0.5**	**1.8**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**0.3**	**0.9**	**1.4**	**1.3**	**0.7**	**0.0**
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	**1.3**	**3.3**	**-0.2**	**1.0**	**0.2**	**1.9**
4521	Department stores	3.0	-2.7	-2.1	-5.1	-2.0	-4.2
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**0.7**	**6.9**	**-0.3**	**6.6**	**3.1**	**5.9**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**1.5**	**9.7**	**1.2**	**9.7**	**1.8**	**8.7**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**0.0**	**11.1**	**1.7**	**11.1**	**2.8**	**10.2**

(p) Preliminary estimate   (r) Revised estimate

(1) Estimates shown in this table are derived from adjusted estimates provided in Table 1 of this report.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, January 17, 2024. Table 3 provides estimated measures of sampling variability.
     Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at
     <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.

Table 3. Estimated Measures of Sampling Variability and Revision to Advance Estimates Dec. 2023

(Estimates are shown as percents and are based on data from the Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey and Monthly Retail Trade Survey)

NAICS Code	Kind of Business	Median CV [1] for Current Mo. (%)	Median standard error [1] for Percent change			Revision for month-to-month change [2]	
			Previous Mo. to Current Mo.	Previous Qtr. to Current Qtr.	Current Mo. to same Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	Retail & food services, total	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.2
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts)	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. gasoline stations)	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Total (excl. motor vehicle & parts & gasoline stations)	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.1
	Retail, total	**0.8**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.0**	**0.1**
441	**Motor vehicle & parts dealers**	**1.6**	**0.8**	**0.4**	**1.0**	**0.2**	**0.1**
4411, 4412	Auto & other motor veh. dealers	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.1
442	**Furniture & home furn. stores**................	**3.0**	**1.8**	**0.8**	**1.7**	**-0.4**	**0.6**
443	**Electronics & appliance stores**	**2.2**	**0.9**	**0.4**	**1.0**	**0.4**	**0.6**
444	**Building material & garden eq. & supplies dealers**..................................	**2.6**	**0.8**	**0.5**	**1.1**	**-0.2**	**0.2**
445	**Food & beverage stores**.........................	**0.7**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.5**	**-0.1**	**0.2**
4451	Grocery stores	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.3
446	**Health & personal care stores**	**3.2**	**0.5**	**0.3**	**0.7**	**0.1**	**0.3**
447	**Gasoline stations**	**1.4**	**0.4**	**0.3**	**0.5**	**0.0**	**0.6**
448	**Clothing & clothing accessories stores**	**2.9**	**0.9**	**0.6**	**1.3**	**-0.1**	**0.3**
451	**Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, & book stores**	**2.4**	**1.2**	**1.0**	**1.6**	**0.3**	**0.4**
452	**General merchandise stores**...................	**1.5**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.0**	**0.1**
4521	Department stores	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1
453	**Miscellaneous store retailers**	**5.3**	**2.4**	**1.3**	**2.5**	**0.4**	**0.7**
454	**Nonstore retailers**	**2.0**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.9**	**-0.1**	**0.4**
722	**Food services & drinking places**	**3.5**	**0.9**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**0.0**	**0.3**

(1) Estimated measures of sampling variability are based on estimates not adjusted for seasonal variation or holiday or trading day variation. Medians are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

(2) These columns provide measures of the difference between the advance-to-preliminary and preliminary-to-final estimates of month-to-month change for the same pair of months as measured by the Advance sample and MRTS sample. The average and median revisions are based on estimates for the most recent 12 months.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Advance Monthly Retail Trade Survey, January 17, 2024. Additional information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, sample design, and definitions may be found at <www.census.gov/retail/how_surveys_are_collected.html>.