



Christmas 2020

5 Insights on Consumers' Holiday Celebrations

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, many were sceptical over its long term impact on daily life - and few could have predicted that the majority of the world would be living with its consequences come Christmas.

Of course, as time went on and the longevity of the situation became clear, Christmas became an even greater beacon of hope - one that would hopefully bring a ceasefire, if you will, and restrictions would be temporarily paused to allow us to celebrate with our loved ones.

For many though, this wasn't the case. So what was Christmas 2020 like for consumers? Here are five key insights that brands need to know...

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We celebrated at home in a very small group. Because of the corona situation, we didn't want to meet anyone to protect ourselves. So the three of us celebrated at home. Certainly not as nice as in the past few years, but it can't be changed.

Male, 39, Germany

“

I was sad because for 23 years, we always celebrated holidays with the whole family sitting at my grandmother's Christmas Eve table, for the first time it did not happen because of restrictions. I felt bad that I couldn't be with all the people close to me.

Female, 23, Poland



1) Expectation vs Reality

When asked prior to the festive period, two-thirds of consumers expected their Christmas celebrations to be different from previous years.

Those in Germany and the UK were prepared for the most change - most likely due to the sudden lockdowns and strict tier systems announced for them in December. Germany was predicting the biggest difference at 73%.

However, when asked after Christmas how different their celebrations really were, the UK came out top. 83% of Brits said their plans were impacted by the pandemic, which was also much higher than predicted.

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We normally have family over for Christmas dinner but this year decided it was not worth the possible risk to health. We also usually go to family on Boxing Day for a big family meal but were unable to this year due to Coronavirus.

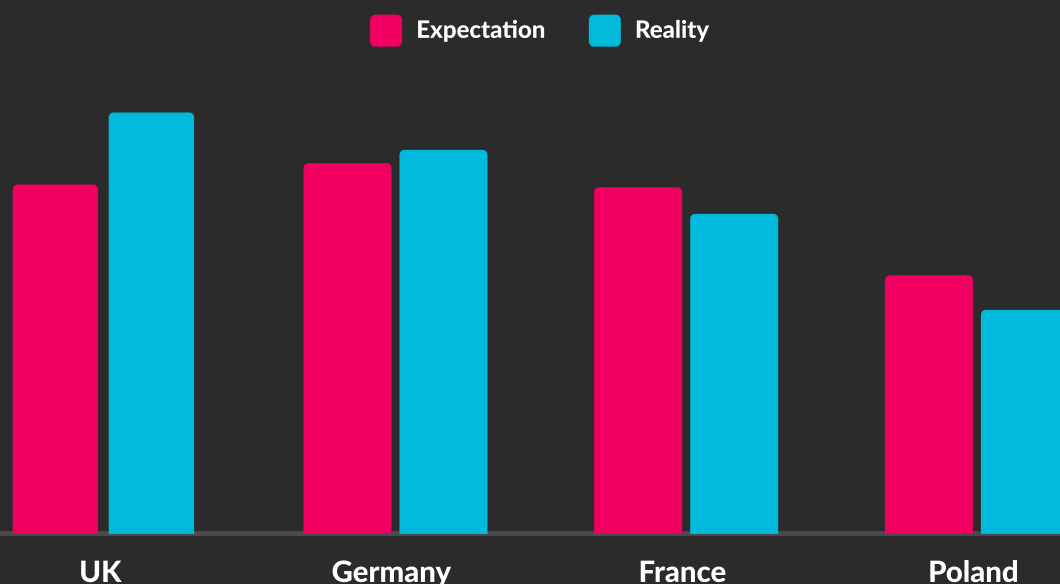
Male, 20, UK

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At first we thought it was not possible to go to Germany for the holidays. Fortunately, we were able to leave with a negative test in our pocket. We didn't go to mass as we usually do. We did not have a big party with the whole family.

Female, 32, France

DID COVID-19 IMPACT CONSUMERS' CHRISTMAS 2020 PLANS?



Countries like Poland and France saw less change than they expected. Although these consumers still made a point to avoid socialising, they were actually able to see more friends/family than initially planned.

Generally speaking, the biggest change to most people's Christmas came down to who they were able to see and celebrate with.

But people made sure to make the most of the situations as is evident through the photos that our bees shared with us. Whether alone or in the company of others - the vast majority still tried to create the Christmas spirit and enjoy as much as the situation allowed.

“

We did not visit a Santa grotto. we did not have all the family for christmas dinner we usually host 12 and only did 6. Shopped online more. Stayed at home more rather than going to carnival and events or meals out

Female, 47, UK

“

The only negative thing was the stress that I created myself. But in the end my wife and I were be happy. Everyone was happy. It was nice that the gifts weren't in the foreground. It is also wonderful that we saw the tree ourselves in advance.

Male, 40, Germany



2) Feeling festive

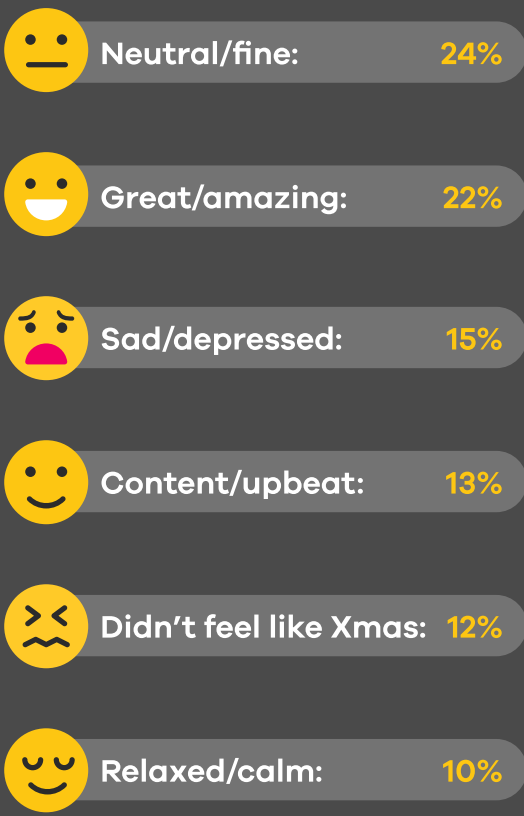
The collective attitude to ‘make the most of it’ translated into mood. When talking to our bees about their Christmas experience there were significantly more mentions of feeling fine, positive, great, amazing as compared to sad and anxious.

There was notably less stress and anxiety during this period than the rest of 2020. However, there’s one group of consumers who found Christmas to be far more enjoyable than others - those with pets.

With so much time spent at home last year, the petcare industry saw a huge boost - with record numbers of people bringing in new furry family members. This has actually had a knock-on effect on Christmas - with pet parents experiencing far more positive emotions over the festive period.

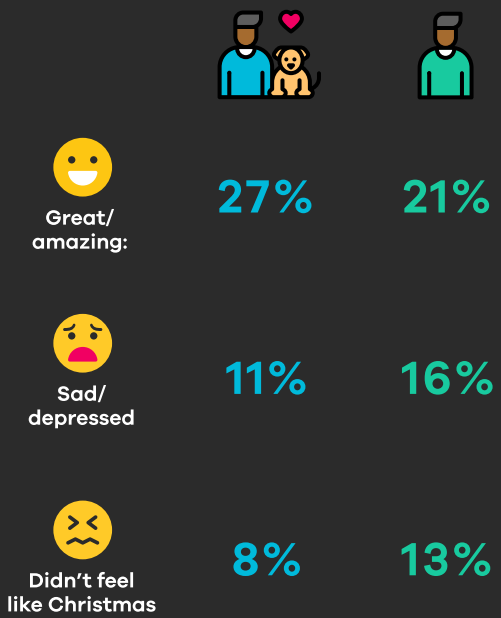
When asked how they felt about their Christmas celebrations, using their own words, they were more likely to experience emotions like great, amazing, content, relaxed, etc than their pet-free counterparts. They were also significantly less likely to be feeling neutral.

OVERALL, HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS LAST MONTH?



HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS LAST MONTH?

PET-PARENTS VS NON PET-PARENTS



There's a lot of research to suggest that having pets can improve one's mental health and reduce stress and anxiety - and clearly, they've been a saving grace for many during this difficult and unstable time.

People love to spoil their pets; over half bought gifts for them, and of them, a whopping 73% even wrapped them like they would any other Christmas present. These consumers were also more likely to have kept their budget the same as the previous year - whether their overall finances were impacted is a different question - being able to treat their pets is a high priority and spending the day with them clearly made a world of difference.

“

Despite everything, I found it very beautiful. I was able to spend a lot of time at home with my closest family. However, the constant Coronavirus issue always remained in the back of our minds, as we could not see a large part of our family.

Male, 24, Germany

“

If I am to be honest I felt tired but satisfied. Seeing the smile on the children's faces and I was overwhelmed with joy. Besides, I like to sing Christmas songs and then the work in the kitchen is better off.

Female, 31, Poland



3) Food and drink remained a high priority

For many, Christmas brings the ability to indulge in ways that at any other time of year would be simply too decadent. Both in terms of products and quantity!

Thankfully though, even in 2020, we were still able to hold on to this - in fact, the number one way people celebrated was with festive food and drinks.

What people actually consumed varied, mainly based on cultural differences on what's considered festive food - for example, the UK chose turkey; Germany and France had other meats, and Poland were more likely to eat fish.

The UK were also by far the biggest chocolate eaters, and while every market indulged heavily in wine, Germany topped the rest with 44% mentioning it.

Consumers clearly find comfort in food - especially when everything else is so unstable. However, brands need to be careful not to overdo their messaging surrounding emotional connection with the product - instead, they need to focus on this category as a facilitator to build connections between consumers.

78%

ate and drank festive food and beverages



“

We made a raclette for Christmas. In Germany we prepare lots of little things for a raclette. Vegetables, fish and meat to put on the stone above. Then of course there are the standard foods like ham, potatoes and cheese too. As a drink we took a good bottle of white wine and German white beer.

Female, 32, Germany

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Dumplings with cabbage and mushrooms, Russian dumplings, borscht with dumplings homemade, herring in sour cream, Greek-style fish, rolls with salmon, vegetable salad in two ways with corn and the other with peas, bigos, łazanki with mushrooms.

Male, 41, Poland



4) Gifts and shopping

With so much of life moving online this year, it's no wonder that ecommerce has seen a boom. But when it came to Christmas gifting, a lot of people were going in with the mindset of 'preparation', hoping to have a mixture of online and in-store.

But as we know, Christmas shopping is more than just shopping. It's often seen as part of the whole festive experience, going into town centres to see the lights and decorations whilst they shop, which is perhaps why only 36% expected to do it mostly online.

However, when looking at what actually happened, we see that shopping online was in fact the number one way consumers bought Christmas gifts. Particularly in Germany and the UK, where harsher restrictions were introduced in December.

Our data also shows that people spent a lot of time in preparation and considering the gifts they wanted to buy for their loved ones. Both in the run up and when reflecting on the event we see high levels of preparation through their open text conversations with us.

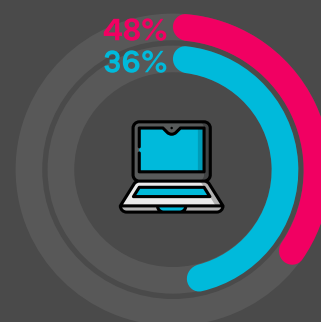
Brands must also start their communications about gifting and gift ideas earlier to capture consumer interest when they are starting to think about it.



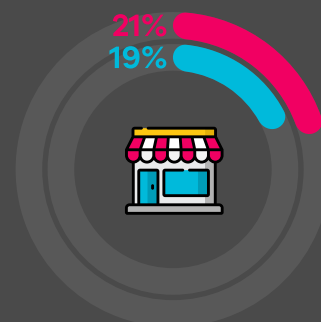
87%
stuck to their
budgets

CHRISTMAS 2021 SHOPPING HABITS

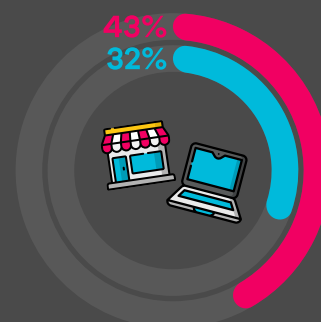
■ Expectations
■ Reality



Mostly online



Mostly in store



Mixture of online
and in store

5) Deck the halls

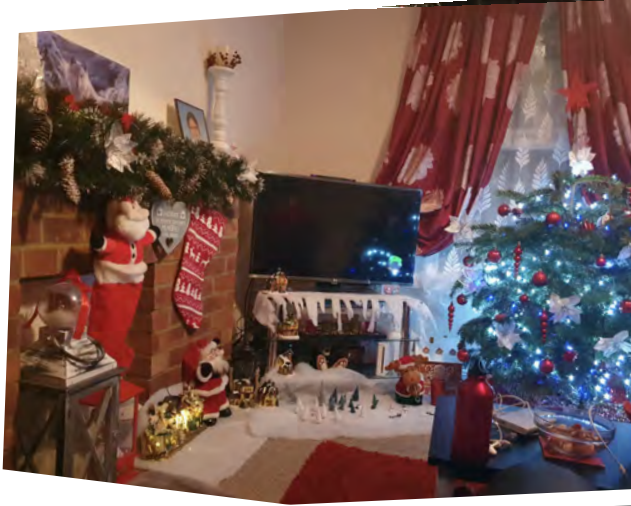
Christmas trees remained a firm favourite when it came to decorations - a tradition that even Covid-19 didn't disrupt. In fact, 73% of consumers we spoke to put up festive decor in their home.

The living room remained the hub for festive cheer - as can be seen from the trees in the photos, but roughly a third of consumers also decorated their entry hall and outdoor areas - despite the majority not hosting parties or welcoming friends and family over.

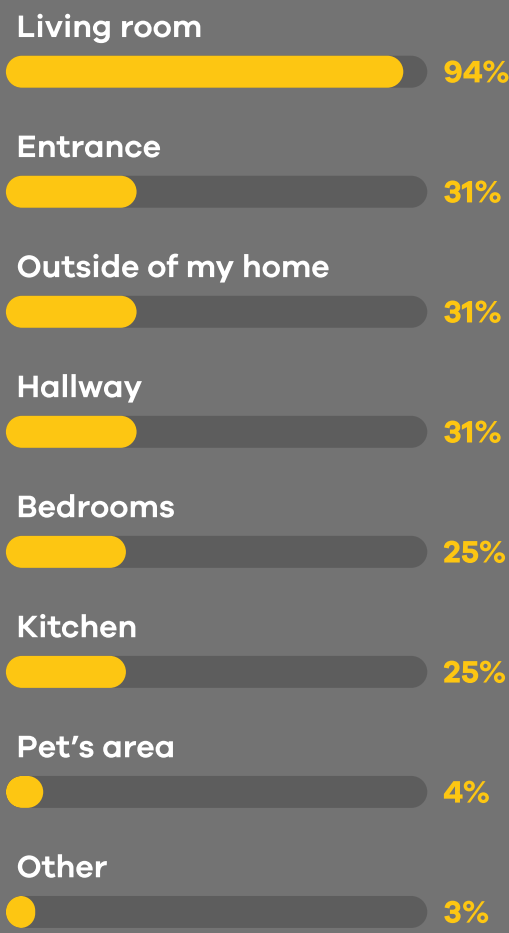
What does this tell us? That decorations aren't just for the visitors, we really do do it for ourselves!

And looking at the country comparison, there are some interesting nuances. In Poland, it's far more common for people to decorate their bedrooms and almost all consumers here put up lights somewhere in their home.

In France, consumers are less likely to decorate rooms other than their living room and entrance, but overall they're the most likely to incorporate garlands into their decor.



WHICH AREAS OF YOUR HOME DID YOU DECORATE?



The UK however is leading the way when it comes to reusable, fake fir trees - a nod to sustainability or simply convenience?

While putting up decorations showed little difference in consumers' emotional response to Christmas 2020, it's clear that decorations are an important part of the tradition. Something that consumers are holding onto to create a sense of normal life.



WHAT DID YOU USE TO DECORATE YOUR HOME?



Lights

84%



Baubles

81%



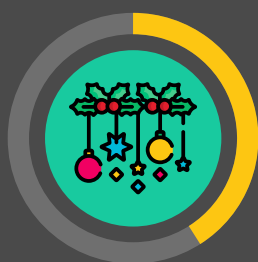
Ornaments

72%



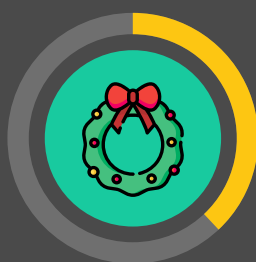
Fake fur tree

53%



Garlands

41%



Wreaths

38%



Real fur tree

38%



Tinsel

35%



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