



# **GIFT SELLERS GUIDE TO GLOBAL HOLIDAYS**

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U.S.-based brands and retailers plan for months to maximize revenue around Black Friday and Cyber Monday. After all, these are the biggest retail shopping holidays of the entire year. But for brands and retailers who are focused on global expansion, Black Friday and Cyber Monday are just the beginning.

Cross border e-commerce requires brands and retailers to stay on top of other global holidays that present opportunities for gift selling. Attention to cultural detail in target markets demonstrates that you are paying attention to what your customers need, year-round.

When it comes to holiday gift selling, it's not just about when to offer special deals, but also what to offer. Brands and retailers need to be cognizant of certain traditions and the types of goods associated with each holiday.

The global e-commerce experts at Flow have compiled this handy reference guide of the most important global gift-selling holidays. Refer back to it and keep in mind that some countries celebrate the same holiday in different ways and even on different dates.

## February 14th: Valentine's Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

U.S., Europe, Japan, South Korea, China, Philippines, Brazil, Belgium, South Africa

### TRADITIONS

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is originally a Western, Christian-based feast honoring one or two early saints named Valentinus. Valentine's Day is now recognized as a cultural and commercial celebration of romance and romantic love in many regions around the world.

### GIFTING

Flowers, chocolates, greeting cards, jewelry and other tokens of affection are globally popular for this day.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

When it comes to gifts of love, don't forget to offer deals for pets: the NRF estimates that millennials and Gen Z consumers spend more on Valentine's Day for their dogs than on humans!<sup>1</sup>

HAPPY  
Valentine's  
DAY

## March 14th: White Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

Japan, South Korea and Taiwan

### TRADITIONS

White Day was first observed over 30 years ago by Japanese confectionary companies.<sup>2</sup> On Valentine's Day, or Barentain Dei in Japan, women take the lead and indulge their sweetheart with gifts and chocolates.<sup>3</sup> On White Day (March 14), celebrated exactly one month after Valentine's Day, men return the favor.

### GIFTING

The gift can be anything white – chocolate, jewelry, lingerie, flowers. In more recent years, the trend has been leaning towards more high-end luxury items such as designer clothing, bags and high-ticket jewelry items.<sup>4</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Because White Day has now spread to South Korea and Taiwan, brands and retailers must be prepared to offer e-commerce deals in multiple languages and currencies.<sup>5</sup>

## First Sunday of August: Friendship Day

# FRIENDSHIP day

### POPULAR REGIONS

India

### TRADITIONS

India's growing youth and aspiring middle-class consumer base have embraced this holiday, which celebrates the importance of having a best friend. The tradition is to spend the day sharing memories of the times spent together and catching up with their lives over a cup of coffee, sharing dinner and exchanging gifts.<sup>6</sup>

### GIFTING

Typically, friends — platonic or romantic — exchange the popular friendship bands, woven hemp or jute bands meant to be tied on your friends' wrists. In recent years, this tradition has expanded to include items such as stuffed animals, personalized mugs or clothing and flowers.<sup>7</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Online retailers often start their Friendship Day campaigns weeks in advance, offering special deals on small but meaningful gift choices. Also, when offering deals to young consumers in India, don't forget to optimize for mobile. WorldPay anticipates that 730 million Indians will be internet users by 2020: 250 million more than in 2016.<sup>8</sup>

## November 11: Singles Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

China, Thailand, Singapore

### TRADITIONS

Singles Day started in the 1990s with college students who were inspired by the date of November 11 – which, when written numerically (11/11), represents four single people. Singles Day is China's version of Valentine's Day for people without romantic partners. It is a time when singles treat each other to dinners and gifts bought online.

### GIFTING

According to ChannelAdvisor, the gift-giving trend for this holiday is leaning more towards high-end items such as electronics, beauty goods, and designer shoes and accessories.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

For brands and retailers, the opportunity to capitalize on this "lonely hearts" holiday is massive: Chinese singles spent a record \$30.8 billion in 2018, the 10th year of this tradition.<sup>9</sup> According to CNBC, the interest in Singles Day is now growing outside of China: Thailand and Singapore also seem to have an abundance of "lonely hearts."<sup>10</sup>

# SINGLES' DAY

## November 20-21: Click Frenzy Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

Australia

### TRADITIONS

Australia's version of Cyber Monday, Click Frenzy Day, started in 2012 as a media stunt by an online retail trade site, Power Retail. The company built a 24-hour sale website called "Click Frenzy" as the country's version of "Cyber Monday." It was the first marathon online shopping event in Australia, and the website almost immediately crashed due to high traffic from deal-seeking shoppers. Held on the third Tuesday of November, Click Frenzy has grown from a publicity stunt to a record-breaking shopping day: in 2015, consumers spent an estimated \$200 million.

### GIFTING

Australian consumers expect deep discounts on such items as electronics, home and beauty products, shoes and apparel and toys.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Brands and retailers who participate in Click Frenzy Day should be prepared to offer deep discounts on items – up to 90% off retail price. Also, be ready for high volumes of web traffic to your localized e-commerce site.<sup>11</sup>

## November: Black Friday

### POPULAR REGIONS

United States, Australia, U.K.

### TRADITIONS

Once considered the official start of the Christmas shopping season in the U.S., Black Friday is the retail name for the day after Thanksgiving. Once upon a time, U.S. consumers would camp out all night and storm the doors of department stores to be the first to grab deep discounts on Christmas gifts. These days, consumers can shop from home: 2018 Black Friday online sales reached an all-time high of \$6.2 billion.<sup>12</sup>

### GIFTING

Adobe notes that computers, tablets, and televisions, and appliances were in highest demand on Black Friday in 2018.<sup>13</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Black Friday has picked up in other countries over the past several years. According to Bloomberg, retailers around the world, from Brazil to France, are now offering deals on Black Friday to take advantage of the U.S. shopping holiday.<sup>14</sup> It's critical that your business is prepared and your website is localized to convert any global traffic into customers to benefit from this key selling holiday.

## November: Cyber Monday

### POPULAR REGIONS

United States

### TRADITIONS

In 2018, the Monday after Thanksgiving broke previous Cyber Monday retail records, bringing in \$7.9 billion in U.S. sales.<sup>15</sup> In comparison, Black Friday and Thanksgiving Day 2018 brought in \$6.2 billion and \$3.7 billion in revenue, respectively.<sup>16</sup> According to Adobe's Holiday 2018 predictions, actuals, and analysis report, that \$7.9 billion consumer spend on Cyber Monday 2018 reflects a 19.3% year-over-year growth.<sup>17</sup>

### GIFTING

Top sellers on Cyber Monday include TVs and computers.<sup>18</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

In 2018, shoppers on Cyber Monday relied heavily on their mobile devices, which accounted for \$2.83 billion in sales, nearly 36 percent of all sales.<sup>19</sup> This is a good reminder to always make sure your site is mobile friendly. Similar to Black Friday, Cyber Monday is also becoming a popular shopping holiday in global markets, so it's important that your website is localized and ready for this boost in traffic and that your operations and logistics teams are prepared to handle the lift in number of orders.

## December: Hanukkah

### POPULAR REGIONS

U.S., Canada, Israel, Western Europe

### TRADITIONS

Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the festival of lights, is an eight-day religious festival. Traditionally, gift-giving was not part of this holiday, but today, many families observe the lighting of the menorah and the giving of small gifts to young children.

### GIFTING

In some regions, Jewish families turn to online shopping for the basics of a Hanukkah celebrations: candles, menorahs, small toys, crayons, and nonperishable food items.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Search Engine Land points out the challenge of performing a Google search using the many variant spellings of the holiday. "Since Hebrew has its own alphabet, there are numerous spellings that one can use to reference it: Hanukkah, Chanukah, and Channukah are all acceptable spellings of the same holiday."<sup>20</sup> That means brands and retailers must prepare Google Ad campaigns with care.

## December 6: Sinterklaas/St. Nicholas Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

Belgium, Netherlands, Holland

### TRADITIONS

December 6 is the day that Santa Claus, known in Dutch-speaking countries as Sinterklaas, brings gifts to good children. Traditionally, families host Sinterklaas parties on St. Nicholas' Eve (December 5). Children play treasure hunt games that give clues about where the gifts are hidden. Children follow the clues to find small gifts left by Sinterklaas. Families wait until December 6 to bestow larger "surprise" gifts, also left by Sinterklaas.

### GIFTING

With two days of gifts, brands and retailers get two rounds of gift selling opportunities. Popular gifts for children include construction toys, chocolates, board and card games and craft supplies.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Consumers who celebrate Sinterklaas often agree upfront with family members about how much they'll spend on gifts. The average budget is about 100 Euros.<sup>21</sup> The opportunity to offer Sinterklaas gift deals online is significant, with only 20 percent of consumers making online purchases for this holiday, and the remaining 80 percent buying in-store.<sup>22</sup> International businesses that offer timely, significant deals on the toys Dutch parents need could win market share away from brick-and-mortar shops.

## December 25: Christmas Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

With more than 2 billion people around the globe observing Christmas, it may be easier to name the countries that don't have a public holiday: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Djibouti, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Laos, Libya, Mauritania, Mongolia, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen.<sup>23</sup>

### TRADITIONS

In the Christian religion, December 25th is the day to observe the birth of Christ; however, the tradition of gift-giving on this date can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon celebration of the winter solstice, or Yule. Note that in Russia, Serbia and Greece, followers of the Orthodox churches generally celebrate Christmas Day thirteen days later, on January 7.<sup>24</sup> The celebration of Christmas in Mexico begins on December 12th and lasts until January 6th.<sup>25</sup> In the Philippines, one of the most devout Christian nations in Asia, Christmas begins September 1.<sup>26</sup> Since the early 20th century, Christmas has also become a secular family holiday, observed by Christians and non-Christians alike, marked by an increasingly elaborate exchange of gifts.

### GIFTING

In the U.S., gift cards remain a popular choice, especially for younger recipients who prefer to redeem them online.<sup>27</sup> In the U.K., home furnishing and accessories are still the traditional gift choice.<sup>28</sup> In China, it's customary to send decorated apples, a symbol of good luck, as gifts.<sup>29</sup> In Eastern Europe, alcohol, beauty products and fragrances are the top traditional gift choices.<sup>30</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Think With Google noticed an interesting consumer behavior in 2017: more shoppers waited until the last minute, hoping to take advantage of late-stage holiday deals.<sup>31</sup> Online conversions on or near December 15 — widely known as the cutoff date for shipping items in time for Christmas Day — were on par with Black Friday and Cyber Monday in 2017.<sup>32</sup>

## December 26: Boxing Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

Canada, U.K.

### TRADITIONS

In the British Commonwealth, Boxing Day is a national Bank Holiday, as well as a day to spend with family and friends feasting on Christmas leftovers. In recent years, Boxing Day, much like the day after Christmas in the U.S., has become a wildly popular shopping day in the U.K.<sup>33</sup> In countries that observe Christmas, many consumers have this day off from work.

### GIFTING

For consumers who received gift cards or vouchers for Christmas, Boxing Day is their first chance to redeem them. Traditionally, this was done in a physical retail store, but more gift card recipients are now turning to online stores, especially in the U.K.<sup>34</sup> The day after Christmas is also a popular time for both in-store and online sales, making it an opportunity for consumers to find discounts on items that they didn't receive for Christmas.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Online sales have passed in-store sales on Boxing Day in the U.K.<sup>35</sup> Canadian shoppers are still heading to brick-and-mortar stores, according to Global News.<sup>36</sup> To entice them to stay home and click, brands and retailers must present localized offerings in English and French.

## Holidays with variable dates

Because many global holidays are based on various calendars from Lunar to Gregorian, this list of “floating holidays” changes year to year. Brands and retailers will need to monitor annually when these holidays occur and plan their gift-selling campaigns appropriately. Also, keep in mind that some countries celebrate the same holiday at different times of the year.

## January/February: Chinese New Year

### POPULAR REGIONS

China, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Australia

### TRADITIONS

Because this important holiday in Chinese culture follows the Lunar calendar, the Chinese New Year starts in late January or early February, and celebrations last for 23 days. Traditionally, this time of year was used to pray to gods for a good planting and harvest season, but today it is a time to spend with family and friends, exchanging small but symbolic gifts.<sup>37</sup>

### GIFTING

Brands and retailers should note that in Chinese culture, the New Year is on par with Christmas in its calendar importance and gift buying. Popular gift items include beauty products and designer clothing. Red is considered a color of good luck at the start of the new year.<sup>38</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

In China, Alipay – a wallet solution which supports all national debit cards and international credit cards – is the dominant choice for e-commerce transactions.<sup>39</sup>

## Mother's Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

U.K., U.S., France, Mexico, India, Japan Russia

### TRADITIONS

The love for Mom is universal, so brands and retailers should understand that Mother's Day is, too. U.S.-based retailers may associate the holiday with the second Sunday in May; however, in the U.K. and Egypt, Mother's Day is in March.<sup>40</sup> In Russia, Mother's Day is rolled into International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8.<sup>41</sup>

### GIFTING

Regardless of where and when, most regions have the same "go-to" gifts for Mom: flowers, candy, and cards.

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Reliable, timely delivery is essential for Mother's Day, and since it falls on a Sunday in most regions, brands and retailers need to work closely with their last-mile partners on meeting consumers' needs for this day.

## Easter

### POPULAR REGIONS

All countries where Christianity is practiced

### TRADITIONS

Easter is one of the most important holidays on the Christian calendar. This holiday can be a challenge for international retailers, because it falls on a different date each calendar year, and can vary in each country depending on which calendar is followed. For example, in the U.K., U.S., Canada, Mexico and other Western countries that follow the Gregorian calendar, Easter is celebrated on the Sunday after the first full moon following the first day of spring, which means it can occur on any Sunday between March 22 and April 25.<sup>42</sup> However, the Orthodox or Julian calendar, followed by such Eastern nations as Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Romania and Ukraine, differs from the Gregorian calendar by 13 days. This results in a possible date range of anywhere between April 4 to May 8.<sup>43</sup>

### GIFTING

Easter often means church services, family feasts, candy, chocolates, Easter baskets containing sweets, painted eggs and small gifts. Because of Easter's proximity to the Spring Equinox, this is also a time when gifts are associated with the changing of the season and popular choices include new shoes, apparel and accessories, as well as flowers.<sup>44</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

With Easter varying so widely between countries, e-commerce shops must have a clear handle on when each global market celebrates. Also, consider offering special deals based on consumer preferences. The National Retail Federation notes that women will often look for discounts on Easter wares, while men tend to spend at least \$20 more than women.<sup>45</sup>

## Father's Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

U.S., U.K., Canada, Argentina, France, Greece, India, Venezuela, Taiwan, Australia

### TRADITIONS

Traditions: The date when Father's Day is celebrated varies from country to country. It is celebrated in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States on the third Sunday of June. It is also observed in countries such as Argentina, Canada, France, Greece, India, Ireland, Mexico, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, and Venezuela. In Australia and New Zealand Father's Day is on the first Sunday in September. In Thailand, it is celebrated on December 5, which is the birthday of the country's king. Brazilian dads are honored on the second Sunday of August.

### GIFTING

The old trope of giving Dad a necktie for Father's Day has changed significantly. According to the National Retail Federation, top gift choices include clothing, personal care items, sporting goods, and gift cards. Families view Father's Day as a way to spend time with Dad as well: over half of online shoppers in the U.S. said they plan to treat Dad to a special outing such as dinner or brunch.<sup>46</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

Father's Day 2017 showed that one-third (33.8%) of U.S. consumers shopped online for gifts for dad.<sup>47</sup> This is higher than the number of online shoppers for Mother's Day, which came in at 29%.<sup>48</sup>

YOU ARE THE BEST DAD

## Children's Day

### POPULAR REGIONS

China, India, Turkey, U.K., Czech Republic, Portugal

### TRADITIONS

Children's Day is an international celebration intended to bring nations together to promote child welfare. Not all regions view the day as a time for shopping, and it is observed on different dates in different countries. In China, for example, Children's Day falls on June 1, and is a massive opportunity for gift selling. In 2017 alone, the holiday generated more than \$1 billion in online sales in China.<sup>49</sup> In India, Children's Day is observed on November 14th.

### GIFTING

Children's Day is a good opportunity for selling toys, board games and apparel. In India, popular gift ideas include educational toys and games, clothing and family-oriented travel deals.<sup>50</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

India Retailer notes that many e-commerce stores in this country will offer special deals around Children's Day in which the retailer donates a portion of the proceeds from online sales to a reputable children's charity.<sup>51</sup> Not only does this approach raise money for a great cause, but it's also a way to build brand loyalty with millennial consumers, who are more likely to do business with a company that makes charitable contributions a priority.<sup>52</sup>

## Eid-al-Fitr

### POPULAR REGIONS

Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Guinea, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya

### TRADITIONS

Eid Al-Fitr means “festival of breaking the fast.”<sup>53</sup> Because Ramadan is determined by the Lunar calendar, this holiday dates change every year. After 30 days of fasting, prayer and reflection, Eid-al-Fitr is marked by three days of feasts, outdoor festivals and the giving of gifts.

### GIFTING

Popular gifts include new clothing and footwear, as well as a traditional fragrant oil called Oudh.<sup>54</sup> Pashmina shawls are a go-to choice as a gift for women, and a common family gift is a traditional Arabic coffee pot. More recently, modern gift choices have come to include books, spices and specialty foods.<sup>55</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

When entering the Middle Eastern market, keep in mind that consumers in this region are active smartphone users, so mobile optimization of your e-commerce sites is a must.<sup>56</sup> They're also very young: 64% of the population in the United Arab Emirates is under 31, and 75% of the population of Saudi Arabia is younger than 35.<sup>57</sup> As such, it's no surprise that this younger demographic is heavily influenced by social media recommendations and advertising. 75% of Middle Eastern consumers believe that their interactions with brand on social media resulted in making more purchases.<sup>58</sup>

## Late October/Early November: Diwali

### POPULAR REGIONS

India

### TRADITIONS

India's biggest holiday for shopping is Diwali, a five-day celebration known in Indian culture as "the festival of light," marked by firework displays and the exchange of gifts and wishes between families and friends.<sup>59</sup> This holiday is moveable because it follows the Lunar calendar and can fall anywhere from the last week of October to mid-November.

### GIFTING

Traditional gifts include small statues of Indian gods and goddesses, candles, jewelry and watches, spiritual DVDs and gift baskets with candies and other sweets.<sup>60</sup> Mobile e-commerce sales have increased greatly in recent years during the festival, with 70% of Indians reporting they planned to shop using their smartphones during this time, hoping to take advantage of the huge discounts offered by retailers for Diwali.<sup>61</sup>

### E-COMMERCE TIP

The customer journey for consumers in India is changing as more people enter the middle class and have access to the internet. Cross border brands and retailers should work closely with an e-commerce expert on the many ways consumers in this market prefer to be engaged. This can include sending personalized communications via email, digital advertising placements, and of course, providing easy-to-use payment and return options.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

If you are ready to maximize your global e-commerce opportunity and make the most of holiday gift-selling in each country, contact the team at Flow for a demo of our solution. We'd be happy to learn more about your market entry needs and help you to sell your products successfully cross border to consumers everywhere.

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Note from Flow Team: Before starting any marketing campaign targeted to a region or country, we recommend consulting your general counsel to ensure compliance with local laws, rules and regulations.