

February U.S. Retail Sales

Overview

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February retail sales rose 0.2%, which was below expectations and followed a downwardly revised 1.2% decline in January.

2

However, excluding auto & gas, sales rose 0.5% for the month and 3.1% YoY, outpacing inflation. Essential categories led the gains for the month and year.

3

An increasingly uncertain economic outlook, including tariff concerns, has made consumers more pessimistic and could lead to slower sales and economic growth.

Breaking Down U.S. Retail Sales


February retail sales grew 0.2%, which was worse than expected and followed a downwardly revised 1.2% decline in January sales. February spending was on pace with inflation as prices rose 0.2% in the month (CPI). However, excluding auto & gas, sales were up a slightly better than expected 0.5% while core retail sales were up a solid 1%. The latest month's result was led by nonstore retailers, up 2.4%, and essential goods, including increases of 1.7% at health & personal care and 0.4% at food & beverage stores. General merchandise and building materials and garden were both up 0.2%. Discretionary sales were flat to negative, led by a 1.5% drop at food service & drinking places.

On a YoY basis, sales overall and excluding auto & gas grew 3.1%, better than the 2.8% CPI inflation rate in February. YoY trends were similar to the monthly, with discretionary categories largely lower, except for a surprise bounce in furniture & home furnishings, up 5%, while clothing stores saw a 1% gain. Health & personal care led with a 6.7% YoY increase.

Electronics and appliance retailers, department stores and sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument & book stores saw sales decline for both the month and year.

The latest sales were mixed and still reflect soft discretionary spending. The economic environment has become more uncertain, including concerns about tariffs and higher inflation. Though the job market remains relatively strong, consumers have become more pessimistic about the future, which could lead to a further pull-back in discretionary spending and slow the economy.

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Seasonally Adjusted Retail Sales				
Source: U.S. Census, Bloomberg				
February 2025				
	Feb 2025	Feb 2025 (Est.**)	Jan 2025	Feb 2025
	m/o/m	m/o/m	m/o/m	y/o/y
Total Retail Sales	0.2%	0.6%	-1.2%	3.1%
Retail Sales Ex Auto	0.3%	0.3%	-0.6%	3.1%
Retail Sales Ex Auto and Gas	0.5%	0.4%	-0.8%	3.5%
Core Retail Sales*	1.0%	0.2%	-1.0%	4.4%
By Category:				
Furniture & home furnishings	0.0%		-1.2%	5.5%
Electronics & appliance	-0.3%		-1.1%	-5.3%
Building materials & garden	0.2%		-1.9%	-0.7%
Food & beverage stores	0.4%		-0.1%	3.9%
Grocery	0.4%		0.1%	4.3%
Health & personal care	1.7%		-1.1%	6.7%
Gasoline stations	-1.0%		1.3%	-0.3%
Clothing & clothing accessories	-0.6%		-0.7%	1.0%
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument & book stores	-0.4%		-3.1%	-3.0%
General merchandise	0.2%		0.5%	3.4%
Department stores	-1.7%		0.8%	-3.9%
Nonstore retailers	2.4%		-2.4%	6.5%
Food services & drinking places	-1.5%		0.0%	1.5%
Miscellaneous store retailers	-0.3%		0.8%	5.0%

* Excludes sales from auto & motor vehicle dealers, gasoline stations, building materials, food services & drinking places

** Represents Bloomberg monthly sales estimates

Quarterly E-commerce Sales

Quarterly U.S. Retail Sales; Total and E-commerce					
Source: U.S. Census					
Quarter	Retail Sales (\$ millions)		E-commerce	% Change from Same Quarter a Year Ago	
	Total	E-comm	% of Total	Total	E-comm
4Q24	1,883,303	308,910	16.4%	3.8%	9.4%
3Q24	1,850,599	300,873	16.3%	2.1%	7.6%
2Q24	1,826,454	292,567	16.0%	2.1%	7.0%
1Q24	1,817,973	287,855	15.8%	1.4%	8.1%
4Q23	1,814,269	282,485	15.6%	2.7%	9.7%

* Retail sales excluding foodservice

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