



Celebrating **MOTHERS**



Spending Is Up

Ever since President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill recognizing Mother's Day as a national holiday in 1914, Americans have spent every May showering their mothers with gifts, praise and love.

In 2016, spending is expected to exceed \$21 billion. That figure is the highest total measured by the National Retail Federation since it started tracking spending on the holiday 12 years ago.

According to NRF's 2015 Mother's Day Spending Survey conducted by Prosper Insights & Analytics, Americans spent an average of \$172.63 on Mother's Day last year.

Families are ready to shell out major cash on jewelry, home improvements, flowers, gift cards, brunch and apparel for the special lady in their lives.

BY THE NUMBERS

The NRF reports that the majority of consumers will pick up a greeting card for mom (80 percent), spending more than \$786 million, and more than two-thirds (67.2 percent) of those celebrating will buy flowers, to the tune of \$2.4 billion.

Shoppers also said they planned on gifting apparel and clothing items (35.8 percent), spending more than \$1.9 billion, according to the NRF.

Other primary gifts include the following:

- Special brunch or activity (\$3.8 billion);



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- Electronic items, such as a new smartphone or e-reader, (\$1.8 billion);
- Personal services such as a spa day (\$1.5 billion);
- Housewares or gardening tools (\$890 million);
- Books and CDs (\$480 million); and
- Gift cards (\$2.2 billion).

LOCAL IMPACT

Attributed to the meaningfulness behind the holiday, fewer shoppers are expected to spend their money online (only 25 percent) this year, heading to local department and specialty stores instead.

This means a major retail season for local businesses,

which in turn spend more of their revenues in their local areas. It's a win-win for moms and local stores when it comes to Mother's Day.

The NRF 2015 Mother's Day Consumer Spending Survey was designed to gauge consumer behavior and shopping trends related to the holiday.

The organization is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries.

Volunteer Together

Some moms prefer a quiet breakfast in bed with limited activity during their special holiday. Others like to engage in an outdoor-focused day spent hiking or biking through the countryside.

But what if the mom in your life has a penchant for helping others? Volunteering together may be the perfect gift for her.

Since Mother's Day falls in the middle of the spring season, it can offer the perfect opportunity to get outdoors on a park reclamation project or a Habitat for Humanity home-building effort. No matter what part of the country you live, you will likely be able to find a volunteering initiative happening around Mother's Day that is in major need of volunteers.

Plan to make a day of it, including taking your mom out for a hearty breakfast and lunch between your volunteering hours. There are many benefits to helping others, and what better day than Mother's Day to make an impact on those around you?

WHY VOLUNTEER?

UnitedHealth Group in 2013 commissioned a national survey of 3,351 adults and found that the overwhelming majority of participants reported feel-

ing mentally and physically healthier after a volunteer experience.

Here are some of the findings from UnitedHealth Group:

- 76 percent of people who volunteered in the last 12 months said that volunteering has made them feel healthier;
- 94 percent of people who volunteered in the last 12 months said that volunteering improved their mood;
- 78 percent of them said that volunteering lowered their stress levels;
- 96 percent reported that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life; and
- 80 percent of them feel like they have control over their health.

If you're trying to come up with the perfect Mother's Day gift, it may be in your family's best interest to come together in the name of volunteering. You will all benefit from the bonding and collaboration that naturally occurs during volunteering events, and you will create meaningful Mother's Day memories.



Use Your Talent

A gift of creativity can be best of all because of the thought and energy that go into making it happen. From art to songs and every artistic expression in between, use your special talent to create the perfect gift this Mother's Day.

By making mom something totally unique, you will be showing her how much you care.

Write a story about mom, make a special home movie or pen her a song. Whatever you do, make sure it comes from the heart and shows her how much she means to you.

PAINT A PICTURE

Are you the artist of your family? If painting or drawing come naturally to you, use this talent to make a stunning water-color or sketch for mom. Pick her favorite flower and create a large pastel arrangement on canvas.

Find a great picture of mom and recreate it in portrait form with colored pencil or paints. Make sure to have the gift framed and matted for an extra special piece.

Maybe mom is the artist in your house. Sign up for a class together to share your love of all things art. Your local artists organization is likely to offer many different classes that can hone your skills with paint brush or pencils. Sharing time together as you create your next work of art will be the extra special part of the gift.

WRITE A SONG

Do you have musical chops on the piano or guitar? How



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about singing? Can you belt out a tune with the best of them? Why not leverage these skills to write mom a powerful song this holiday?

With a little planning, you

can surely create a tear-jerking song about your mother's love or how much she has done for you over the years. Perform the song for her on the morning of Mother's Day to get the day

started off with a special surprise.

If performing isn't your thing, you can pre-record the song and make a music video. Upload a slideshow of pictures

and videos to your computer and let the song play behind them. Watch the video with your mom and watch her heart fill with appreciation for your thoughtful, creative gift.

Remembering Mom

Mother's Day is special to Americans across the country, serving as a day to celebrate and spoil our moms. But the holiday also can be one of great sadness and grief for those who have lost their mothers.

No matter how much time goes on, dealing with personal holidays such as Mother's Day can bring back emotions — both happy and sad — that can make the day downright difficult to get through.

So how can you make sure you are honoring the people you have lost in your life? There are many ways, but what matters is that you find something that makes you feel at peace with their passing so you can stay focused on the positive memories you have of your loved one.

COOK LIKE MOM

Did your mom make a special roast every Sunday during your childhood? Maybe she always had a plate of homemade bread around the kitchen. This Mother's Day, put on the apron and cook a meal like mom did.

Share it with your family members, especially those in your family who also may be feeling the loss of your mother.

Invite brothers, sisters and other relatives over for a meal that reminds them of the special lady you are honoring.

PAY YOUR RESPECTS

One of the simplest yet most meaningful ways you can honor your mother is by



visiting her gravesite. Leave behind a bouquet of white carnations, which are traditionally the flowers chosen to remember mothers no longer with us.

Place the carnations in a vase with other special

mementos of your mom. A poem, photograph or candle will do — whatever makes you remember your mother in a personal, loving way.

PAY IT FORWARD

Was mom actively involved

in a local charity or nonprofit organization? You can make a donation to her cause as a special tribute. Maybe she suffered from cancer or Alzheimer's. There are numerous organizations taking donations or volunteers to

advance their goals.

Make mom proud by connecting with your local chamber of commerce or small business owners to find out ways to get involved with acts of kindness in your neck of the woods.

Gifts on a Budget

Americans love spending big bucks on mom. If you're looking to spend a little less this holiday, there are plenty of ways to do so. All you need is creativity and an understanding of how to pull at your mom's heartstrings.

After all, it isn't how much you spend that defines the greatness of your gift. It's the effort and thought you put behind it that makes the difference.

SURPRISE PICNIC

If the weather is favorable in your area, an outdoor picnic is the perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Be sure to sneak to the grocery store Friday or Saturday so you're prepared with lunch. Prepare as much of it ahead of time as possible so you can pull off an impromptu surprise.

Impress mom by remembering all the logistics, such as a large picnic blanket, plastic silverware and drinks. She will be happy to see you put so much thought into pulling off a picnic surprise.

GIVE MOM SOME ALONE TIME

You can break the bank on expensive jewelry, but sometimes the most valuable gift can be that of silence. If the mom in your home spends her time running kids from practice to practice and cooking homemade meals night after night, a little relaxation may be just what the doctor ordered.

Peace and quiet is something every mom needs, no matter if their children are young or old. Dads, you can plan on taking the kids out for the afternoon so mom can have the house to herself. Head over to a friend or family member's house to give your wife time to nap, watch TV or work in the garden. She'll enter Monday



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morning rested, rejuvenated and ready to re-enter the daily grind.

TAKE PICTURES

A Mother's Day scrapbook can be a great way of marking the holiday

every year on a budget, especially considering the low cost of photos and a handmade book.

Look through your hard drive or digital camera for the best photos of the special mom in your life from the

previous year. Compile them into a digital or physical book and share the gift on Mother's Day. The gesture will be appreciated and help you look back on the year you just spent together.

What Moms Really Do

Mother's Day means valuing the women in our lives and all that they do for us on a daily basis. As any mom knows, parenting can be a 24/7 job that comes with a lot of unpaid work.

The annual Insure.com Mother's Day Index has become one of the most anticipated reports each year because it actually places a value on the work moms do.

The 2015 edition was released earlier this year and reported a market value of \$65,284 if mom were to be paid an annual salary. While this still sounds like mom is getting short-changed, it's up more than 3 percent over last year's figure and 9.1 percent compared to the 2013 value of \$59,862.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The annual index is based on the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics median wage data. It does not include income moms earn outside the home. The 2015 report also included survey responses from participating moms. Here are some of the findings:

• When asked how much moms should be paid for the things they do around the house, respondents said:

Nothing: 2 percent

Up to \$10,000: 4 percent

\$10,001 to \$25,000: 12 percent

\$25,001 to \$50,000: 25 percent

\$50,001 to \$75,000: 24 percent

\$75,001 to \$100,000: 17 percent

\$100,001 to \$200,000: 7 percent

Over \$200,000: 9 percent

• 38 percent of women in the survey said mom's salary at home should top \$75,000, compared to 28 percent of men who said the same.

MOM'S MAIN JOBS

Here are some of the main tasks moms perform and what kind of



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annual salary they would bring in if they were paid for it, according to BLS statistics:

- Cooking: \$7,371
- Driving: \$5,672

- Homework: \$7,720
 - Childcare: \$23,088
 - Summer Activity Planner: \$8,964
- So the next time you see mom stressed about how much there is to

do around the house, remember she is balancing the full-time job of parenting along with whatever other professional or volunteering responsibilities she carries.

Gifts for Green Thumbs

Does your mom spend a lot of time in the garden? Is she continuously planting, picking, digging and raking? Finding her the perfect Mother's Day gift this year should be a breeze.

There are many great gifts available for the gardener in your life. From fancy pots to organic plants, your local gardening center is fully stocked with your mom's next great present. Take a look around her shed to see what she's missing and pick it up for her. She'll be excited to receive a gift that is both practical and one that lets her enjoy her favorite pastime.

Stop and smell the roses: What's better than receiving a vibrant, premium rose bush that will produce beautiful flowers for years to come? Making sure to choose a bush that will thrive in your mom's climate,

pick out an option that matches her favorite color. The options are endless if you know where to look. Local rose growers likely have many choices for you, including ones with red blooms and silver reverses or hybrid tea roses in light pink or yellow.

Tools of the trade: Maybe the perfect gardening tools are what your mom needs on this special holiday. How about a gardening apron or plant markers? A new toolset that includes mini shovels, hoes and rakes also can make for handy gifts. There are also many gifts available at your local center that make gardening easier on your mom, includ-

ing kneelers to protect her knees and lower back, and quality gloves to keep her hands safe and protected.

Quality over quantity: Does your mom spend hours in the garden each week of the spring, summer and fall seasons? If you know that gardening is a major part of her life, it's a good idea to invest a little more gift money to make sure you're buying top-line products.

This goes for tools and materials, as well as plants, soil and compost. Your mom will be able to tell if you skimped on quality to save a few bucks.