

# advance monthly RETAIL SALES



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APRIL 1968

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in April were estimated at \$27.5 billion; this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences but not for price changes, was \$27.6 billion. The advance estimate, after adjustment, was about 2 percent below March sales but about 7 percent above April sales last year. Adjusted February-through-April sales averaged about 4 percent above the prior 3 months and 8 percent above the comparable period a year ago.

The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment, sales of durable goods stores fell 3 percent and sales of nondurable goods stores fell 1 percent in April from their March peaks. Declines were noted for most of the major

kinds of business. Average monthly sales for durable goods stores during the February-April period were about 6 percent above the average for the prior 3 months, and the average for nondurable goods stores for the comparable period increased 3 percent. The year-to-year gain in the 3 month average for nondurable goods stores was about 7 percent and about 10 percent for durable goods stores.

Based on the full sample the total U.S. unadjusted sales estimate for March was \$27.1 billion, about \$0.1 billion more than the retail sales published earlier in the March Advance Monthly Retail Sales report released on April 10, 1968. The seasonally adjusted sales for March as revised were about 3 percent above February.

The April sales figures are based on advance reporting of a small sub-sample of the Census Bureau's panel of retail firms. Beginning with the October 1967 report, the advance figures have been modified on the basis of the relationship between the advance estimates and full sample estimates. The advance estimates are subject to revision by estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 0.7 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 1.0 percent for food stores to 3.9 percent for the furniture and appliance group.

It should be noted that even for figures derived from the full sample, sales movements between individual pairs of months tend to be relatively irregular. Data for several months are generally required to indicate the underlying trend.

(more)

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Annual subscription to Current Retail Trade Reports (Weekly Retail Sales Report, Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report, Monthly Retail Trade Report, and Annual Retail Trade Report sold as a single subscription) \$6.00. Single copies, available only from the Bureau of the Census, 10¢.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE C. R. Smith, Secretary  
William H. Chartener, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS A. Ross Eckler, Director

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR APRIL 1968

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1968		1967
	April <sup>1</sup>	March <sup>2</sup>	April
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	27,548	27,051	25,081
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	8,998	8,913	8,205
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	18,550	18,138	16,876
Food group.....	6,058	6,343	5,810
Grocery stores.....	5,515	5,825	5,348
Eating and drinking places.....	2,114	2,120	1,991
General merchandise group.....	3,670	3,370	3,049
Department stores.....	2,414	2,228	2,016
Apparel group.....	1,631	1,421	1,375
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,267	1,310	1,160
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,574	1,405	1,457
Automotive group.....	5,469	5,504	4,955
Gasoline service stations.....	2,148	2,072	1,940
Drug and proprietary stores.....	919	927	851

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(ADJUSTED for seasonal variations and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, Apr. 1968 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Mar. 1968 from--	
	Mar. 1968	Apr. 1967	1968			1967	Feb. 1968	Mar. 1967
			Apr. <sup>1</sup>	Mar. <sup>2</sup>	Feb.	Mar.		
Retail stores, total <sup>3</sup> .....	-2	+7	27,640	28,129	27,399	25,739	+3	+9
Durable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup> ...	-3	+8	8,750	9,065	8,765	8,150	+3	+11
Nondurable-goods stores, total <sup>3</sup>	-1	+6	18,890	19,064	18,634	17,589	+2	+8
Food group.....				6,275	6,160	6,041	+2	+4
Eating and drinking places.....				2,220	2,206	2,046	+1	+8
General merchandise group.....				3,890	3,737	3,327	+4	+17
Apparel group.....				1,645	1,586	1,443	+4	+14
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,435	1,398	1,278	+3	+12
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,570	1,555	1,517	+1	+3
Automotive group.....				5,278	5,068	4,602	+4	+15
Gasoline service stations.....				2,161	2,116	1,964	+2	+10
Drug and proprietary stores.....				948	936	889	+1	+7

<sup>1</sup>Advance sample estimates.

<sup>2</sup>Preliminary estimates of full sample.

<sup>3</sup>Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.