

Retail trade, December 2023

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, February 22, 2024

Retail sales increased 0.9% to \$67.3 billion in December. Sales were up in five of nine subsectors and were led by increases at motor vehicle and parts dealers (+1.9%).

Core retail sales—which exclude gasoline stations and fuel vendors and motor vehicle and parts dealers—were up 0.5% in December.

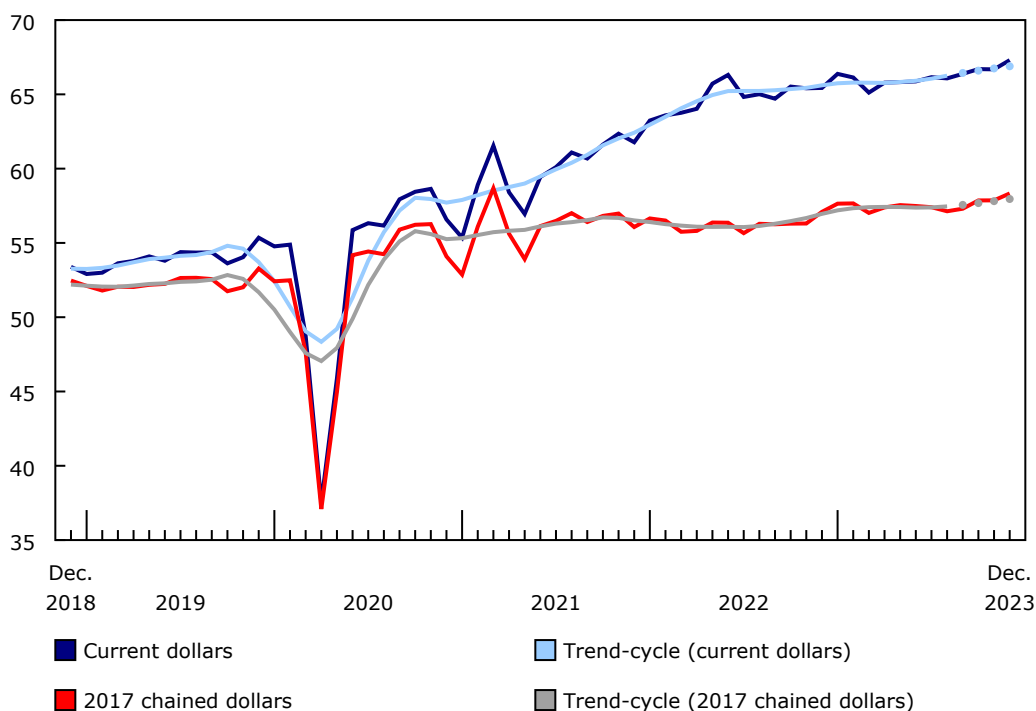
In volume terms, retail sales increased 0.8% in December.

Retail sales were up 1.0% in the fourth quarter of 2023, marking a second consecutive quarterly increase. In volume terms, retail sales increased 1.3% in the fourth quarter.

In 2023, retail sales increased 2.2%, led by gains at motor vehicle and parts dealers. In volume terms, sales were up 2.3% in 2023.

Chart 1
Retail sales increase in December

billions of dollars



Note(s): The higher variability associated with the trend-cycle estimates is indicated with a dotted line on the chart for the current reference month and the previous three months. For more information, see the Note to readers.

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers rise

The largest increase in retail sales in December was observed at motor vehicle and parts dealers (+1.9%), up for a fourth consecutive month. The gain in December was led by higher sales at new car dealers (+2.4%). The largest decline in this subsector came from automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers (-2.7%).



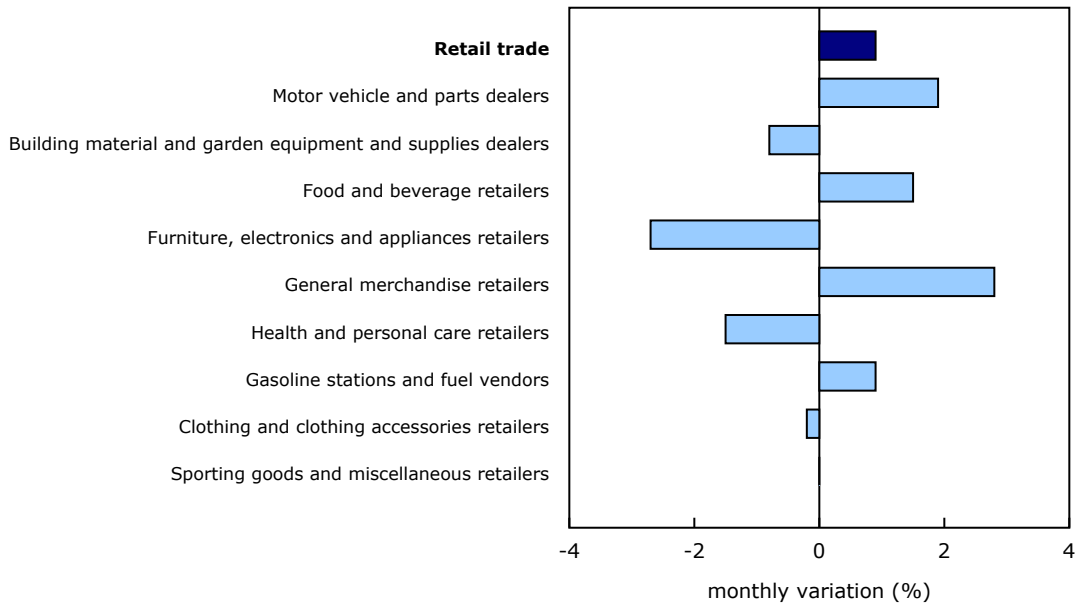
Sales at gasoline stations and fuel vendors (+0.9%) were also up in December. In volume terms, sales at gasoline stations and fuel vendors increased 2.1%.

Core retail sales rise on gains at general merchandise retailers

Core retail sales increased 0.5% in December, led by higher sales at general merchandise retailers (+2.8%) and food and beverage retailers (+1.5%). Sales at food and beverage retailers were up from higher sales at supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience retailers) (+1.8%) and, to a lesser extent, specialty food retailers (+3.1%).

The largest decrease to core retail sales in December came from furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances retailers (-2.7%).

Chart 2
Sales increase in five of nine subsectors in December



Source(s): Table 20-10-0056-01.

Sales up in eight provinces

Retail sales increased in eight provinces in December, led by higher sales in Ontario (+1.3%) and, to a lesser extent, British Columbia (+1.5%).

In Ontario (+1.3%), retail sales were up in December on the strength of higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers. In the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Toronto, retail sales were up 0.6%.

Retail sales in British Columbia (+1.5%) rose in December, led by higher sales at food and beverage retailers. In the CMA of Vancouver, retail sales were up 1.5%.

The largest provincial decrease in retail sales in December was observed in Prince Edward Island (-3.3%). The decrease was led by lower sales at gasoline stations and fuel vendors.

Retail e-commerce sales in Canada

On a seasonally adjusted basis, retail e-commerce sales were down 3.6% to \$3.7 billion in December, accounting for 5.5% of total retail trade, compared with 5.8% in November.

Retail sales in 2023

Canadian retailers finished 2023 with \$794.4 billion in sales, up 2.2% from 2022 with increases observed in five of nine subsectors. Leading the gain in retail sales in 2023 were higher sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers (+7.0%), which were driven by gains at new car dealers (+8.7%) and coincided with improved supply chains and inventories compared with 2022. The largest decrease to retail sales in 2023 was observed at gasoline stations and fuel vendors (-9.9%), largely the result of lower gasoline prices in 2023 compared with 2022. In volume terms, sales at gasoline stations were up 9.7% in 2023.

Core retail sales increased 2.4% in 2023, led by higher sales at food and beverage retailers (+3.7%) and health and personal care retailers (+8.6%). Sales at food and beverage retailers were up from higher sales at supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience retailers) (+5.5%), which saw gains in eight months in 2023.

Advance retail indicator

Statistics Canada is providing an advance estimate of retail sales, which suggests that sales decreased 0.4% in January 2024. Owing to its early nature, this figure will be revised. This unofficial estimate was calculated based on responses received from 52.7% of companies surveyed. The average final response rate for the survey over the previous 12 months was 88.3%.

Did you know we have a mobile app?

Get timely access to data right at your fingertips by downloading the [StatsCAN app](#), available for free on the [App Store](#) and on [Google Play](#).

Note to readers

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted and expressed in current dollars, unless otherwise noted.

Seasonally adjusted data are data that have been modified to eliminate the effect of seasonal and calendar influences to allow for more meaningful comparisons of economic conditions from period to period. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

The percentage change for the advance estimate of retail sales is calculated using seasonally adjusted data and is expressed in current dollars.

This early indicator is a special unofficial estimate being provided to offer Canadians timely information on the retail sector. The data sources and methodology used are the same as those outlined on the [Monthly Retail Trade Survey](#) information page.

Trend-cycle estimates are included in selected charts as a complement to the seasonally adjusted series. These data represent a smoothed version of the seasonally adjusted time series and provide information on longer-term movements, including changes in direction underlying the series. For information on trend-cycle data, see [Trend-cycle estimates – Frequently asked questions](#).

Both seasonally adjusted data and trend-cycle estimates are subject to revision as additional observations become available. These revisions could be extensive and could even lead to a reversal of movement, especially for the reference months near the end of the series or during periods of economic disruption.

Seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers are presented in unadjusted form, as no seasonal pattern has been established by official statistics yet. Establishing such a pattern requires several months of observed data. In the interim, the seasonally adjusted estimates for cannabis store retailers will be identical to the unadjusted figures.

Some common e-commerce transactions, such as travel and accommodation bookings, ticket purchases and financial transactions, are not included in Canadian retail sales figures.

Total retail sales expressed in volume terms are calculated by deflating current-dollar values using consumer price indexes.

Find more [statistics on retail trade](#).

Next release

Data on retail trade for January will be released on March 22.

Table 1
Retail sales, by province, territory and census metropolitan area – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023 ^r	December 2023 ^p	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Canada	65,432	66,683	67,301	0.9	2.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	953	952	952	-0.0	-0.1
Prince Edward Island	289	305	295	-3.3	2.0
Nova Scotia	1,752	1,760	1,783	1.3	1.8
New Brunswick	1,376	1,463	1,474	0.8	7.1
Quebec	14,485	14,947	14,975	0.2	3.4
Montréal	7,296	7,670	7,548	-1.6	3.4
Ontario	24,556	24,944	25,263	1.3	2.9
Toronto	11,089	11,399	11,468	0.6	3.4
Manitoba	2,275	2,252	2,257	0.2	-0.8
Saskatchewan	2,141	2,106	2,127	1.0	-0.7
Alberta	8,431	8,558	8,637	0.9	2.4
British Columbia	8,960	9,169	9,306	1.5	3.9
Vancouver	4,387	4,619	4,690	1.5	6.9
Yukon	90	96	99	2.4	9.9
Northwest Territories	75	82	83	1.2	10.8
Nunavut	50	50	52	4.5	4.4

^r revised

^p preliminary

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): Table [20-10-0056-01](#).

Table 2
Retail sales, by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023 ^r	December 2023 ^p	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade (current dollars)	65,432	66,683	67,301	0.9	2.9
Retail e-commerce	3,318	3,858	3,719	-3.6	12.1
Total retail trade (2017 chained dollars)	57,090	57,865	58,328	0.8	2.2
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	48,329	48,661	48,935	0.6	1.3
Total (current dollars) excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations and fuel vendors	41,154	41,912	42,124	0.5	2.4
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	17,103	18,022	18,367	1.9	7.4
New car dealers	13,463	14,291	14,631	2.4	8.7
Used car dealers	1,274	1,267	1,289	1.7	1.2
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,150	1,182	1,199	1.4	4.3
Automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers	1,217	1,282	1,248	-2.7	2.6
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,846	3,846	3,816	-0.8	-0.8
Food and beverage retailers	12,357	12,587	12,782	1.5	3.4
Supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience)	8,615	8,848	9,006	1.8	4.5
Convenience retailers and vending machine operators	679	747	745	-0.2	9.8
Specialty food retailers	828	890	918	3.1	10.8
Beer, wine and liquor retailers	2,236	2,101	2,113	0.6	-5.5
Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances retailers	3,671	3,772	3,670	-2.7	-0.0
Furniture retailers	1,246	1,210	1,164	-3.8	-6.6
Floor covering, window treatment and other home furnishing retailers	715	720	669	-7.1	-6.5
Electronics and appliances retailers	1,710	1,842	1,838	-0.2	7.5
General merchandise retailers	8,708	8,754	8,998	2.8	3.3
Health and personal care retailers	5,205	5,618	5,531	-1.5	6.3
Gasoline stations and fuel vendors	7,175	6,749	6,811	0.9	-5.1
Clothing, clothing accessories, shoes, jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	3,427	3,608	3,600	-0.2	5.1
Clothing and clothing accessories retailers	2,648	2,799	2,787	-0.4	5.2
Shoe retailers	400	418	421	0.8	5.1
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	378	392	392	0.1	3.7
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book, and miscellaneous retailers	3,941	3,726	3,727	0.0	-5.4
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book retailers and news dealers	1,397	1,370	1,322	-3.5	-5.3
Miscellaneous store retailers	2,544	2,356	2,405	2.1	-5.5
Cannabis retailers ¹	426	408	441	8.2	3.6

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Data for this Canadian industry are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern established by official statistics yet.

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): Tables [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

Table 3
Retail sales at 2017 constant prices, by industry – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023 ^r	December 2023 ^p	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	millions of dollars			% change	
Total retail trade at 2017 constant prices¹	57,327	58,200	58,644	0.8	2.3
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers	42,305	42,819	43,080	0.6	1.8
Total excluding motor vehicle and parts dealers and gasoline stations and fuel vendors	36,803	37,151	37,295	0.4	1.3
Motor vehicle and parts dealers	15,022	15,381	15,564	1.2	3.6
New car dealers	11,727	12,133	12,335	1.7	5.2
Used car dealers	1,113	1,078	1,089	1.0	-2.2
Other motor vehicle dealers	1,149	1,136	1,137	0.1	-1.0
Automotive parts, accessories and tire retailers	1,032	1,034	1,003	-3.0	-2.8
Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	3,673	3,735	3,733	-0.1	1.6
Food and beverage retailers	10,094	9,962	10,087	1.3	-0.1
Supermarkets and other grocery retailers (except convenience retailers)	7,004	6,980	7,081	1.4	1.1
Convenience retailers and vending machine operators	531	557	550	-1.3	3.6
Specialty food retailers	671	716	736	2.8	9.7
Beer, wine and liquor retailers	1,888	1,709	1,720	0.6	-8.9
Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliances retailers	3,507	3,629	3,545	-2.3	1.1
Furniture retailers	1,037	1,023	984	-3.8	-5.1
Floor covering, window treatment and other home furnishing retailers	643	661	614	-7.1	-4.5
Electronics and appliances retailers	1,827	1,945	1,947	0.1	6.6
General merchandise retailers	7,434	7,399	7,600	2.7	2.2
Health and personal care retailers	5,094	5,430	5,367	-1.2	5.4
Gasoline stations and fuel vendors	5,502	5,668	5,785	2.1	5.1
Clothing, clothing accessories, shoes, jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	3,400	3,562	3,535	-0.8	4.0
Clothing and clothing accessories retailers	2,689	2,829	2,798	-1.1	4.1
Shoe retailers	414	411	415	1.0	0.2
Jewellery, luggage and leather goods retailers	297	322	321	-0.3	8.1
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book and miscellaneous retailers	3,602	3,435	3,428	-0.2	-4.8
Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument and book retailers and news dealers	1,297	1,266	1,210	-4.4	-6.7
Miscellaneous store retailers	2,305	2,168	2,218	2.3	-3.8
Cannabis retailers ²	511	505	549	8.7	7.4

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Calculated using the Laspeyres method.

2. Data for this Canadian industry are presented in unadjusted form as there is no seasonal pattern established by official statistics yet.

Note(s): Figures may not add up to totals as a result of rounding.

Source(s): Table 20-10-0067-01.

Available tables: [20-10-0056-01](#) and [20-10-0067-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [2406](#) and [2408](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).