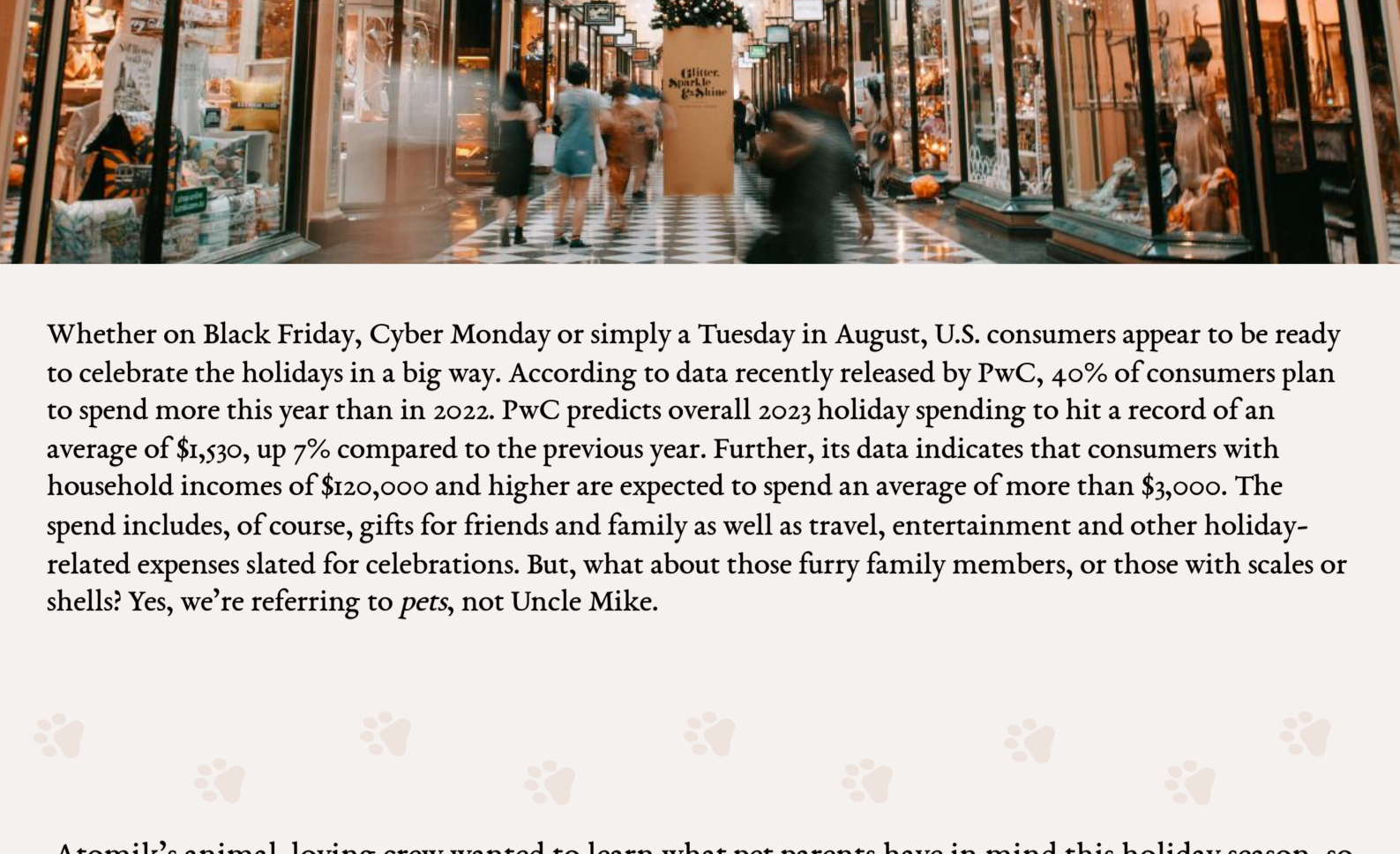


SPENDING. GIFTING. GIVING. TRAVELING. CELEBRATING!

# 2023 HOLIDAY SEASON PERSPECTIVES

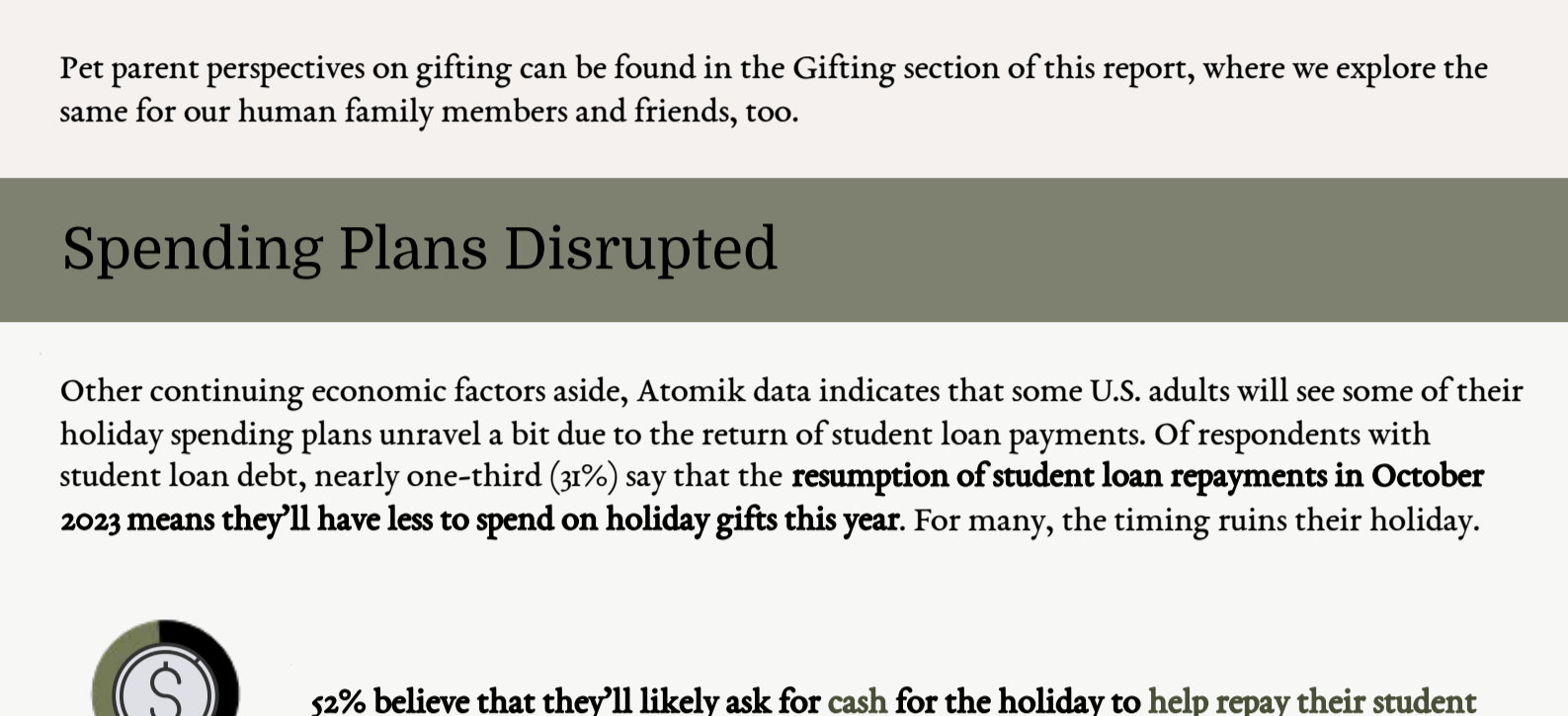


Hanukkah, Christmas, Boxing Day, Kwanzaa and even the Winter Solstice – December 21, in case you want to note that – represent just a few of the many celebrations marking the end of the year that many think of as the “holiday season.” Of course, it doesn’t stop there when you consider that New Year’s Eve, Mardi Gras and even Valentine’s Day are also technically winter holidays, with the former being a key part of the aforementioned traditional holiday season. Oh, and let’s not forget Thanksgiving Day that in many ways represents the start of the traditional holiday season. So when exactly are “the holidays”?



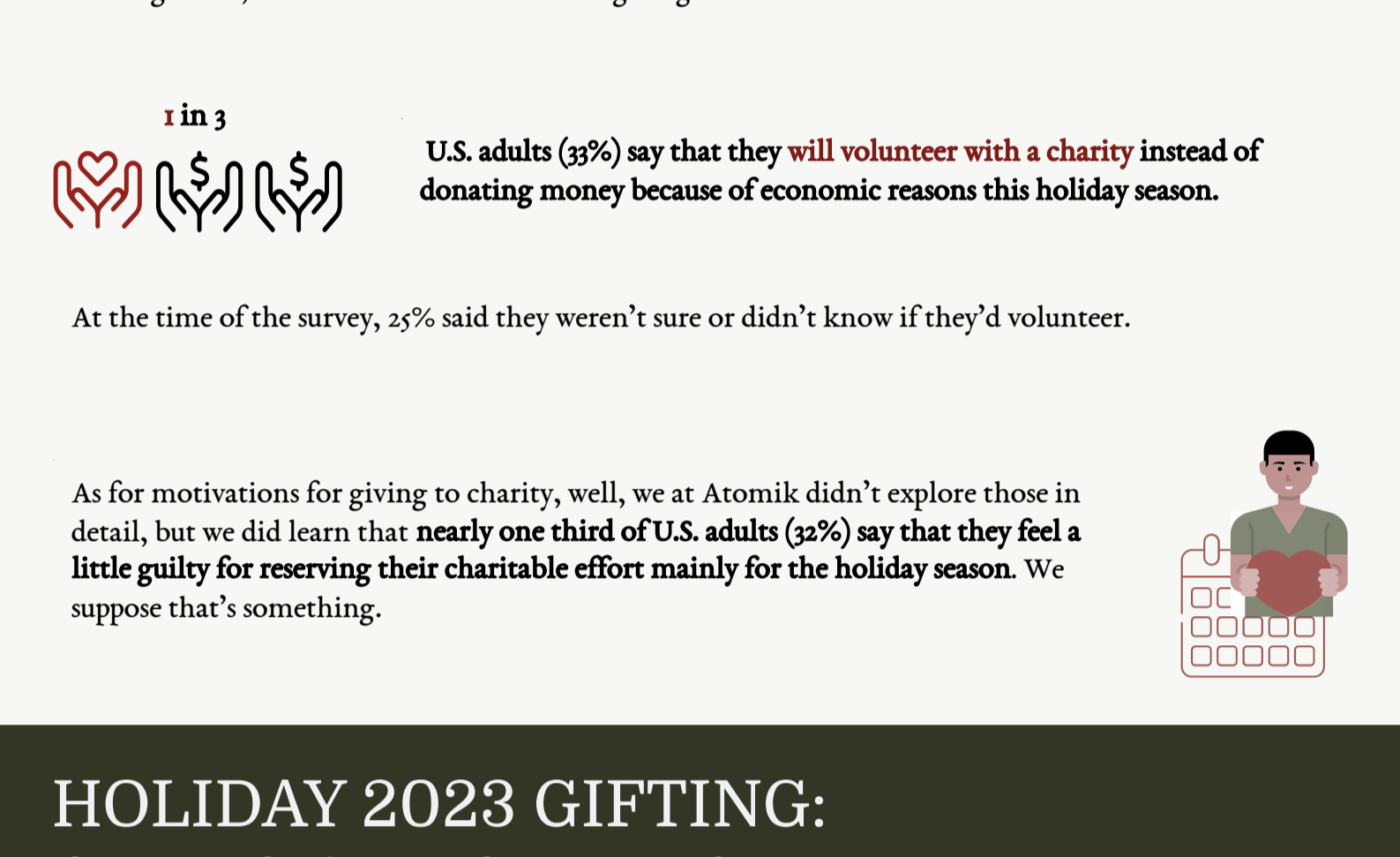
With that in mind, let’s dig into some details around spending plans, charitable giving and economic impacts that may disrupt those plans. Sorry to bring it down a bit, but hey – we’ll have some fun too with gifting for pets and perspectives on holiday vacation “escapes.” So, turn on some holiday tunes (optional) and read on.

## HOLIDAY 2023 SPENDING EXPECTATIONS & DISRUPTIONS



Whether on Black Friday, Cyber Monday or simply a Tuesday in August, U.S. consumers appear to be ready to celebrate the holidays in a big way. According to data recently released by PwC, 40% of consumers plan to spend more this year than in 2022. PwC predicts overall 2023 holiday spending to hit a record of an average of \$1,530, up 7% compared to the previous year. Further, its data indicates that consumers with household incomes of \$120,000 and higher are expected to spend an average of more than \$3,000. The spend includes, of course, gifts for friends and family as well as travel, entertainment and other holiday-related expenses slated for celebrations. But, what about those furry family members, or those with scales or shells? Yes, we’re referring to *pets*, not Uncle Mike.

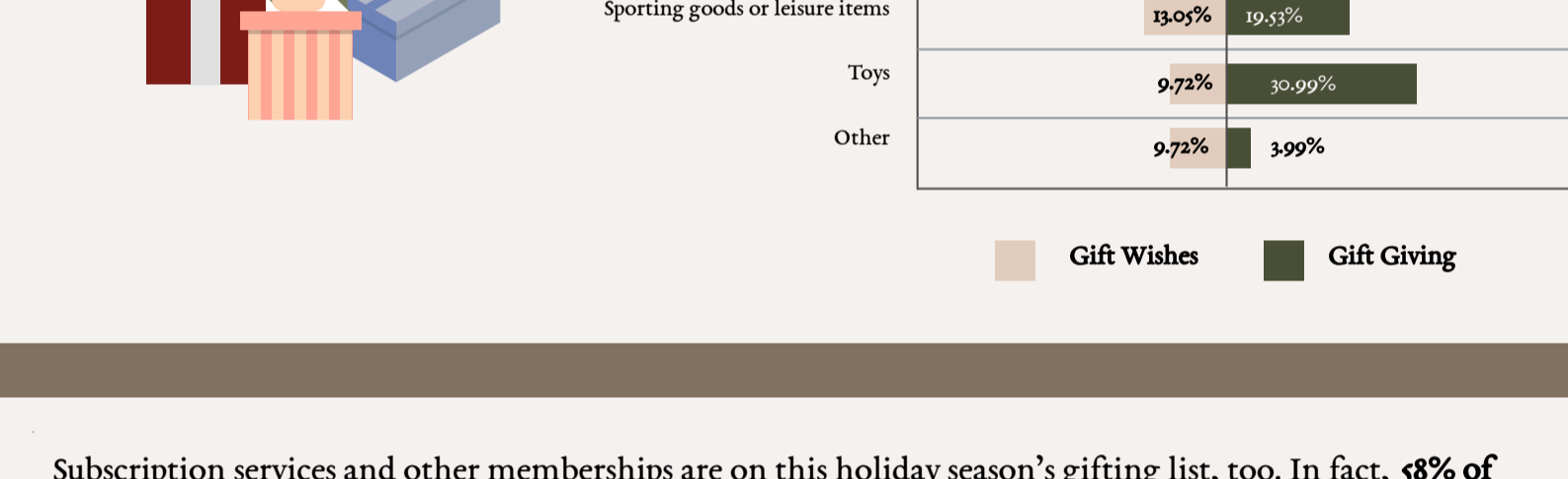
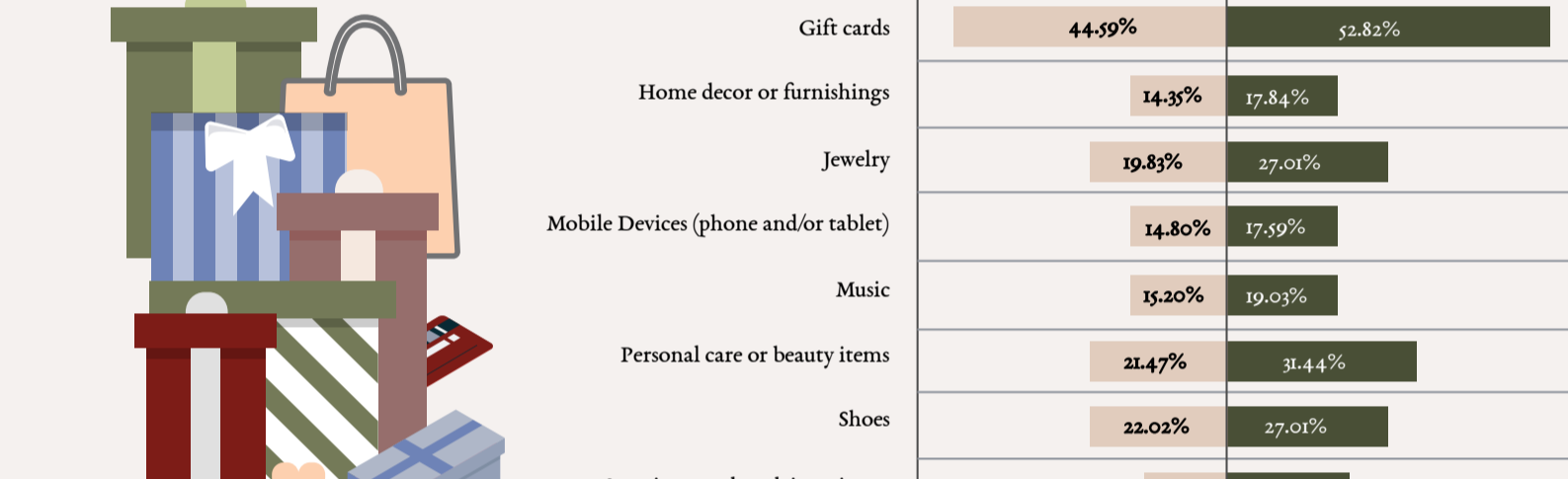
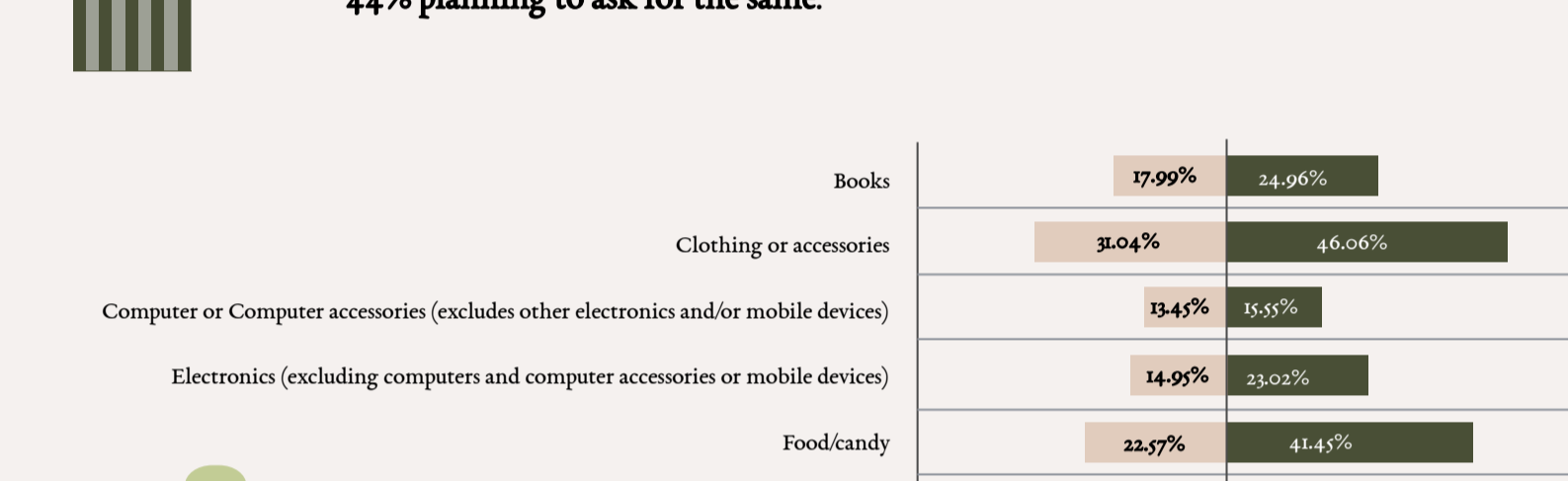
Atomik’s animal-loving crew wanted to learn what pet parents have in mind this holiday season, so we asked. Here’s what we learned about **how U.S. pet parents’ per pet spending plans parse out.**



Pet parent perspectives on gifting can be found in the Gifting section of this report, where we explore the same for our human family members and friends, too.

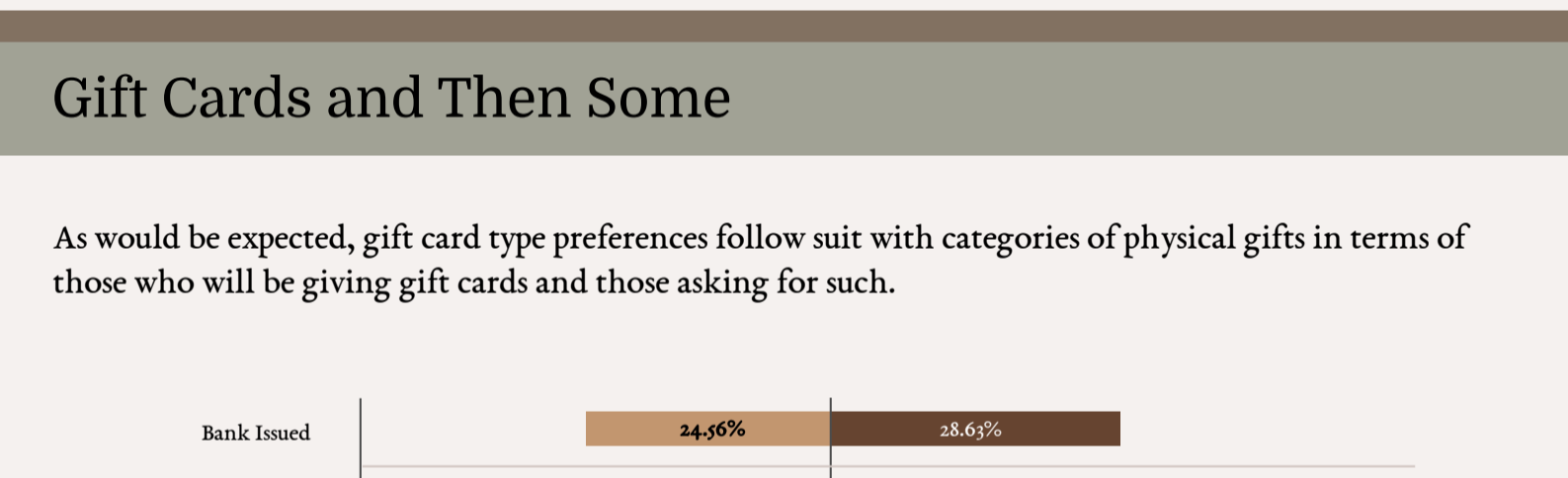
## Spending Plans Disrupted

Other continuing economic factors aside, Atomik data indicates that some U.S. adults will see some of their holiday spending plans unravel a bit due to the return of student loan payments. Of respondents with student loan debt, nearly one-third (31%) say that the **resumption of student loan repayments in October 2023 means they’ll have less to spend on holiday gifts this year.** For many, the timing ruins their holiday.



## Holiday 2023 Charitable Giving, in Brief

The holidays are about giving back as well. Whether charitable giving is via cash donations or volunteering, U.S. adults are pitching in to help out. Atomik’s survey results show that **44% of U.S. adults include funds for charitable giving in their holiday budget**, and 21% say that they don’t create a holiday budget, which doesn’t mean they don’t give to charities. Nearly half of adults (49%) say that they prefer to donate money in person instead of online or digitally. And others are taking direct action instead of donating funds, which is a whole new level of giving.



At the time of the survey, 25% said they weren’t sure or didn’t know if they’d volunteer.

As for motivations for giving to charity, well, we at Atomik didn’t explore those in detail, but we did learn that **nearly one third of U.S. adults (32%) say that they feel a little guilty for reserving their charitable effort mainly for the holiday season.** We suppose that’s something.

## HOLIDAY 2023 GIFTING: GIVING & RECEIVING



Gift exchanges represent a cornerstone of the holiday season in many celebrations. This season – even with the continued economic challenges many U.S. consumers face – gift giving is still on the list.

## Gifting Categories

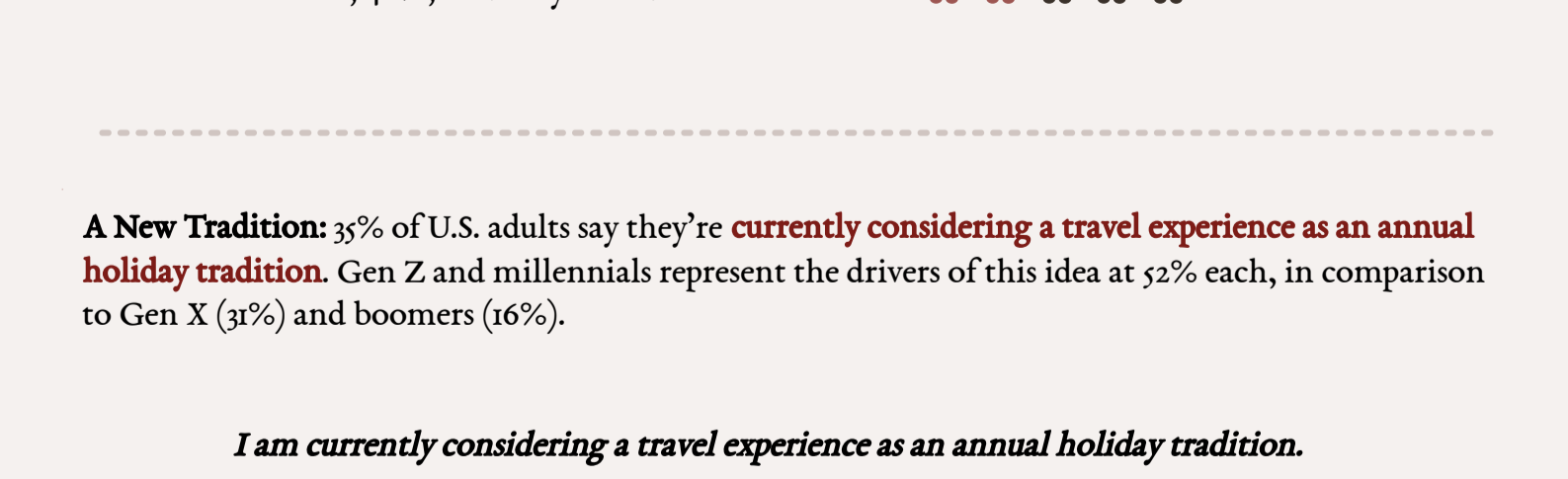
In terms of gift giving and gift wishes, **gift cards** top the list of categories for both, with...



Category	Gift Wishes	Gift Giving
Books	17.99%	14.96%
Clothing or accessories	31.04%	46.06%
Computer or Computer accessories (excludes other electronics and/or mobile devices)	13.45%	15.85%
Electronics (excluding computers and computer accessories or mobile devices)	14.95%	23.02%
Food/candy	33.97%	41.45%
Gift cards	44.99%	52.85%
Home decor or furnishings	14.35%	17.84%
Jewelry	19.84%	27.00%
Mobile Devices (phone and/or tablet)	14.80%	17.99%
Music	13.20%	19.05%
Personal care or beauty items	21.47%	31.44%
Shoes	22.02%	27.00%
Sporting goods or leisure items	13.05%	19.05%
Toys	9.75%	20.99%
Other	9.75%	3.99%

Subscription services and other memberships are on this holiday season’s gifting list, too. In fact, **58% of U.S. adults believe that giving a subscription to a friend’s or family member’s favorite service is a thoughtful way to show they care about their interests/needs beyond the holiday season.** Atomik explored services focused on fitness/wellness and what some may deem “vices.” Here are a few of the top highlights.

## Fitness and Food:



Further, another 17% plan to gift someone exercise equipment for home use.

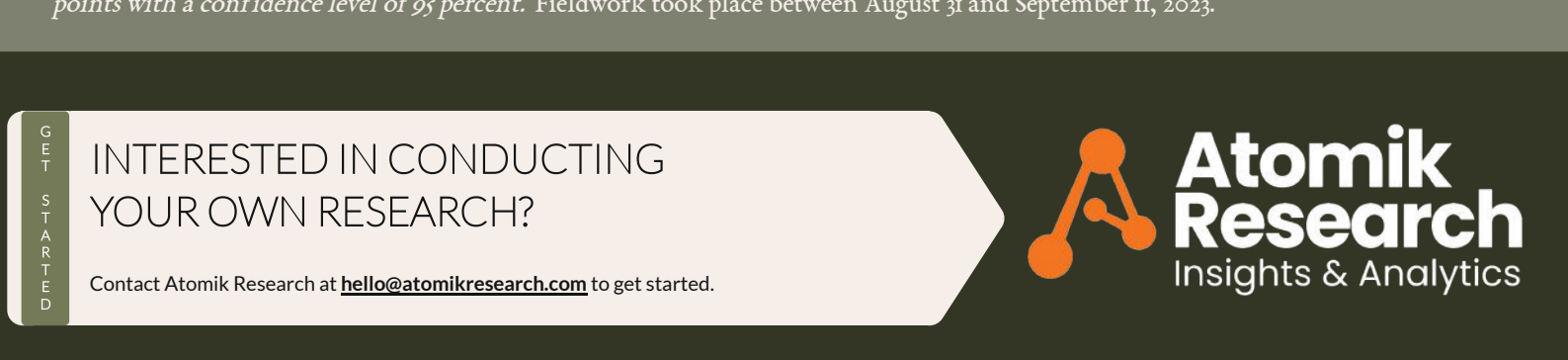
Regarding food, 18% plan to gift someone a healthy meal kits subscription (e.g., Fresh N Lean, Saltara, Factor, etc.).

## Booze and Bets:

In categories of subscription services of “vices,” 28% of U.S. adults plan to give as a gift funds for sports betting or credits on a gambling app/site. Another 25% plan to gift someone a subscription to some form of wine/beer/liquor subscription service this holiday season.

## Gift Cards and Then Some

As would be expected, gift card type preferences follow suit with categories of physical gifts in terms of those who will be giving gift cards and those asking for such.



## Gift Card Expectations and Attitudes

52% of U.S. adults say they’re likely to purchase between **5 and 10 gift cards.**

A separate 39% expect to purchase **up to 4.**

Over 1 in 3 (35%) **trade gift cards of equal value** with friends and/or family members for stores/services that they each prefer.

67% say that **gift cards are their favorite gift** to receive for the holidays because they can choose what they want to get with those cards.

51% say it’s **unlikely that they’ll re-gift a gift card** they receive for the holidays.

40% **don’t** believe that giving someone a gift card for the holidays is **the ultimate cop-out.** 33% **do.**

## But wait, what about “cash” as a gift?

When considering how cashless our society we’ve become, Atomik wanted to know if an alternative to cash and gift cards was on U.S. consumers’ minds. Turns out, there is.

Results show that **42% of U.S. adults say they’re likely to give friends and/or family members money as a gift by using person-to-person payments** such as Venmo, Zelle, Cash App, Apple Pay Cash or others. **40%** said unlikely. Though this split is fairly even with the rest falling to neutral on the idea, it’s worth watching in the years ahead. What’s more is that **64% of U.S. adults said that they would be fine with receiving a holiday gift of money via a person-to-person payment app** (e.g. Venmo, Zelle, Cash App, Apple Pay Cash, etc.). This gives and take (literally) suggests that consumers are open to the idea, in general. Check with us next year to see if this trends upward on both.



## PET GIFTING SPOTLIGHT



Before we go any further, it may be worth pausing and thinking about your standing with family who are pet parents because 44% of them say that they would rather spend their holiday gift-giving budget on their pet(s) instead of spending it on some of their family members (34% said the opposite). Ouch. If you’re unsure of your standing with family, maybe friends will come through. So, what else are pet parents thinking about this holiday season?

## Among pet parents...

More than 1 in 3 (36%) plan to give their pet(s) an experience (dinner at a restaurant, vacation, hiking trip, etc.) instead of a gift this holiday season. It’s the thought that counts.

61% wish they could find **edible gift wrap** for the gifts they plan to give their pet(s). This was highest among pet parents of dogs, by the way, at 82%. For comparisons, 65% and 63% of pet parents of cats and dogs, respectively, said they wish they could find such gift wrap. Yes. Really.

Just over one-third (35%) say that they write a “**Santa Paws**” wish list (holiday gift wish list) for their pet(s).

51% say they **haven’t ever sent holiday gifts from their pet(s) to their friends and/or a family member.** You know what that means then.

## HOLIDAY 2023 TRAVEL: ESCAPING FOR THE HOLIDAYS OR ESCAPING THE HOLIDAYS?

As the end of the year approaches, some working U.S. adults are scrambling to figure out how to squeeze in some vacation days before they lose them. In fact, according to Atomik’s *State of the American Full-Time Worker survey*, full-time workers estimate that 45% of their PTO (paid time off) days go unused each year. Thinking about that stat may lead some of us to think about vacation travel plans for 2024, too. Others may even consider using part or all of their 2023 holiday gifting budget on travel in the new year. And yet others may even be leveraging travel as a new holiday tradition.

**An Even Split:** 42% of U.S. adults say they would rather spend their holiday gift-giving budget on a vacation in 2024. The same amount, 42%, said they wouldn’t.

**A New Tradition:** 38% of U.S. adults say they’re currently considering a travel experience as an annual holiday tradition. Gen Z and millennials represent the drivers of this idea at 52% each, in comparison to Gen X (31%) and boomers (16%).

*I am currently considering a travel experience as an annual holiday tradition.*



Overall, the majority of U.S. adults (54%) say that they don’t want to travel during the holiday season as a convenient excuse to avoid family. Aw, that’s sweet. **But when it comes to staying with family or staying in a hotel during those holiday season visits, 42% of U.S. adults prefer to stay in a hotel.** Maybe it’s Uncle Mike’s snoring. On yet another positive note, **48% of U.S. adults say that they would not send their in-laws on a vacation to avoid them for the holidays.** Refer back to the point on hotel preference: marriage saver.

**More men (34%) than women (22%) say that they would send their in-laws on a vacation to avoid them for the holidays.**

## WRAPPING UP

There’s lots to unwrap in this report, and it’s our little gift to you. Overall, it’s looking to be a pretty good holiday season this year. Despite challenges, the gifting outlook – including to charitable causes – appears good, and spending time with family and friends (of all forms) is the focus, as it should be. And speaking of family, one last thing before we wrap this up...

**42% of U.S. adults say that they’re always annoyed with the family member who makes everyone wait when unwrapping holiday gifts** because they insist on cleaning up after each person opens their present(s). **Only 31% are fine with it. Yes. We asked. So, enough already, Uncle Mike.**

From all of us at Atomik Research, we wish you all the best for the holiday season in all the ways you celebrate with family and friends.

Methodology: Atomik Research conducted a survey of 2,007 adults throughout the United States. The margin of error is +/- 2 percentage points with a confidence level of 90 percent. Fieldwork took place between August 31 and September 11, 2023.