

Austrians spend around 2.4 billion Euros on Christmas presents

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Women are more generous than men

Austrians prefer to pay by cash, followed by ATM and credit card

Erste Bank recommends paying by card and issues a warning about thefts by trickery during the Christmas period

86% of Austrians want to give presents to their loved ones, and are this year spending around 2.4 billion Euros to do so. That's about 100 million Euros less than the previous year. According to the Erste Bank's payment transaction expert Klaus Mattes, "Austrians have become slightly more thrifty." Because, according to a representational survey conducted by the market research institute Integral on behalf of Erste Bank und Sparkasse, 89% of Austrians wanted to buy presents in 2010, and spent 2.5 billion Euros.

Austrians spend around 386 Euros on presents – Women are more generous than men

Austrians spend an average of 386 Euros on Christmas presents (2010: 390 Euros). Women are more generous, and buy presents worth 400 Euros. Men, on the other hand, only spend 371 Euros. 7 in 10 Austrians break their piggy bank to do this, whereby men (76%) rely more on their own savings than women (67%). Unlike men (39%), women (45%) tend to finance their presents using the Christmas bonus from their employers – a figure once again above the Austrian average (43%). Both sexes avoid using account overdraft or payment by instalment.

Cash over ATM card as most popular payment method

Austrians prefer to buy Christmas presents by retail (80%); online/mail orders are well behind at 18% and 11% respectively. 8 in 10 pay for their Christmas shopping predominantly with cash, making it the most popular method of payment, ahead of ATM and credit cards. Men are more likely to rely on the plastic: Around one quarter of men and only one fifth of women use this form of payment.

"We advise paying by bank card, because cash in wallets is lost if stolen. For cards, insurance takes effect once the block has been imposed", says Erste Bank payment transaction expert Klaus Mattes. Statistics confirms the fact that cashless paying is becoming increasingly popular even in Austria:



According to the Austrian National Bank, Austrian wallets contain over 8.2 million ATM cards and 2.5 million credit cards. Amounts of 6.4 billion Euros have this year already been paid by credit card.

High season for theft by trickery: Tips for keeping money and bank cards safe

"The Christmas period is the peak season for theft by trickery", warns Mattes. The Erste Bank thus advises taking the following precautionary measures:

Con artists and thieves like to engage in conversation with passersby, stealing their wallets in the meantime. Cash, bank cards and all values should thus be kept safely and always re-checked. Only small amounts of cash should be carried.

Before withdrawing money from ATMs or when paying at POS terminals (supermarket, tobacconists, ticket machines, etc.), make sure the person behind you is a sufficient distance away, e.g. the keypad should be covered with your hand when entering your PIN code.

A bank card's PIN code is worth money – at least in relation to the card. The code should thus not be written down anywhere or entrusted to anyone. Although every Erste Bank customer is automatically insured, the insurance does not cover gross negligence, which includes a noted PIN code.

Card limits can be adjusted to suit anticipated use at any time.

Lost or stolen Erste Bank or Sparkasse bank cards should be immediately reported via the central emergency number and to the police. The Erste Bank 24-hour emergency number: 050100 – 20111. For Erste Bank ATM cards ("card airbag"), the institute pays for all damages.

Free copies of the Erste Bank brochure: „Wichtige Tipps für den sicheren Umgang mit Bankkarten und Bargeld“ ("Important tips for keeping bank cards and cash safe") are available at Erste Bank branches.

About the survey:

The Erste Bank contracted market research institute INTEGRAL to conduct a telephone survey about Christmas present spending. Between 9 and 16 November 2011, 500 people were asked about their sources and payment options for Christmas shopping, how this is financed, and the costs incurred for this. The results represent the Austrian population aged 14 years and over (= 7,090,000 people).

[Download photo Klaus Mattes \[jpg; 452.9 KB\]](#)