

Newsflash – St. Patrick’s Day, 17 March 2019

How Marketers Get Lucky on St. Patrick’s Day with \$5.9B Being Spent!

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Are you feeling lucky? Every St. Patrick’s Day, millions of people do - especially in the United States. With more than 126.9 million Americans (30x the population of Ireland) expected to celebrate this year, the holiday can be the pot-of-gold at the end of marketing rainbow for many businesses. From decorations and greeting cards to clothing, food, and drink, over four billion dollars are spent during the celebrations, presenting a fun opportunity for businesses big and small to campaign for their cut. Collecting data from National Retail Federation, WalletHub, US News, and Fox Business among others, we’ve put together this overview to share some of the holiday’s most surprising consumer statistics.

Here are a few highlights:

- 52.3% of Americans plan on celebrating St. Patrick’s Day
- 82.4% Plan on wearing green
- 77% of Americans ages 25-34 celebrate
- \$245 million spent on beer
- 36.9M of Americans claim to have Irish ancestry
- ~ \$5.9 Billion will be spent on St. Patrick’s Day
- The average American spends \$39.65 on the day
- Millennials spend an average of \$42; while individuals 35-44 spend on average \$45.76, the highest of all age groups.
- Only 19% of those celebrating plan on visiting a bar or restaurant.

Questions:

1. Why is St. Patrick’s day important for businesses?
2. What ways of celebrating St. Patrick’s day are mentioned in the text?
3. Why do so many Americans celebrate St. Patrick’s day, including those with no Irish ancestry?
4. Do you think the consumer statistics cited in the text are really surprising?

Suggested videos to watch:

The history of St Patrick:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOqWT2tk9Js>

Saint Patrick - The Amazing Story, From Slave to Saint

<https://youtu.be/wfXUTVCBzbs>

New York City celebrates St. Patrick's Day

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bO4IP7D_y8

10 GREEN IDIOMS YOU CAN’T DO WITHOUT

(to be) green with envy = (to be) very envious

eg. I was green with envy when I heard that my cousin would be going to Bali for a week.

to give the green light = to give approval to proceed

eg. We finally got the green light to start the project.

(to have a) green thumb = to be good with plants/gardens

eg. My neighbour really has a green thumb. His garden looks beautiful!

the grass is always greener on the other side = a place or situation that is far away or different seems better than one’s present situation;

eg. I sometimes think I’d be happier living in Spain. Oh well, the grass is always greener on the other side!

green around the gills = sickly, looking sick

eg. My friend looked green around the gills after the long bus ride.

(to be) green = to be new at something or someplace;

eg. That new guy is really green, he has no idea what to do.

(to be) green = to be concerned about the environment

eg. It is really important that everyone be as green as possible.

green belt = an area of fields and trees around a town

eg. Our council has a policy of increasing the green belt around the city.

green-eyed monster = jealousy

eg. The woman was consumed by the green-eyed monster and it was affecting her life.

greenhorn = an untrained or inexperienced or naive person

eg. The young man is a greenhorn and he has much to learn about his new job.



Who was Saint Patrick?

Patrick was born at the end of the fourth century in Britain. When he was 16, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and taken as a slave to Ireland. He spent six years there before escaping back home and became a priest. Later Patrick returned to Ireland to convert the pagan Irish to Christianity. According to legend, Saint Patrick used the three-leaved shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to them. He spent many years converting the Pagans which eventually turned in to an allegory in which he drove all of the “snakes” out of Ireland. (Note: Ireland has never had any snakes)

Patrick died on the 17th of March and over the following centuries, many legends grew around Patrick which eventually led him to becoming a saint.

Saint Patrick's Day Celebrations

On St. Patrick's Day, it is customary to wear green clothing and accessories (green is the national color of Ireland). There are many colorful parades around Ireland and other parts of the world and many important buildings are lit with green lighting at night to celebrate the day. In Ireland, a St. Patrick's Festival lasts for around five days which showcases Ireland and its culture with concerts, outdoor theater performances and fireworks.

The largest Saint Patrick's Day parade in the world is held in New York (USA) with around 150,000 participants each time. Also in the United States, the north White House fountain has been dyed green for Saint Patrick's Day every year since 2009. The Chicago River is also dyed green on this day.

Why do people pinch on Saint Patrick's Day?

If you don't wear green on St. Patrick's Day then someone may pinch you... or so some people say. You will be interested to know that this is in fact an American tradition, not an Irish one. I confirmed my doubts after asking many people from Ireland and they say they had never heard of this or done it themselves. But why is it done in the US? Supposedly leprechauns pinch people that don't wear green on the 17th of March.

Saint Patrick's Day Vocabulary

A list of typical words associated with Saint Patrick's Day:

cabbage: (noun) a green vegetable consisting of thick leaves in a spherical shape.

emerald: (noun) a green precious stone. Ireland is sometimes called the Emerald Isle.

fiddle: (noun) a violin, especially when used to play folk music.

four-leaf clover: (noun) a clover leaf with four leaves instead of the typical three. They are thought to bring good luck.

harp: (noun) a triangular-shaped musical instrument that has many parallel strings that are plucked to make sound.

Ireland: (noun) the common name of the country called the Republic of Ireland

Irish: (adjective) the nationality of a person from Ireland; from Ireland or relating to it.

legend: (noun) a traditional story that is sometimes regarded as historical but is unauthenticated.

leprechaun: (noun) a small, mischievous creature from Irish folklore

limerick: (noun) a humorous verse of three long and two short lines

parade: (noun) a public procession, especially one celebrating a special day or event.

pinch: (verb) when you squeeze someone's skin between your index finger and thumb.

pot of gold: (noun) a large but distant or imaginary reward. It is said that there is a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow.

saint: (noun) a person acknowledged as being holy or virtuous

Saint Patrick: The patron saint of Ireland

shamrock: (noun) a clover-like plant with three leaves, used as the national emblem of Ireland

