



Is it Really Christmas?



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As emerging Asian markets are increasingly embracing Western consumer trends the retail trade in these markets is increasingly catering to their need. In this edition of Indochina Research's I-TRAK™ survey that monitors changing consumer trends across the region we seek to assess the impact of the most hallowed western shopping time of all – Christmas.

I-TRAK™ Research Design: Random street intercept with 600 male & female consumers aged 15-45 and interviews with 150 retail business representative of key urban areas of the 3 countries – HCMC (Vietnam), Phnom Penh (Cambodia) & Vientiane (Laos). Conducted in November 2006.

Top Occasions When Consumers Spend Most

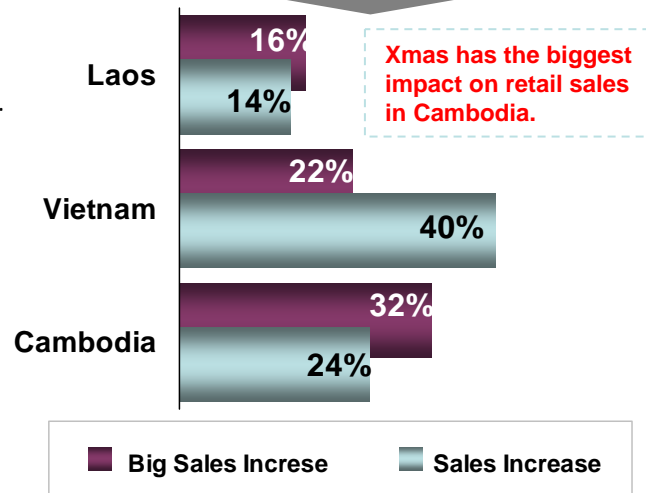
	Cambodia	Laos	Vietnam
1	Khmer NY	Laos NY	Lunar NY
2	Christmas	Valentines	Valentines
2	Valentines	Int'l New Year	Christmas
2	Pchum Ben		Int'l Women Day
2	Chinese NY		VN Women Day
3	Water Festival	Christmas	National Day
3	Int'l New Year	Buddist Day	Int'l Childrens Day
3		National Day	Int'l Labour Day

- 2 in 3 people cite being with friends as the main motivation to celebrate Xmas.
- Typical celebration is a party with friends. Cambodians are far more likely to travel within the country or overseas for Xmas
- Family is a bigger motivator to celebrate Xmas among Vietnamese who spend more time with their families over Xmas.
- While Xmas lunch is most often taken at home in Vietnam & Laos – Cambodians are just as likely to party at a restaurant.
- Across the region 50% mainly gifts for their boy/girl friends. Cambodian & Lao consumers are the top gift givers.
- Most gifts tend to be small tokens with the average total spending of only US\$10. Vietnamese spend twice that of others.
- Some western "traditions" still remain with last minute Xmas shopping being the norm with 3 in 4 people waiting until the day before Xmas day to buy gifts.

Retailers in Vietnam and Cambodia see a bigger impact on their sales due to Xmas than do retailers in Laos. Retailers across the region observe increasing competition for customers at this time of year.

Vietnam retailers are the most likely to increase stock inventories in anticipation for increased sales over the Xmas period BUT don't see a need to offer any Xmas promotions as "sales will increase anyway"

Impact of Xmas on Retail Sales



Unlike western countries Xmas is confined to 1 to 2 day period, gifts bought tend to be more tokenistic, and it is friends rather than the family who are the key social element of Xmas. However, similarities do exist in that last minute Xmas shopping is normal, retail sales are impacted, sales competition is greater and some people (Cambodians) are more "into Xmas" than others.