

# US retail sales rise a tick more than expected in May

WASHINGTON - US consumers spent slightly more than expected in May after a strong surge in retail sales the prior month, official data showed Tuesday.



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Retail and food services sales rose 0.5 percent in May, slowing from the 1.3 percent jump in April, the Commerce Department reported. Analysts had forecast a smaller 0.3 percent gain.

The retail sales data is a key gauge of consumer spending in the United States, the main motor of the economy. Retail sales were up 2.5 percent in May from a year ago.

"This is a solid report," said Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics.

"Now that the weather has returned to normal with the fading of El Nino, and with Easter distortions out of the data, the consumer is back on track."

Gasoline sales jumped 2.1 percent, reflecting in part increased prices. Online sales growth slowed to 1.3 percent, nearly half the pace of April, but sales at restaurants and bars, and clothing stores picked up.

Auto sales increased 0.5 percent, marking a sharp downturn from March as the auto industry cools from a 2015 boom.

Stripping out auto sales, retail sales rose 0.4 percent in May.

**Source:** Sapa-AFP

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