

Last-minute shopping: Target, Walmart, Best Buy, Amazon, other stores offering Christmas Eve same-day delivery

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Getting last-minute gifts to loved ones without setting foot in stores is easier than in past years.

With the pandemic-fueled boom in online shopping, retailers set tight deadlines to guarantee holiday delivery, but they are also offering same-day options, from delivery to curbside pickup.

These good tidings have a downside in some cases. You may have to pay extra to get your late orders delivered on Christmas Eve.

"As many shoppers are discovering right now, all this increased e-commerce has put a strain on traditional shippers. USPS has been battling backlogs and delays," said Marc Gorlin, founder and CEO of Roadie, a crowdsourced delivery platform for same-day and urgent deliveries. "More than ever before, many shoppers will be counting on same-day or urgent delivery for their holiday needs."

Same-day delivery has become more than a convenience: It's an essential service, Evangeline George, Shipt's director of business communications, told U.S. TODAY.

"Early in 2020, we had a goal for people to view same-day delivery not as a luxury, but as a convenience. What we have seen is that the American consumer and retailer have embraced that," George said, adding Shipt delivers from more than 120 retailers, including Target, Bed Bath & Beyond, buybuy Baby, Best Buy, Party City, CVS, Office Depot, Petco and Meijer.

Since early December, more than 3.5 million parcels were delayed for one or more days nationwide, according to a study by shipping consulting company ShipMatrix, which used industry data from over 100,000 shipping locations across the country.

Matthew Lekstutis, global managing partner of supply chain consulting for Tata Consultancy Services, said what has made this year harder is "many of us are exchanging gifts via parcel shipment rather than in

person at traditional large gatherings, further stressing logistics providers who face their own challenges keeping employees safe amidst this huge surge."

Instacart President Nilam Ganenthiran told U.S. TODAY that demand for same-day delivery services like Instacart has surged as people made "lifestyle changes to keep themselves and their families safe."

"With the holidays in full swing and widespread shipping delays, we're seeing more people turn to Instacart to put food on their table and, now, send last-minute gifts to loved ones," Ganenthiran said.

Instacart delivers the Disney store, Sephora, Bed Bath & Beyond, Best Buy, Big Lots, Staples, 7-Eleven and partners with more than 500 national, regional and local retailers.

The COVID-19 crisis has led to an expansion—and reliance—on what Amazon started with the recent growth in demand for same-day delivery, Gorlin says.

Roadie has added 5,000 stores to its footprint, which is currently more than 15,000 locations nationwide and includes a thousand Home Depot, all Tractor Supply stores and recently added Chico's, he said.

"We can't always forecast demand—but the crowdsourcing model succeeds because it doesn't need to. We can add delivery resources in [real-time](#)," Gorlin said. "As delivery volume goes up, the number of active drivers delivering within our system goes up as well, while delivery times and costs remain the same."

Place same-day orders early

For Christmas Eve orders, experts advise that consumers place orders

early in the day and realize that delivery times can depend on the availability of store employees and paid shoppers who round up orders.

On-demand restaurant delivery services including DoorDash and Postmates also are delivering for retailers.

Target is offering same-day Christmas Eve delivery through Shipt on orders placed on the Target app or website as late as 5 p.m. Thursday. However, delivery times vary, so ordering early is advised. Amazon also has same-day delivery on Christmas Eve.

Walmart's cutoff to place orders for Christmas Eve delivery and pickup ends Wednesday pending availability, but there's an express delivery option to order by 1 p.m. Thursday for delivery in two hours or less pending availability. Orders need to be \$35 or more.

Consumers willing to pick up their orders in stores or at the curb can often take advantage of savings. J.C. Penney is offering an additional 10% off select items with same-day pickup, and orders can be placed through 3 p.m. local time Christmas Eve.

Belk is offering an extra 5% off pickup orders and one person per day at each store through Thursday who uses a pickup option gets the value of their order back in store gift cards up to \$575 in a promotion called the "Very Merry Surprise."

Walgreens, which has same-day [delivery](#) with both Postmates and DoorDash, recently added pickup in as little as 30 minutes for online orders at the curb, through pharmacy drive-thrus and in stores.

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