



# The Asian American Consumer

AANHPI Heritage Month Thought Leadership

May 2026



# What's included

Illustrating the Growing Power of the Asian American Consumer



Identity, values, and voice of Asian Americans

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Headwinds and tailwinds for Asian Americans

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What and where is the Asian American shopper purchasing

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How to connect with the Asian American consumer

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## ***Note on Terminology: the Use of Asian, Asian-American, and AANHPI***

Since 2000, the U.S. Census has reported Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders separately from Asians. Within NIQ's data sources, panelists self-identify their race, and NHPI respondents may select different options (e.g., "Asian," "Asian-Pacific Islander," or "All Other") depending on the source.

For this analysis, the terms "Asian" and "Asian American" are used for consistency and refer to individuals who self-identify as Asian in the Census or as Asian or Asian-Pacific Islander in panelist data.

These terms are intended to be inclusive and respectful of the diverse identities within the Asian diaspora. We remain committed to evolving our language and frameworks to better reflect the richness and complexity of the communities we serve, fostering deeper cultural understanding and more accurate insights.

## ***What is the **ALL-IN** Employee Resource Group (ERG) at NielsenIQ?***

The ALL-IN (Asian Learning, Leadership, Innovation, and Networking) ERG is dedicated to connecting, supporting, and uplifting Asian employees within North America. To learn more ALL-IN and receive updates on upcoming events, please join the CommunityCliq group [here](#).



# Identity, values, and voice of Asian Americans



## *Culture Shapes How Asian Americans Buy*

Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing consumer segments in the U.S., but their purchasing decisions are shaped by distinct cultures, languages, immigration histories, and values.

Understanding this diversity is not a nuance — it's a prerequisite for relevance, trust, and growth.

**24.4M**  
Asian individuals in  
the United States

**54%**

are immigrants,  
with half of them  
living in the U.S.  
over 21 years

**4%**

identify as Hispanic  
or Latino

**63%**

speak a language  
other than English  
at home

**4 in 5**

Asian Americans  
identify as  
Asian alone

**1 in 2**

Asian immigrants  
came to the U.S.  
for economic  
and educational  
opportunities

**10%**

of the Asian  
population lives  
in poverty

**78%**

of Asian adults have  
experienced the  
“forever foreigner”  
stereotype

**34.7**

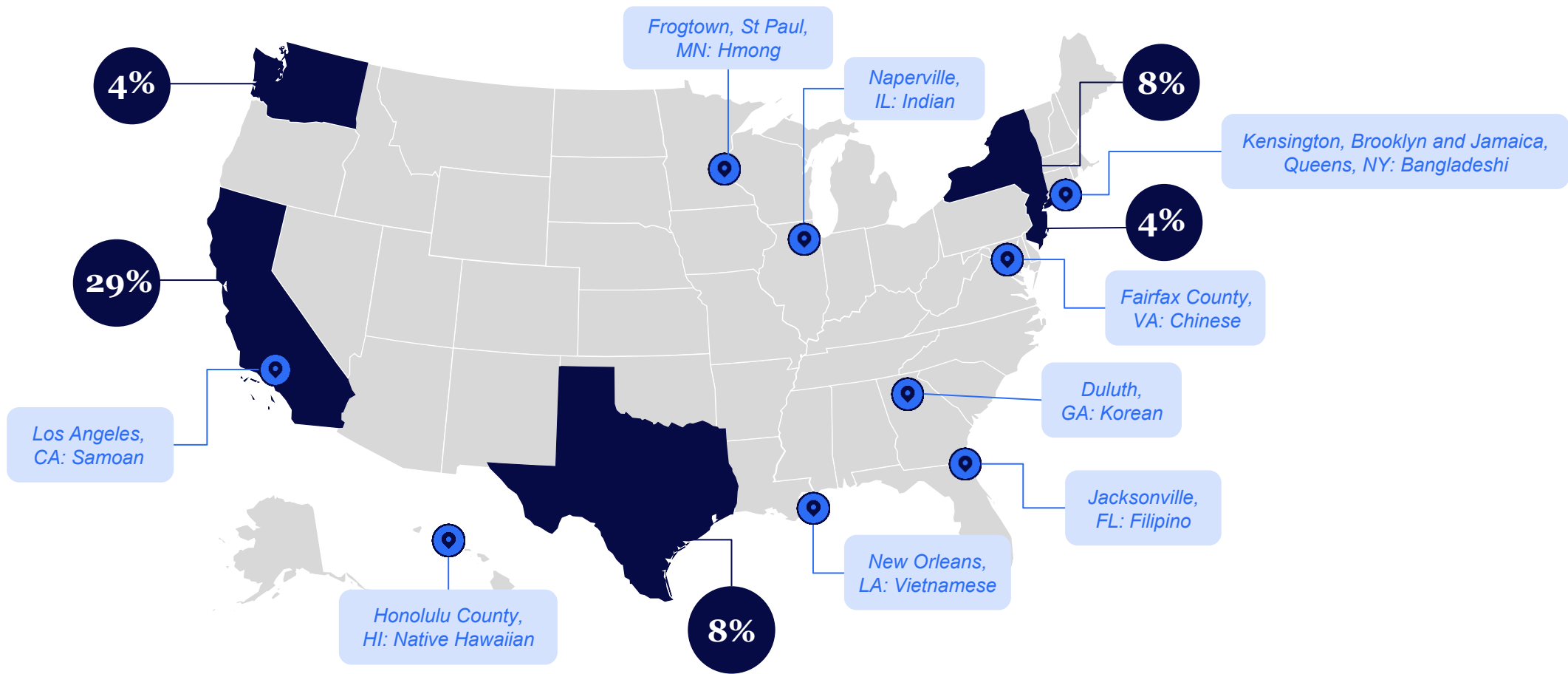
Is the median age,  
compared to 38.0  
for total U.S.



# 53% of Asian American consumers reside in five states

Ethnicity-specific Asian enclaves emerge even where Asian populations are smaller, maintaining strong cultural continuity through close-knit communities

## Examples of Asian Enclaves by City and Ethnicity



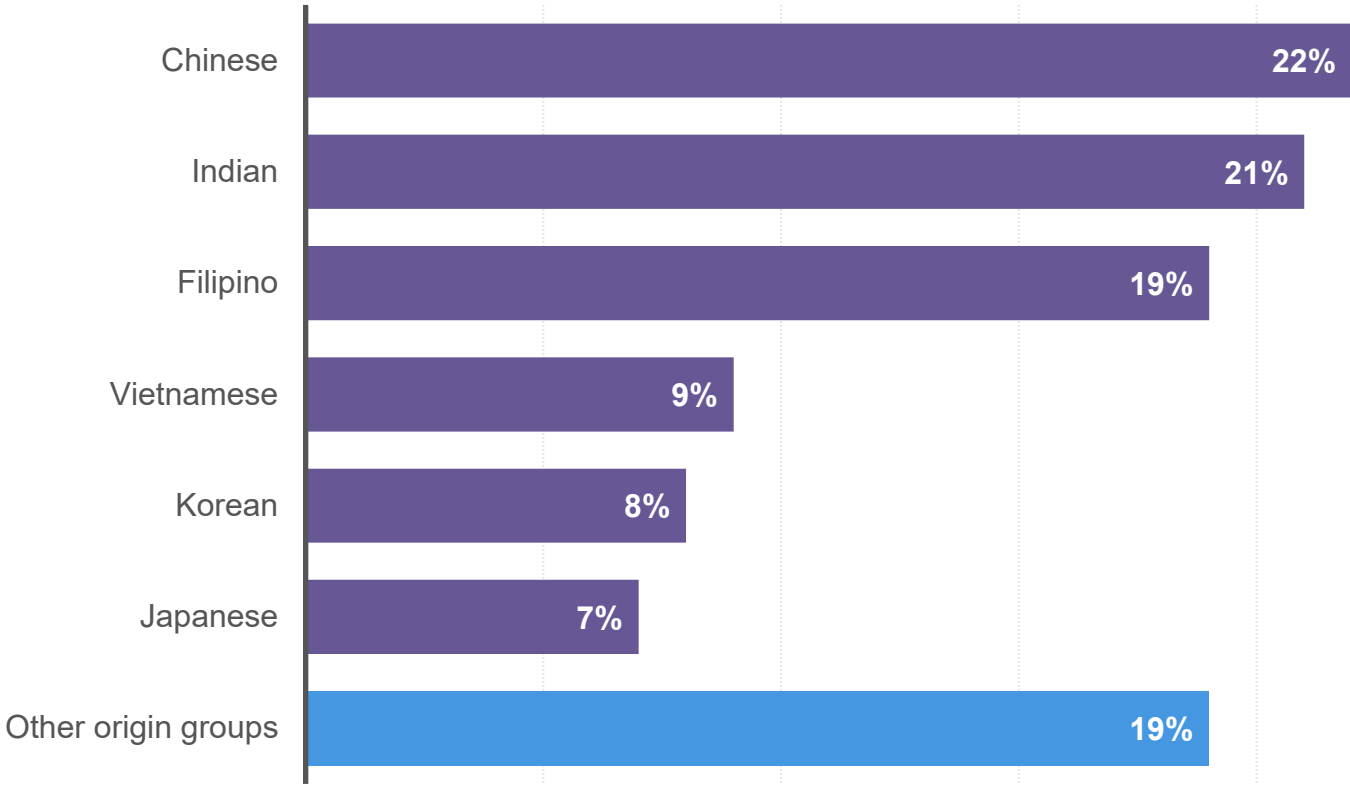
Source; Pew Research Center



# *Asian Americans are not a monolith.*

Each of these different groups – and oftentimes, even within each national origin - have their own languages, cuisines, holidays, and more.

% of the U.S. Asian population that is \_\_\_\_



Other origin groups covers 20 groups, including Pakistani, Hmong, Cambodian, Thai, Taiwanese, Bangladeshi, Laotian, and more.

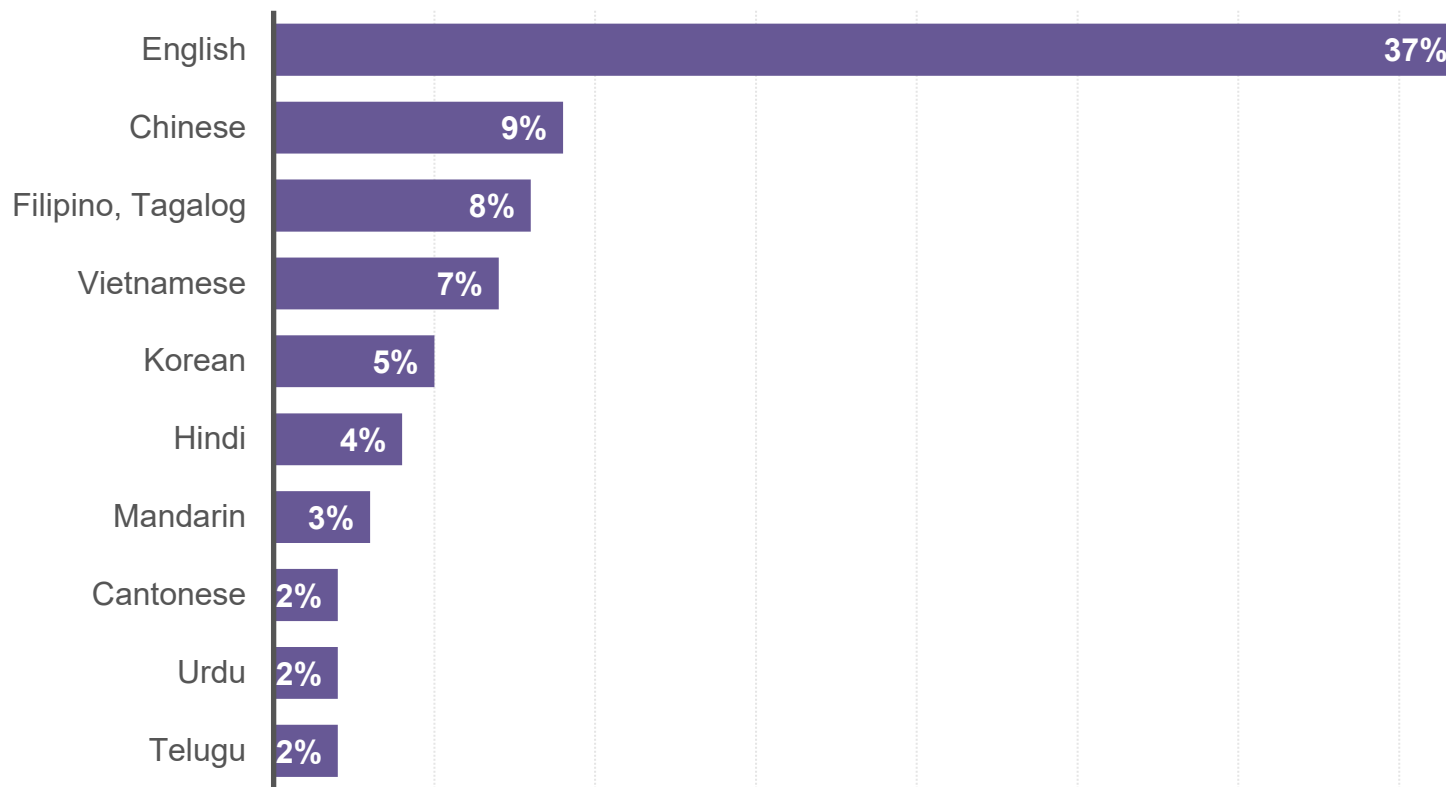
Source: Pew Research Center, 2023



## Language diversity reflects Asian Americans' immigration journeys

English isn't always the default language. **68% of U.S. born** Asian Americans use English at home, while only **14% of immigrants** use English primarily.

% of Asians in the U.S. ages 5 and older who speak \_\_\_\_ at home\*



*Note - Identified languages spoken at home are based on self-reports. The Census recognizes Chinese as a macrolanguage containing individual languages. Languages are reported at the individual language whenever possible and at the macrolanguage level when it is not possible to identify the individual language.*

# Asian Americans are highly educated and overrepresent in higher-income groups

Consumers with more spending power are driving CPG spending, while households making under \$100K are pulling back

Asian American Income Distribution

|                      | 12%   | 11%    | 12%   | 12%   | 19%   | 35%    |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Index to Total Panel | 79    | 63     | 74    | 91    | 110   | 164    |
| CPG spend % change   | -6.6% | -15.1% | -4.9% | -4.8% | +9.4% | +19.5% |

- Household income under \$25,000
- Household income \$25,000-\$49,999
- Household income \$50,000-\$74,999
- Household income \$75,000-\$99,999
- Household income \$100,000-\$149,999
- Household income \$150,000+

Asian American Education Distribution

|                      | 17%   | 21%   | 63%   |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Index to Total Panel | 52    | 71    | 164   |
| CPG spend % change   | +4.5% | +4.5% | +7.7% |

- High School or Less
- Some College
- College Graduate / Post College Graduate

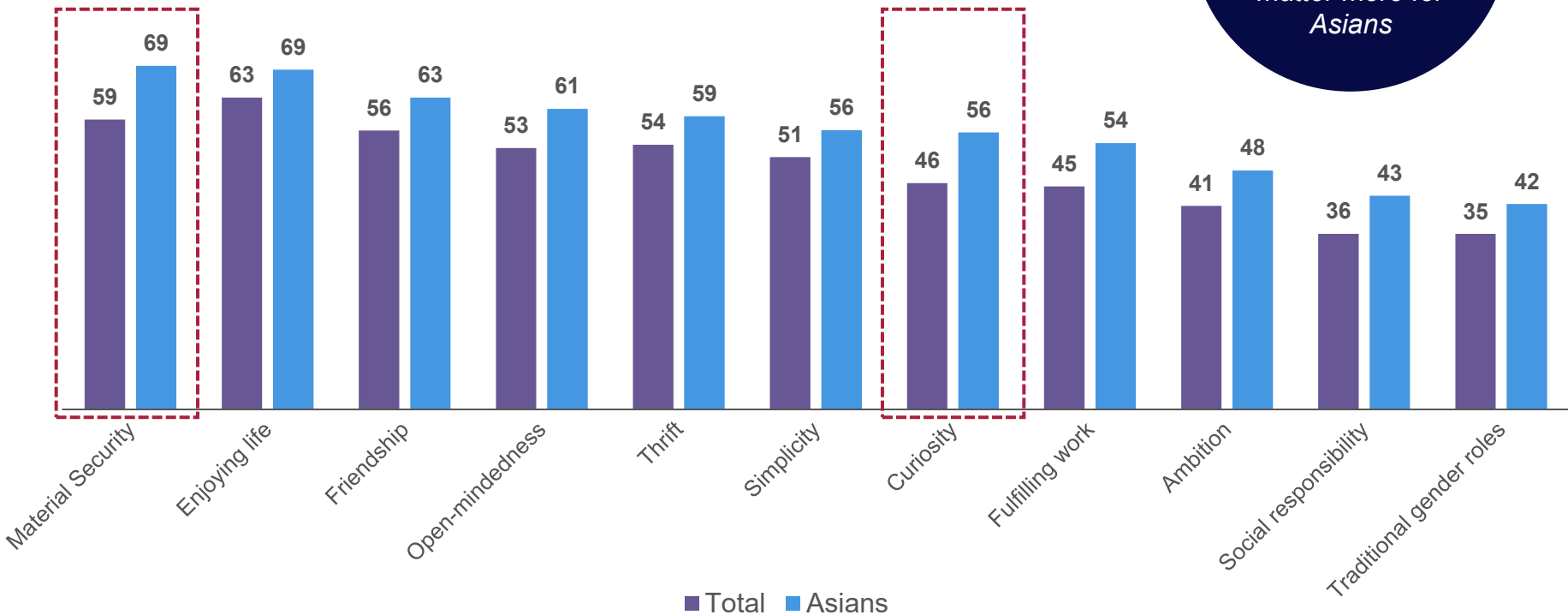
# Asians value authenticity, freedom, and family with a greater connection to traditional values and personal relationships



## Top 10 values for Asians

- Authenticity
- Freedom
- Protecting the family
- Honesty
- Material Security
- Stable personal relationships
- Enjoying life
- Knowledge
- Self-esteem
- Friendship

### More Important Values among Asian consumers with the largest gap between Total US and Asians



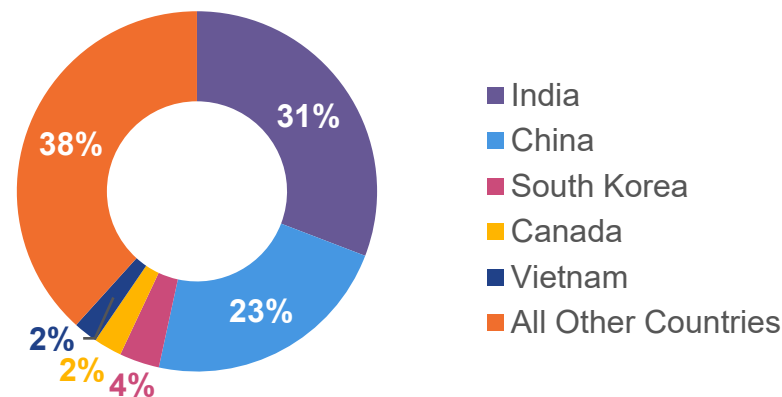
Source: NielsenIQ Consumer Life 2025, % of respondents who agree that each value is a guiding principle in their lives (top-2 box agreement on a 7 point scale, total of 57 values are rated)

# Headwinds and tailwinds for Asian Americans

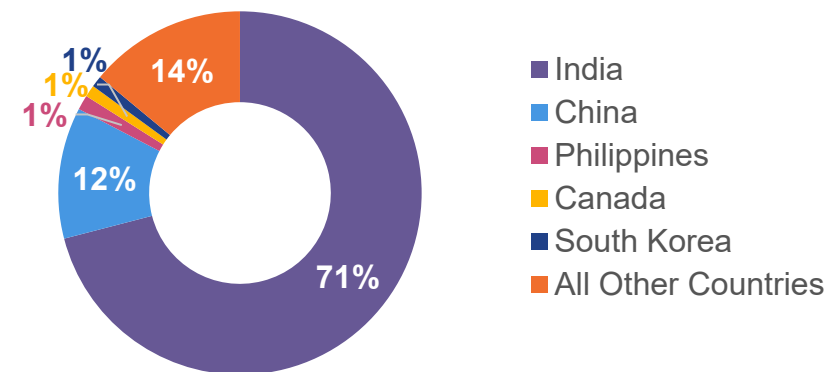
# Immigration policy changes could shift the trajectory of Asian American growth

A disruption in the Asian talent pipeline has downstream implications for long-term spending power

Places of Origin of International Students



Places of Origin of H1B Recipients



Source: IIE Open Doors, USCIS



# Asian consumers' highest-ranked concerns center on costs, global policy, and the environment

## Top ranked concerns for Asian consumers



Inflation & High Prices



Cost of Healthcare



Recession & Unemployment



Money Enough to Live Right & Pay Bills

## Concerns that Asian consumers rank higher compared to other races/ethnicities



### Costs

- Recession & Unemployment
- Cost of Healthcare



### Global Policy

- Trade Restrictions Impacting My Country
- Relations with Foreign Countries



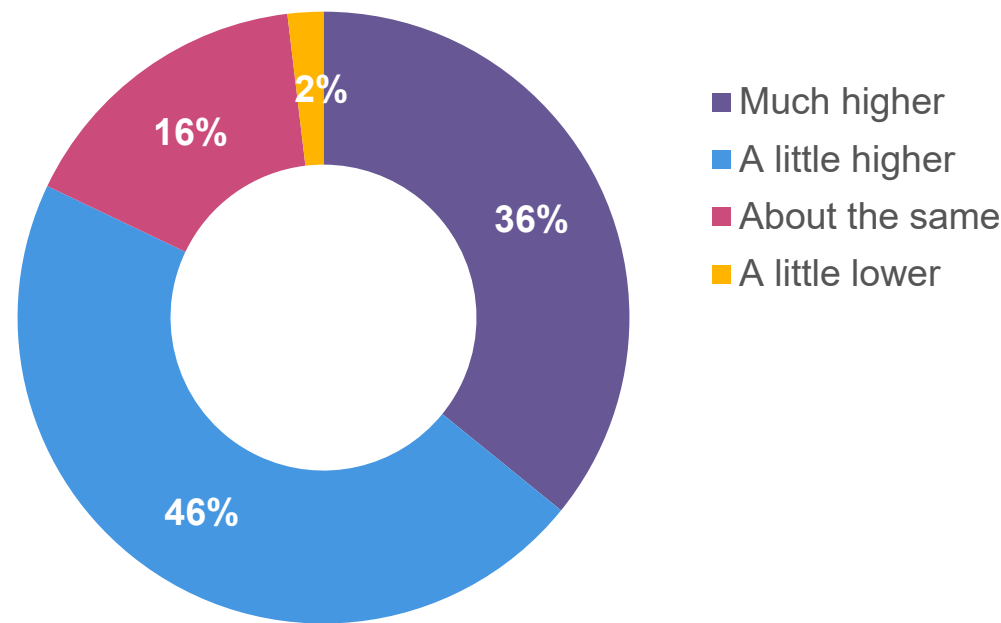
### Environmental

- Environmental Pollution
- Global Climate Change/Global Warming

Source: NIQ Consumer Life

# In a time of financial uncertainty, Asian Americans are conscious of rising prices and are adapting their shopping trips to fit their needs

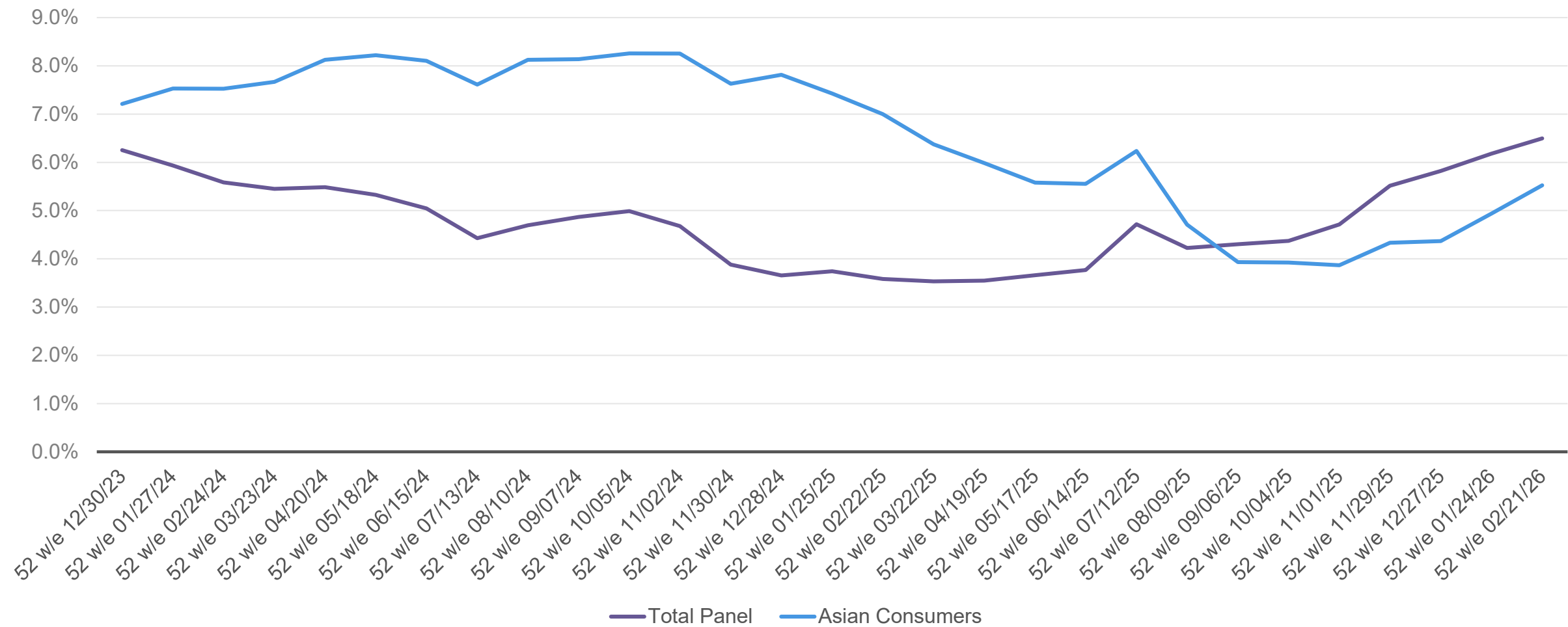
What is your perception of the cost of groceries and everyday household items compared to last year?



Source: March 2026 Omnibus Survey

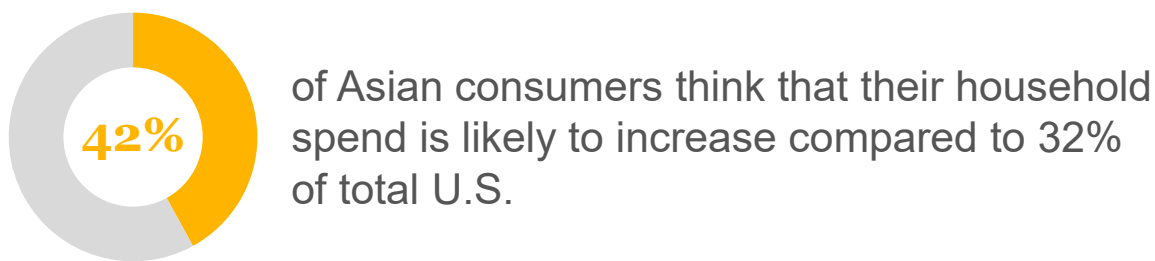
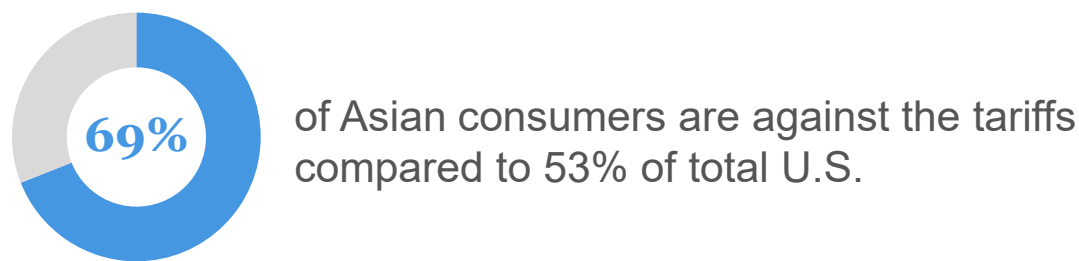
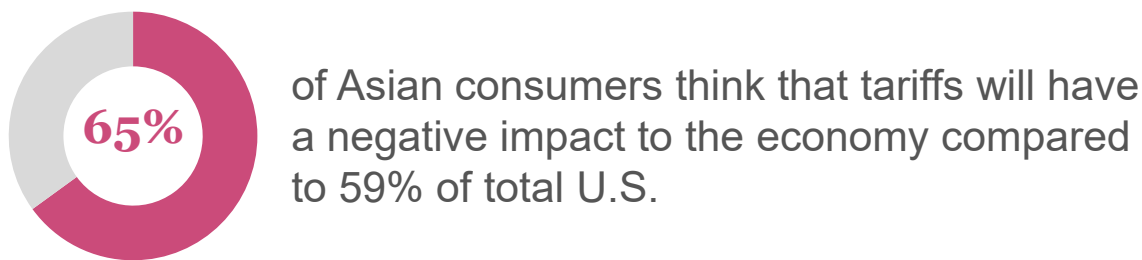
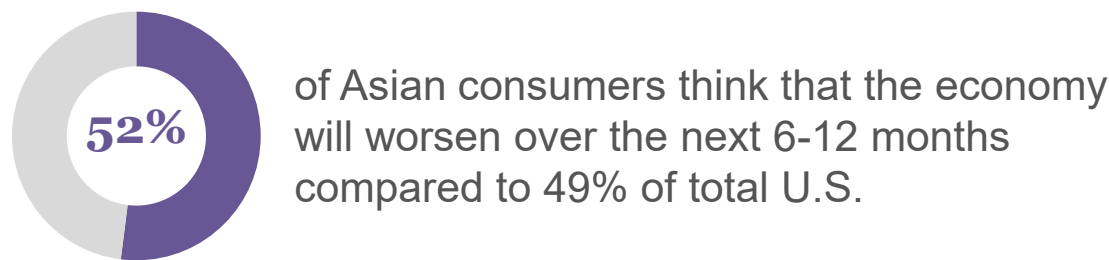
# Asian consumer dollar growth has slowed and now is under pacing total panel

Asian American vs Total Panel Total Store Dollar % Chg vs YA

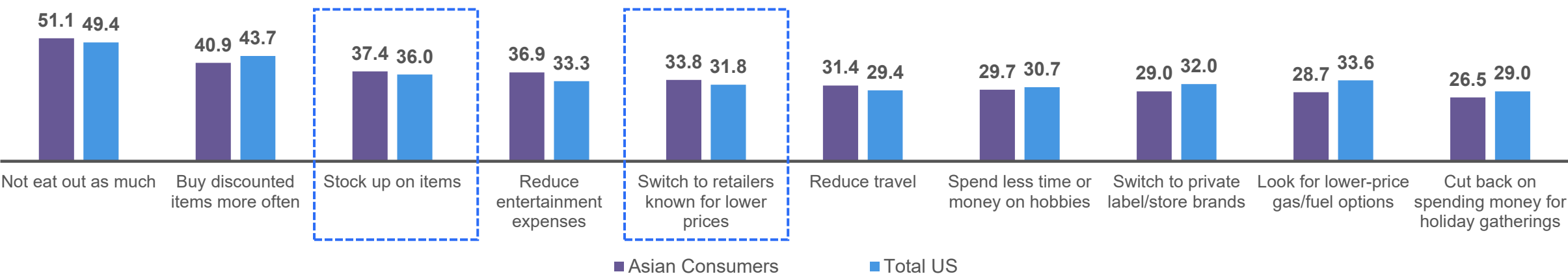


Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Omnishopper | Latest 52 Wks – w/e 02/21/26

# Asian consumers view tariffs and their impact more negatively compared to total U.S.



## Actions taken in response to the tariffs

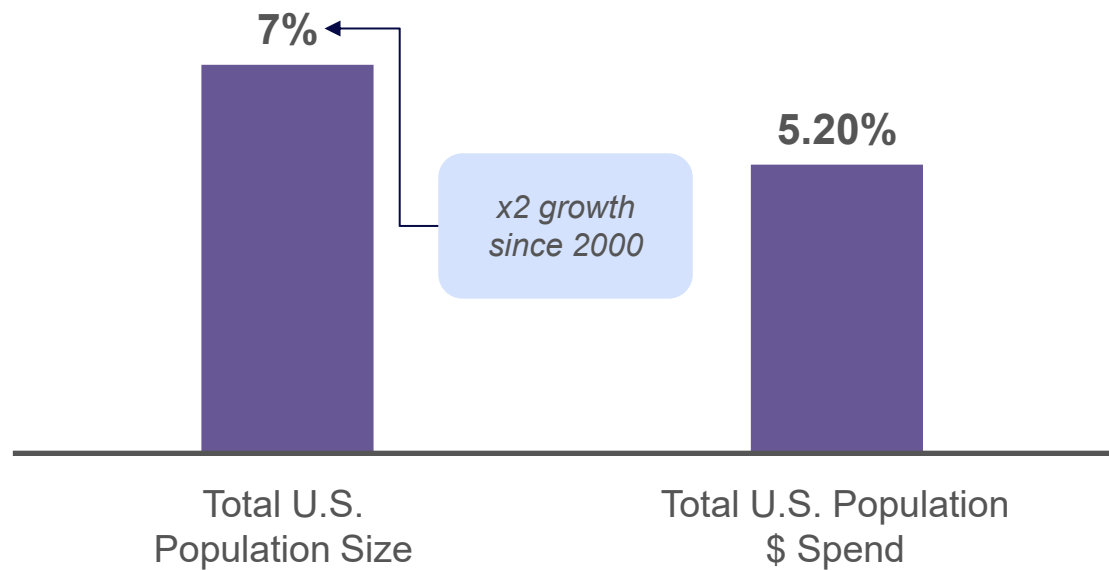


Source: NielsenIQ Tariff Survey Wave 4

# What and where is the Asian American shopper purchasing

# Asian consumer spending lags the total market despite rapid population growth

Asian American Representation within...



There is an opportunity to close the frequency *and* volume gap via mission-based shopping and culturally relevant occasions



Asian American value per buyer in 2025

\$15,148

6.5% less than total panel



Asian American occasions per buyer in 2025

323

9.5% less than total panel

Considering the availability and costs of items today, as well as financial situations, Asian Americans are more likely to say “now is a good time to wait” to buy things<sup>2</sup>

Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Omnishopper | Cal Yr 2025 - 12/27/2025; 2. NIQ Consumer Life

# Value, not price alone, is driving Asian American channel preferences for warehouse club

Culturally relevant products like Korean beef bone broth, ghee, papadam, and mooncakes appear seasonally and year-round

| Channel           | \$ Sales | \$ Share |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Mass Merch        | \$37.8B  | 34%      |
| Grocery Store     | \$30.6B  | 28%      |
| Warehouse Club    | \$23.7B  | 21%      |
| Department Store  | \$3.1B   | 3%       |
| Home Improvement  | \$2.7B   | 2%       |
| Beauty Supply     | \$2.6B   | 2%       |
| Drug Store        | \$2.4B   | 2%       |
| Convenience/Gas   | \$2.2B   | 2%       |
| Remaining Outlets | \$2.0B   | 2%       |
| Dollar Store      | \$1.3B   | 1%       |

211 index vs  
Total Panel

17% of Asians state that the Club channel is best for purchasing food compared to only 6% of non-Asians<sup>2</sup>

Viral Tiktok videos show off the diverse assortment of Costco's Asian products, particularly in highly Asian populated areas like Orange County, CA



Source: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Omnishopper | Cal Yr 2025 - 12/27/2025; 2. NIQ Category Shopping Fundamentals Fall 2025 Wave (Channel Preference)

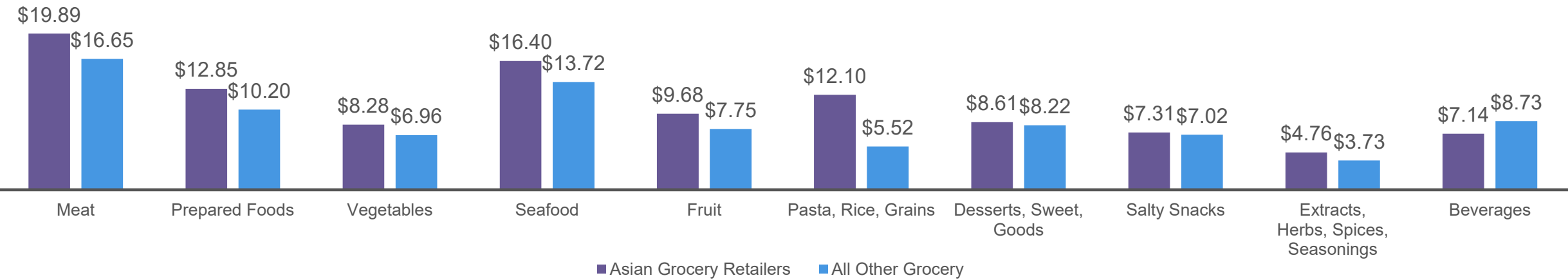
# Fresh produce is a priority in Asian American FMCG spending



Dataset: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Omnishopper | Full Year 2025

# Asian shoppers spend more per trip across top categories in national Asian grocery retailers like H-Mart, Patel Brothers, and 99 Ranch

\$ Spend Per Trip



Share of Retailer \$ Sales by Category, *green indicates over-indexing categories*

|                 | Meat | Prepared Foods | Vegetables | Seafood | Fruit | Pasta, Rice, Grains | Desserts, Sweet Goods | Salty Snacks | Extracts, Herbs, Spices, Seasonings | Beverages |
|-----------------|------|----------------|------------|---------|-------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Asian Retailers | 16%  | 12%            | 12%        | 10%     | 9%    | 5%                  | 3%                    | 3%           | 3%                                  | 2%        |
| A/O Grocery     | 14%  | 6%             | 7%         | 3%      | 8%    | 1%                  | 3%                    | 3%           | 1%                                  | 6%        |

Dataset: NielsenIQ Panel On Demand Omnishopper | Full Year 2025

# Food as medicine has been an enduring trend in Asian cuisine and modern CPG is just playing catch-up



Matcha  
**+22.9%**



Probiotics  
**+6.5%**



Turmeric  
**+5.6%**



Collagen  
**+2.0%**



Ashwagandha  
**+16.5%**

**114**

Asian Americans’ health management style skews towards **Healthy Homeopaths**: health opinions are driven by opinions from friends, family, or independent research rather than doctors. They prefer homeopathic medicine over prescription drugs and exercise and eat a healthy diet.

Source: [1] NielsenIQ NPI xAOC Total US Latest 52 Weeks Ending 3/21/2026. Food & Beverage CAGR, [2] MRI Simmons

# How to connect with the Asian American consumer

# Asian American soft power reached new heights in the past year through pop culture, sports, and social media

Alysa Liu, bursting with joy, wins first U.S. Olympic women's figure skating gold in 24 years



Alysa Liu is the first U.S. woman to win a figure skating medal since 2006, and the first to win gold since Sarah Hughes at the Salt Lake City Games in 2002. Jamie Squire / Getty Images



By Marcus Thompson II

Feb. 19, 2026 | Updated Feb. 21, 2026



ENTERTAINMENT MOVIES

## How *KPop Demon Hunters* Conquered the World

 ADD TIME ON GOOGLE

by **Kayti Burt**  
BURT IS A CONTRIBUTOR FOR TIME.

Updated: AUG 22, 2025 4:09 PM ET



# Cultural misalignment puts brand equity at risk

Asian Americans’ strong emphasis on authenticity means cultural oversights can disproportionately impact trust

### Boba tea company apologises over Canada Dragons' Den row

14 October 2024

Madeline Halpert  
BBC News, Washington DC

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The Marvel actor has called for social media users to stop attacking a Canadian drink company after he voiced concern over the company's Dragons' Den pitch

### David Chang issues apology over ‘chili crunch’ trademark controversy

The celebrity chef and Momofuku's CEO addressed the controversy in a recent episode of Chang's podcast and announced plans for the future of the trademark.

Updated April 15, 2024, 11:51 AM EDT / Source: TODAY

Rachel Askinasi





### Top 5 values for Asians

- Authenticity
- Freedom
- Protecting the family
- Honesty
- Material security

Source: NIQ Consumer Life

# Emerging Asian food and beverage businesses move stateside, catering to adventurous and trend-chasing consumers

The New York Times

**Get Ready, America: Here Come China's Food and Drink Chains**

China's fast-food and beverage brands have an opportunity to expand in the United States and escape cutthroat competition at home.





**How L.A. became the hub for omakase, bite by bite**

Omakase took off in the U.S. by importing traditional Japanese culture, rather than embracing fusion. How L.A. started it all.



Executive chef Yohel Matsuaki at Sushi Ginza Onodera in Los Angeles. — MIT CREATIVE

FOOD

**Din Tai Fung's co-CEOs talk legacy, TikTok virality, and the art of making Americans fall in love with dumplings**

By Aditi Bharade + Follow



Aaron and Albert Yang, the two CEOs of Din Tai Fung, are the third-generation leaders of the iconic dumpling chain. Din Tai Fung

160

*Fast and Curious Foodies*

Asian Americans are the cutting edge of food culture and are more willing to experiment with the newest food trends and products

Source: MRI Simmons



## Asian consumers: *What to know*

- Asian Americans are one of the **fastest-growing** consumer segments in the U.S., exhibiting strong buyer power driven by **education, income, and cultural influence**.
- Asian consumers are **intentional, mission-driven shoppers**, prioritizing fresh foods, shopping at retailers that deliver strong perceived value.
- Cultural traditions, food rituals, and wellness practices — many rooted in heritage — continue to influence modern CPG trends, often ahead of mainstream adoption.

### *Takeaways for manufacturers and retailers when engaging with Asian Americans:*

1. **Cultural Authenticity is Non-Negotiable:** Authenticity is the top core value; cultural missteps can quickly erode trust. Invest in accurate representation, credible storytelling, and respectful execution.
2. **Language, Occasion & Assortment Matter:** Language preferences, traditional foods, and holidays shape shopping behavior. Winning brands show up with relevant assortment, occasion-based merchandising, and bilingual or culturally clear communication.
3. **Community & Credibility Drive Loyalty:** Trust is built through community presence — from ethnic retailers and local enclaves to culturally connected creators and word-of-mouth influence. Relevance travels through family, peers, and cultural networks, not just mass media.



# Thank you!

QR Code for feedback



## NielsenIQ