



16th June 2026

## **The Devil Eats Popcorn – May spend rise driven by box office blockbusters and discretionary spend bounce – AIB Spend Trend**

- **Restaurant spend up 10% over last 12 months, serving up a bumper May for food outlets**
  - **Silver screen spend - cinema spend up 53% on May 2025**
  - **Power surge - electrical goods spend up 11% ahead of World Cup**
- **Vinted, not minted effect - almost 200% rise in second hand clothes sales while clothing store sales fall**

Discretionary activity spend among AIB card holders was up in May, with spend in restaurants (+10%), pubs (+5%) and fast food (+7%) all increasing year on year. Overall spend for the month increased by 2% according to the May **AIB Spend Trend**. The increase in discretionary activity spend comes despite Irish consumers having been impacted by fuel and energy cost increases.

**Entertainment spend** was up 6% over 12 months, partially driven by **strong growth in cinemas** with sales up 53% on last May. Sunday May 3rd was the highest spend day in cinemas this year, taking in the recent release of *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, while *Michael* was also proving a thriller in the box office charts. Spend on **electrical goods** was up 11% year on year in advance of the World Cup.

Service station spend continues to rise, with an 8% increase over 12 months, while EV charging is up 74%. Spend on road and bridge tolls is up 7%. Airline spend is down 6%, cruise line spend is down 29% while travel agency spend is down 3%, all over a 12 month period.

**Clothing store spend was down** 9% on the level seen in May 2025, juxtaposed with **huge growth in second hand stores** – such as Vinted - spend, which is up 197% year on year.

When looking at clothing spend, the share between men and women varies by county. Monaghan has the lowest male share, with men accounting for 23% of spend compared to 77% for women. At the other end of the scale, Westmeath records the highest male share, with men accounting for 31% of clothing spend versus 69% for women.

The data was compiled from 83 million card transactions carried out by AIB customers in store and online during May 2026 and has been anonymised and aggregated. Data provided by AIB features one of the most comprehensive and accurate data sets on consumer spending in Ireland.

- Taxi spend was up 8% over 12 months
- Pharmacy spend was up 3% year on year
- While pub sales rose, off licence sales were down 10%

AIB's Head of Consumer, Adrian Moynihan said "The AIB Spend Trend data for May shows a resilience among Irish consumers after the initial impact of rising energy costs impacted spending

patterns the previous month. In particular, spend on discretionary activities such as eating out and cinema trips increased strongly in May. Service station spend levels remain elevated however as a result of the continued impact of the Middle East conflict. By monitoring these latest data trends, AIB can better support our customers, enabling them to make informed choices that suit their needs, whilst ensuring businesses are equipped to respond to changes in how consumers spend. As a trusted partner, AIB is committed to meaningful, lasting relationships in the communities we are embedded in across Ireland, supporting our customers and their long-term financial wellbeing.”

**ENDS**

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