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Shopping Differences Between Sexes Show Evolution at Work

The last-minute holiday dash is on: Men tend to rush in for their prized item, pay, and leave. Women study the fabrics, color, texture and price.

The hunting and gathering ritual of yesteryear continues today in malls around the world. Understanding the shopping behavior of your partner can help relieve stress at the stores, according to a researcher at the University of Michigan.

Daniel Kruger of the U-M School of Public Health says that gathering edible plants and fungi is traditionally done by women. In modern terms, think of filling a basket by selecting one item at a time, he said. Women in foraging societies return to the same patches that yield previous successful harvests, and usually stay close to home and use landmarks as guides.

Foraging is a daily activity, often social and can include young children if necessary. When gathering, women must be very adept at choosing just the right color, texture, and smell to ensure food safety and quality. They also must

time harvests, and know when a certain depleted patch will regenerate and yield good harvest again.

In modern terms, women are much more likely to know when a specific type of item will go on sale, for example, than men. Women also spend much more time choosing the perfect gift.

Men on the other hand, often have a specific item in mind and want to get in, get it, and get out. In ancestral times, it was critical to get meat home as quickly as possible, Kruger said. Taking young children isn't safe in a hunt and would likely hinder progress. Of course these behaviors aren't genetically determined and don't apply to everyone, but there are consistent broad themes, Kruger said.

Story Source: The above story is reprinted from materials provided by University of Michigan.