

Dig In

The Fed Cut

Name a better “I would love to be a fly on the wall” situation than the Federal Reserve meeting room that probably felt like holiday dinner with the extended family when someone speaks up and says, “Actually, I disagree.” The policy decision itself wasn’t shocking, but the three dissents definitely added some awkward chair-shuffling energy, something we haven’t seen since 2019.

The Fed’s updated Summary of Economic Projections offered us insights on how policymakers see the road ahead, and apparently, it’s showing fewer rate cuts. Officials are penciling in one cut next year, while markets are still betting on two. Part of the holdup? Inflation is sticking around like that guest who won’t take the hint that the party ended an hour ago. Core Personal Consumption Expenditures for 2026 is now projected at 2.5%, up from a projected 2.2% in December 2024.

But it’s not all lingering inflation blues. The Fed also sees stronger economic growth in the years ahead. 2026 GDP is now expected to hit 2.3%, a noticeable lift from September’s 1.8% forecast.

And what about Fed Chair Jerome Powell? He hinted the Fed may pause for now, noting labor market risks nudged them toward a cut, but inflation still keeps them far from “mission accomplished.” For more on this topic, check out our latest [Sight|Lines](#).

Weekly Specials

We’re basically paying a second rent these days thanks to [subscriptions](#). The average person juggles 19 plans costing \$254 a month – streaming, music, even coffee. Experts say: Audit your accounts, cancel what you don’t use, and embrace churn. Turn off auto-renew so apps have to earn your business every month. (Sourced from The Wall Street Journal – a subscription-based newspaper.)

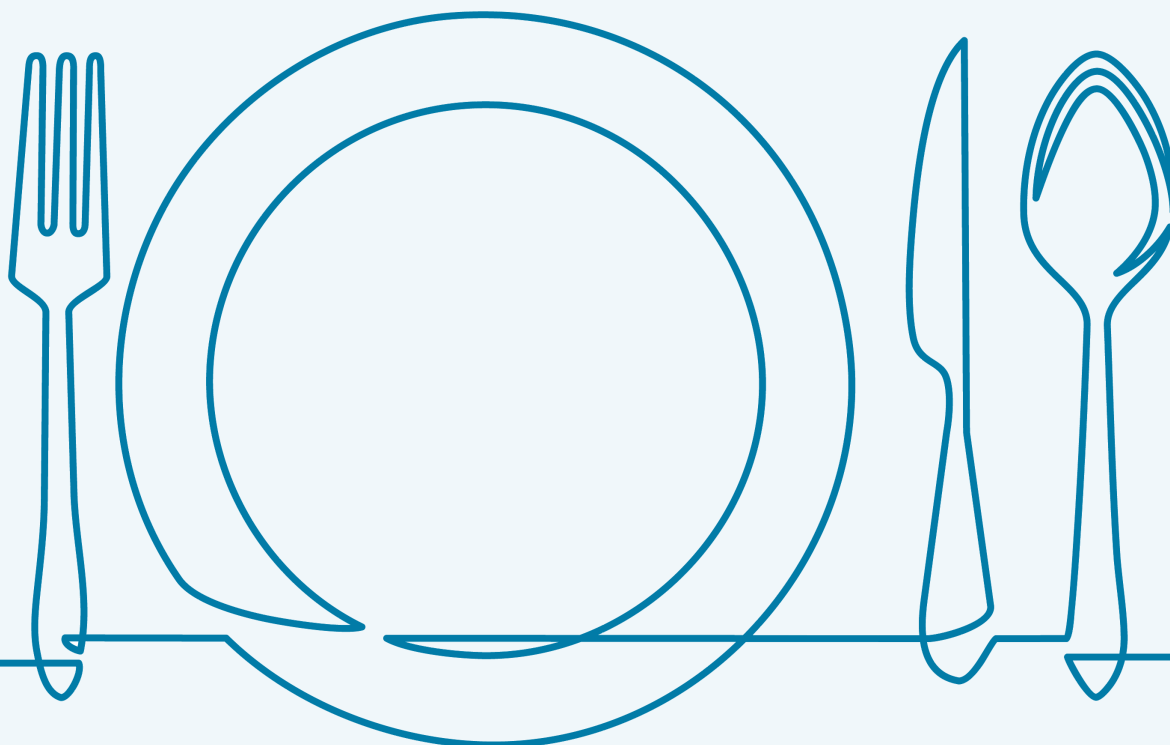
Australia just grounded its under-16s from [TikTok](#), [Instagram](#), and the rest of the social crew. Platforms now have to verify ages with IDs or facial scans. The rule affects more than 1.5 million accounts, though experts admit teens will still outsmart the internet’s adults.

Holiday stress is getting outsourced to silicon. About 42% of shoppers are already using AI tools like [ChatGPT](#) for gift ideas, and nearly half would let AI pick presents outright. When the choice is AI help or spending another hour debating sweater colors with your in-laws ... the machines win.

A [baby fur seal](#) waltzed into a New Zealand craft beer bar, hid under the dishwasher, and refused to leave. The bribe to lure it out? A salmon pizza topping. Conservation rangers eventually escorted the underage patron home.

Corporate Lunch

- **Amazon's** Packaging Innovation Lab is basically **Fear Factor for boxes**. Stress tests galore to keep your gifts unbothered and unbroken.
- **Fanatics** just scored the ultimate hat trick: running retail and merchandising for **104 World Cup matches** across North America. Game on.
- **McCormick's** 2026 **flavor of the year** has just been announced. Meet Black Currant: Tart-and-tangy with a sweet, fruity flavor!
- Pause the movie! **Paramount** versus **Netflix** for **Warner Bros.**? Streaming's hottest feud just dropped as Paramount made a massive **hostile bid** for Warner after Netflix's announced deal.
- **Nvidia** **dethroned Apple** as the best-managed company of 2025 while also getting the go-ahead to ship artificial intelligence (AI) chips to China ... talk about a **double processor** flex.
- **Prada** has bought **Versace** for nearly \$1.4 billion, confirming **opposites do indeed attract**. That's one way to keep your rivals in check – plaid pun intended.
- **Svedka's** first Super Bowl ad is serving **retro-future** realness: Fembot is being rebooted with AI for the ultimate vodka comeback.



One Financial Plaza | 501 North Broadway | St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated | Member SIPC & NYSE | www.stifel.com

Diversification and asset allocation do not ensure a profit or protect against loss.

Stifel does not provide legal or tax advice. You should consult with your legal or tax advisor regarding your particular situation.

Investing involves risks, including the possible loss of principal invested. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Index returns include the reinvestment of dividends but do not include adjustments for brokerage, custodian, and advisory fees. Indices are unmanaged and are not available for direct investment.

This material is for informational purposes only and is not an offer or solicitation to purchase or sell any security or instrument discussed herein.

*If you no longer wish to receive these types of communications from Stifel, please reply with a subject line of "unsubscribe."
Please note you will still receive electronic communication as it pertains to your account(s).*