

Holiday shoppers are everywhere right now but who would even guess that the person next to you in the meat department could be part of the 1 in 11 using the 5 finger discount. Yes, I said meat department.

Believe it or not Filet Mignon tops the list of this years most shoplifted item as stated by ADWeek.com. How to stuff a nice piece of filet mignon where it won't be seen is not a picture I really want in my head. According to the list, luxury meat theft is up 21 percent. That takes the old saying "Champagne taste on a beer budget" to a whole new level. Some of the other items on this list surprised me but as a former employee of a large retail store, some items I knew about.

Let's run down the list

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1. *Filet Mignon* – can you put security tags on meat?
2. *Expensive liquor* – Here in North Carolina it would be more difficult as you purchase alcohol in a state run store, but in states like Nevada (where I come from) you can buy alcohol in your standard grocery store. After working Loss Prevention I could tell you stories about empty Vodka bottles and empty gallon jugs for water.
3. *Electric Tools* – Is this caused by the uprising of DIY shows? Included in this category are also electric toothbrushes.
4. *Iphone4* – According to the AJ Novick Group 100,000 phones, laptops and other various "gadgets" will be stolen this year from big box retailers. This is also known as the ISteal phenomenon.
5. *Gillette razor replacement blades* – with the cost of these upwards of \$25 they are always a quick grab. Have you noticed that a lot more stores are putting these and similar items behind glass or under lock & key.
6. *Axe products* – Now this one surprised me. I guess the ingenious commercials have triggered its popularity. According to the one article I read, these personal hygiene products are big sellers at swap meets, flea markets and other open air markets. So the next time you are at Cook's and see Axe products think twice about where they might have come from.
7. *Designer clothes* – Always a favorite among thieves. Again, these items are found at open air markets. Tommy Hilfiger & Polo Ralph Lauren seem to be the favored lines for theft. Clothing theft has increased 31% since 2009
8. *Let's Rock Elmo* – where would this list be without one of the most hyped toys on the market today. I'm sure past lists have included other "Elmo" products. Each year, these toys make the Toys R Us hot list both for sales and thefts.

9. *Expensive perfumes* – these smell good products actually make up about 4% of stolen merchandise.

10. *Nikes* – Again we have an item found at multiple re-sell sites including some of your online resellers. These are easy targets especially at crowded do it your-self shoe stores

Here are some figures I ran across while researching this blog. \$119 billion of merchandise will be stolen this year. This figure is up 6% since last year. As mentioned earlier 1 in 11 people will steal, 75% of those are adults and the apprehension rate is a dismal 1 in 48 times. As the title suggests is this a sign of a down economy, high unemployment rate or simply the result of a generation of people who feel that they deserve more than what they have in life. I'll let you be the judge.

No matter what is behind it, the numbers are staggering and I for one will be watching a little more carefully at the person standing next to me in the store.