

Q2 2026



INVESTING THROUGH



TURBULENCE

MARCH 2026



Introduction

In a quarter defined by tariff escalation, geopolitical flashpoints, and a “sell America” trade that briefly spooked markets, modern retail investors are set to do something that might surprise their detractors: invest more.

Nearly nine in ten plan to invest the same or more over the next three months, stock market optimism has snapped back to its highest level since mid-2025, and more than half have at least \$10,000 ready to deploy.

These investors are paying close attention to the world around them and making active choices about where they put their money. For example, a third are reducing their US market exposure, bitcoin optimism has cooled but holders are staying the course, and portfolios are tilting toward mainstream diversifiers like ETFs.

This quarter’s Modern Investor Pulse captures retail investors’ steely conviction to stay invested through volatility, and humility that isn’t afraid to rebalance when the facts on the ground or their views change.

Happy reading,



Carl Hazeley
CEO



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MODERN RETAIL INVESTOR TRENDS IN Q2 2026

Modern retail investors are entering the second quarter of 2026 facing a wall of headlines, whether on tariffs, the Middle East, or the direction of US economic policy. But against that challenging backdrop, their resolve has strengthened.

Stock market optimism has rebounded: 68% of respondents expect global markets to be higher in 12 months, up from 61% last quarter and the strongest reading since mid-2025. Risk appetites have steadied, and almost 90% plan to invest the same or more over the next three months – showing investors are not cutting and running despite volatility.

However, that optimism hasn't extended to bitcoin. Just 57% expect it to be higher in 12 months, and planned crypto allocations have fallen to one in five from almost a third last quarter. That said, bitcoin holders are famously long-term and most are therefore staying put.

55% of respondents plan to invest at least \$10,000 in the next 12 months, up from 51% last quarter, with 15% sitting on more than \$100,000. And a lot of that cash is headed toward stocks and exchange-traded funds. Among individual stocks, the Magnificent

Seven, led by Nvidia, are still top of the charts, while stocks and commodities have overtaken crypto as the asset classes investors most want to learn about.

North America remains the most attractive market among modern retail investors, but a third of investors are actively reducing their US exposure in response to recent political and market developments, while a further quarter are reshuffling their exposure within the country.

KEY FIGURES FROM THE Q2 2026 MODERN INVESTOR PULSE

- 68% believe global stock markets will be higher in 12 months
- 57% of modern investors think bitcoin will be higher in 12 months
- 55% plan to invest at least \$10,000 in the next 12 months
- 63% are adjusting their US exposure in response to recent developments



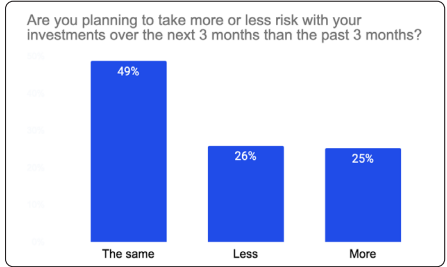
INVESTOR OPTIMISM HAS REBOUNDED

68% of modern retail investors expect global stock markets to be higher in 12 months, up from 61% last quarter. That's the strongest reading since the third quarter of 2025, and a sharp reversal of the cooling trend of the last two quarters. It seems investors aren't panicking about sell-offs driven by the so-called "SAAS-pocalypse" or geopolitical turmoil, perhaps viewing the major market response as short-lived and perhaps divorced from long-term company fundamentals. That tracks with respondents' view from last quarter that attractive entry points were hard to find, and they were holding onto cash in case of pullbacks.

quarter's seen a mean reversion of that trend, with the proportion of modern investors who expect global stock markets to be higher in a year's time rising in line with US stocks once again.

RISK APPETITES AND INVESTMENT INTENTIONS HAVE STEADIED

Modern retail investors' plans are broadly steady for the second quarter of 2026, but with a slightly more enthusiastic tilt. Over the next three months, 49% plan to keep their risk level the same (up from 46% last quarter), while 26% plan to take less risk (down from 31%) and 25% plan to take more (up from 23%).

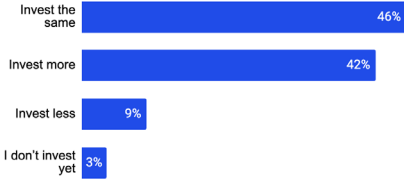


Historically, retail investor optimism has tended to move in the same direction as the S&P 500. But over the last six months, as US stocks hit new heights, that relationship weakened. This

Investment intentions tell a similar story. 46% plan to invest the same in the next three months as they did in the previous three, while just 9% plan to invest less (down from 13% last quarter) and 42% plan to invest more (up from 37%).



Are you planning to invest more or less in the next 3 months than the past 3 months?

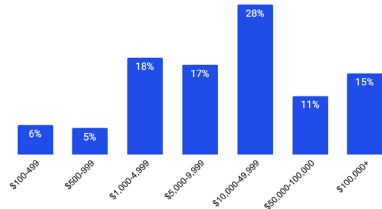


55% PLAN TO INVEST AT LEAST \$10,000

Modern retail investors continue to have meaningful cash reserves to deploy. 55% of respondents said they have at least \$10,000 to invest in the next 12 months (up from 51% last quarter). Looking more closely, 11% plan to invest between \$50,000 and \$100,000 (unchanged), and 15% are set to invest over \$100,000 (up from 14%).

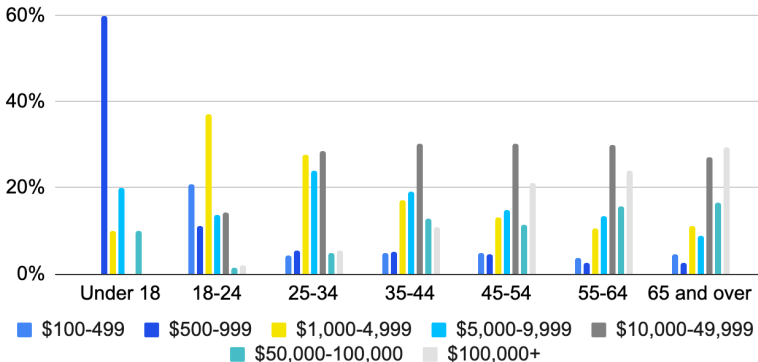
As you'd expect, older cohorts have larger sums on hand. Nearly a quarter of 55 to 64-year-olds and almost a third of over-65s have more than \$100,000 ready to invest over the next year. But younger investors continue to show that they're more affluent than they're given credit for: almost 40% of 25 to 34-year-olds have at least \$10,000 that they plan to invest in the next 12 months, and a third of under-25s have more than \$5,000 ready to deploy.

How much cash do you currently have that you plan to invest in the next 12 months?



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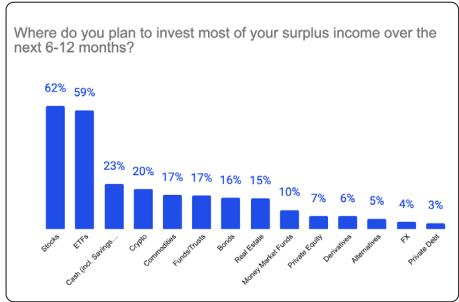
Split by age of respondents



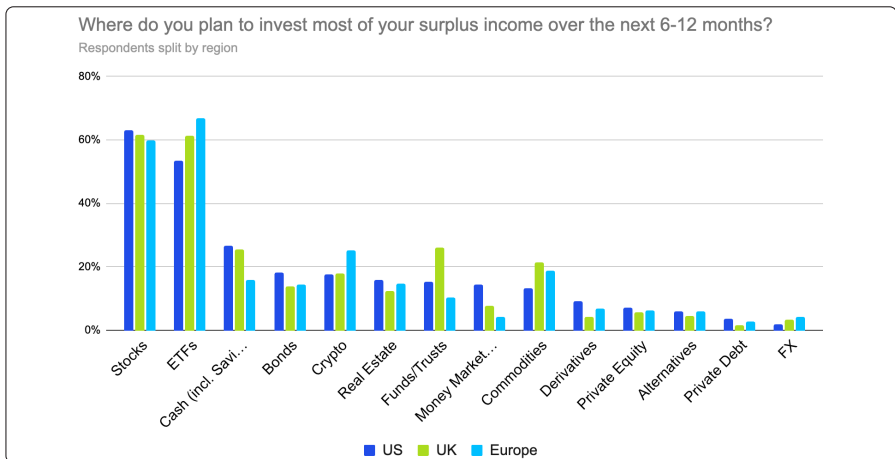


STOCKS AND ETFS HOLD INVESTORS' TOP SPOTS

Stocks are the top asset class choice for retail investors, with 62% planning to invest in them in the next six to 12 months, while a similar proportion (59%) plan to invest in exchange-traded funds. The intention to invest in ETFs is a retail investor play that our data has identified before. When stock markets look shaky, rather than retreat, modern investors up their ETF allocations, offsetting the risk of single stocks by diversifying across multiple assets at once. In crypto, 20% of respondents said they plan to invest in digital assets over the next six to 12 months. That's down from 29% in Q1 and 32% in Q4 2025.



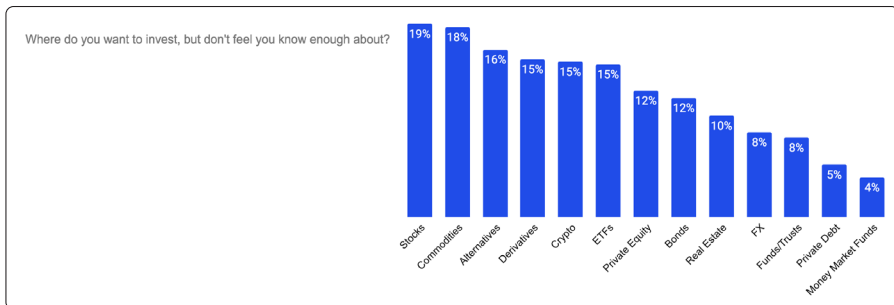
Looking geographically, investors in Europe are most interested in ETFs, followed by UK and then US investors. That's inverted when it comes to cash holdings, with US investors the keenest, followed by those in the UK and Europe – possibly reflecting their respective central banks' likely interest rate plans. Interestingly, Europeans also show a higher propensity for crypto – perhaps in favor of cash.





The Pulse also asked which assets retail investors want to hold but don't feel knowledgeable enough to invest in, and stocks and commodities topped the knowledge gap list, followed by alternatives. Cryptocurrencies, which had consistently led the responses, dropped to 15% from 23% last quarter. That's perhaps partly down to modern retail investors' reduced desire to hold cryptocurrencies in the short-term.

It could also reflect that investors have educated themselves on digital assets since we last checked in with them. It's worth noting that investors in the UK and Europe feel more held back by a lack of understanding about bonds and money market funds than those in the US. While Europeans and Brits feel more confident than Americans when it comes to private equity.



“Retail investors aren’t retreating from volatility. They’re moving into and within mainstream assets like ETFs and commodities. What we’re seeing is consistent with our understanding of how retail investors think and act: they’re sophisticated, and are focused on building long-term portfolios rather than chasing short-term trades.”

- Carl Hazeley, CEO

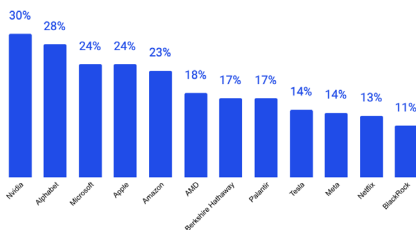


NVIDIA STAYS TOP STOCK PICK FOR MODERN RETAIL INVESTORS

Nvidia remains the retail favourite, with 30% planning an investment. But the gap has narrowed: 36% of investors had planned to back the AI darling last quarter but that dropped, and Google-parent Alphabet has jumped into second at 28% (up from fourth and 25%), leapfrogging Microsoft (24%) and Apple (24%). Amazon sits at 23%, with AMD (18%), Berkshire Hathaway (17%), and Palantir (17%) rounding out the top tier.

Alphabet’s jump could reflect investors’ growing optimism around the company’s AI search, cloud, and enterprise products – or a broadening of bets beyond Nvidia as the AI trade matures. Elsewhere, the proportion of investors planning to invest in stocks including Intel, Coinbase, and MicroStrategy dropped below 10% from 13%, 12%, and 10%, respectively last quarter.

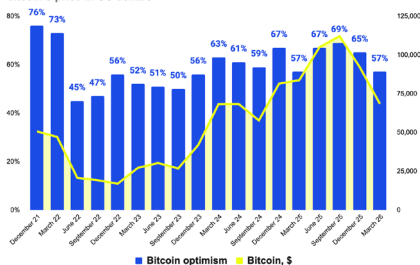
What stocks are you planning to invest in in the next 12 months?



BITCOIN OPTIMISM COOLS BUT HOLDERS DOUBLE DOWN

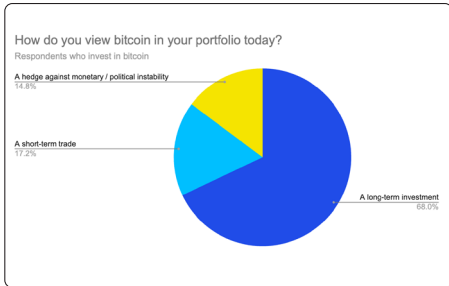
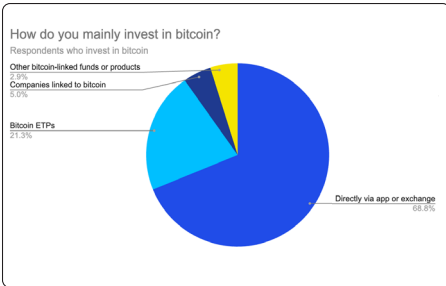
Modern retail investors’ optimism about the stock market over the next 12 months hasn’t extended to bitcoin. 57% of respondents expect bitcoin to be higher over the next 12 months, down from 65% last quarter.

Proportion of respondents who think bitcoin will be higher in 12 months and bitcoin’s price in US dollars

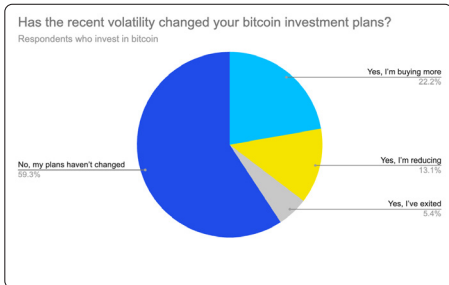


The relationship between retail investor optimism about bitcoin and the OG cryptocurrency’s price is holding firm as it has done in recent quarters, partly explaining the correlation in the dip of both.

Despite falling optimism, bitcoin holders are largely staying put. While almost half of modern investors say they don’t invest in bitcoin (suggesting that the catastrophizing about the impact of its price drop might be overdone), two-thirds of those who do see it as a long-term holding.



It stands to reason, then, that almost 60% haven't changed their bitcoin investment plans. More than 20%, though, see the current price as an attractive entry point: they're buying more.



And as for how those folks are buying their bitcoin, almost 70% do so via a crypto app or exchange. A fifth look to exchange-traded products for their bitcoin exposure, some 5% invest in bitcoin-linked

companies (i.e., those that mine the currency or that hold bitcoin on their balance sheets), and a small number look to derivatives for their bitcoin exposure.

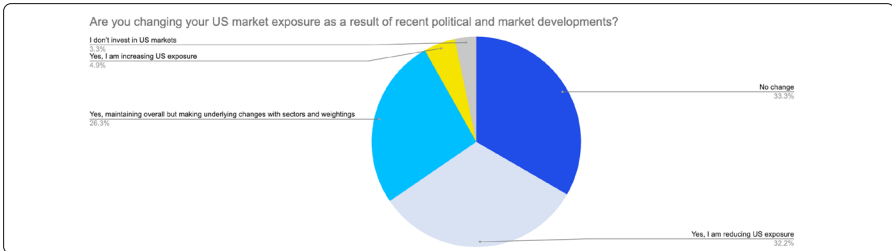
“Optimism about bitcoin’s price has cooled this quarter, but the investors who already hold it are largely staying put. Many expect volatility and see it as a long-term investment, and a significant minority are actively buying more. What we’re seeing is a shift from hype-driven enthusiasm to a more committed base of holders.”

- Carl Hazeley, CEO



AMERICA: STILL FIRST AMONG MODERN INVESTORS

the continent’s defence stocks a possible factor given continued geopolitical uncertainty. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, the Middle East ranked least attractively among modern retail investors.



Nearly a third of investors are actively reducing their US market exposure, but North America still ranks highest in attractiveness. A further quarter is sticking with US markets but reshuffling sector exposures and weightings within them.

North America’s topping of the rankings stands to reason: it’s home to the Magnificent Seven, and the heart of the AI megatrend, after all.

Asia (excluding Japan) comes second. Investors may be attracted to China’s innovation in AI, electric vehicles, batteries, and solar, as well as Vietnam’s role as the region’s export manufacturing hub. India’s growing middle class is also likely a factor, given the country’s demographic dominance in the region.

Europe takes third place, with

GLOBAL: RANK THESE MARKETS BY INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS FOR 2026

1. North America
2. Asia ex-Japan
3. Europe
4. Japan
5. UK
6. Latin America
7. Middle East and Africa

At a regional level, investors in the US track the global average. Investors in the UK largely agree too, however, they still rank their home market ahead of Japan.



UK: RANK THESE MARKETS BY INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS FOR 2026

- 1. North America**
- 2. Europe**
- 3. Asia ex-Japan**
- 4. UK**
- 5. Japan**
- 6. Latin America**
- 7. Middle East and Africa**

And in Europe, investors see their local market as the most attractive – perhaps a case of “home bias” shining through.

EUROPE: RANK THESE MARKETS BY INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS FOR 2026

- 1. Europe**
- 2. North America**
- 3. Asia ex-Japan**
- 4. Japan**
- 5. UK**
- 6. Latin America**
- 7. Middle East and Africa**

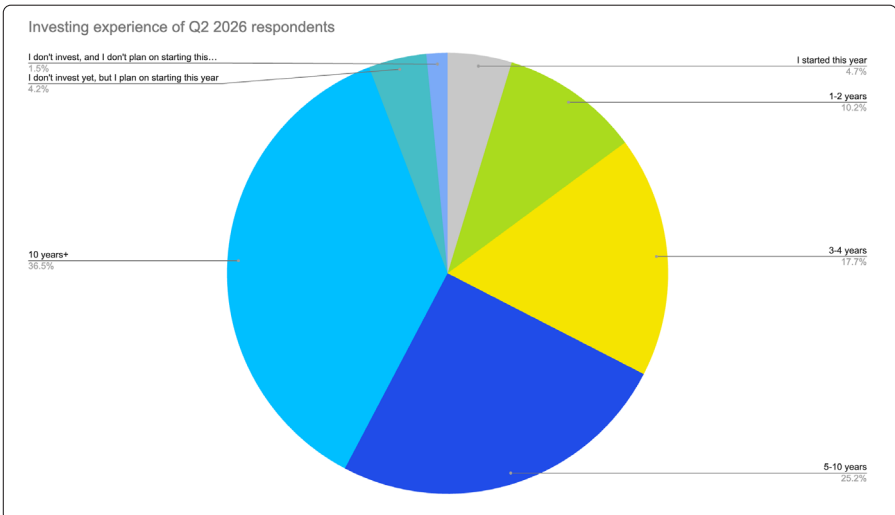
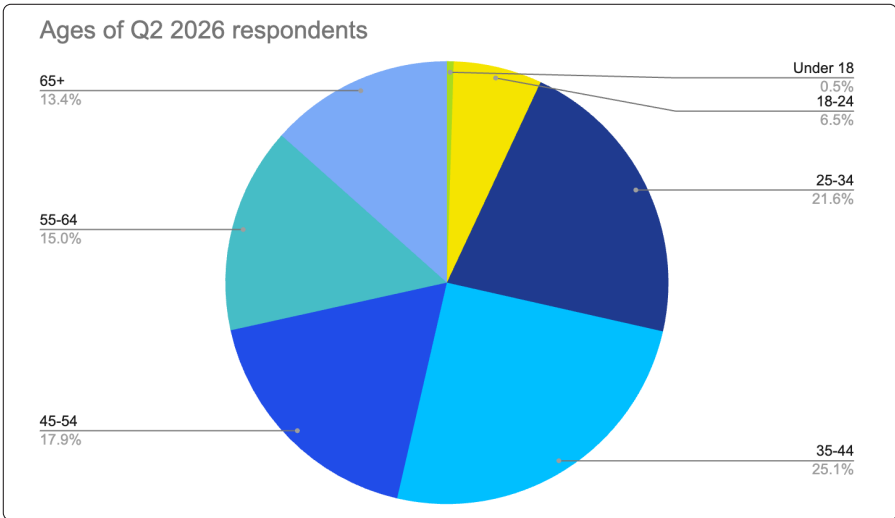


ABOUT THE MODERN INVESTOR PULSE

The Modern Investor Pulse is a quarterly survey of retail investors in the Finimize community.

Data for Q2/2026 collected in March 2026

Number of respondents: 2,660



You can access previous surveys [here](#)



WHAT IS FINIMIZE?

Finimize is an investing insights platform that empowers modern retail investors with daily quick-to-digest analysis from world-class analysts, and helps financial institutions engage with the modern investor.

WHY IS FINIMIZE DIFFERENT?

With over one million subscribers to its newsletter and mobile app, Finimize is home to one of the biggest retail investor communities in the world. Over 70,000 attend its member-organized events each year.

Alongside its direct-to-consumer offering, Finimize has partnered with over 300 fintechs and financial institutions to support their efforts to engage with modern retail investors.

WHY IS CONTENT NEEDED?

The retail investor community is set to account for 61% of global AUM by 2030. Some of the biggest global asset management firms in the world are firmly setting their sights on this growing market, with plans to release investment vehicles that specifically target retail investors. Finimize's ability to communicate with this audience is closing the information gap for DIY investors. That's a massive draw for institutions looking for ways to engage and retain their retail investor clients.



ABOUT FINIMIZE FOR BUSINESS

Understand, attract, and communicate with modern retail investors better than ever before.

We've helped more than 300 businesses grow, including startups, scaleups, and long-established financial service firms. To do that, we leverage our insight-driven, community-informed expertise, and produce content designed to grow our partners' reach and help them engage with modern retail investors at scale.

FINIMIZE CONTENT

Jargon-free, unbiased, and actionable financial content that attracts market-leading engagement.

Meet the educational needs of a wide range of retail investors, from beginners to experts, with our content licenses and bespoke content solutions. You can seamlessly integrate Finimize Content API while retaining maximum flexibility. That means you can give your customers the type of information that actually matters to them, in text and audio formats, thanks to our extensive tagging framework.

FINIMIZE PROMOTE

Multi-channel campaigns that leverage our daily reach into a community of over one million retail and accredited investors.

Connect and grow with one of the biggest and most engaged retail investor communities in the world – an enormous opportunity for financial service firms. Discover a robust range of multi-channel campaigns, tailored around the way modern retail investors learn and access information.

SUMMITS

An opportunity to directly connect with the most engaged members of our million-strong retail investor community.

The Finimize Modern Investor Summit is the world's biggest event of its kind: 30,000 investors join the two-day summit in December to engage with industry experts like Ray Dalio, Jamie Dimon, Cathie Wood, and Mark Cuban. Choose from a highly impactful range of sponsorship packages to get involved, all designed to help financial services hit their marketing and business goals.



SEE YOU IN Q3

Contact

If you have questions, want to dive deeper into this data, or hope to use this analysis to build better connections with retail investors, contact business@finimize.com.

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