

ABOVE THE FRAY

---

## Expect the Unexpected with Stocks

Wes Crill, PhD  
hD Senior Investment Director and Vice President

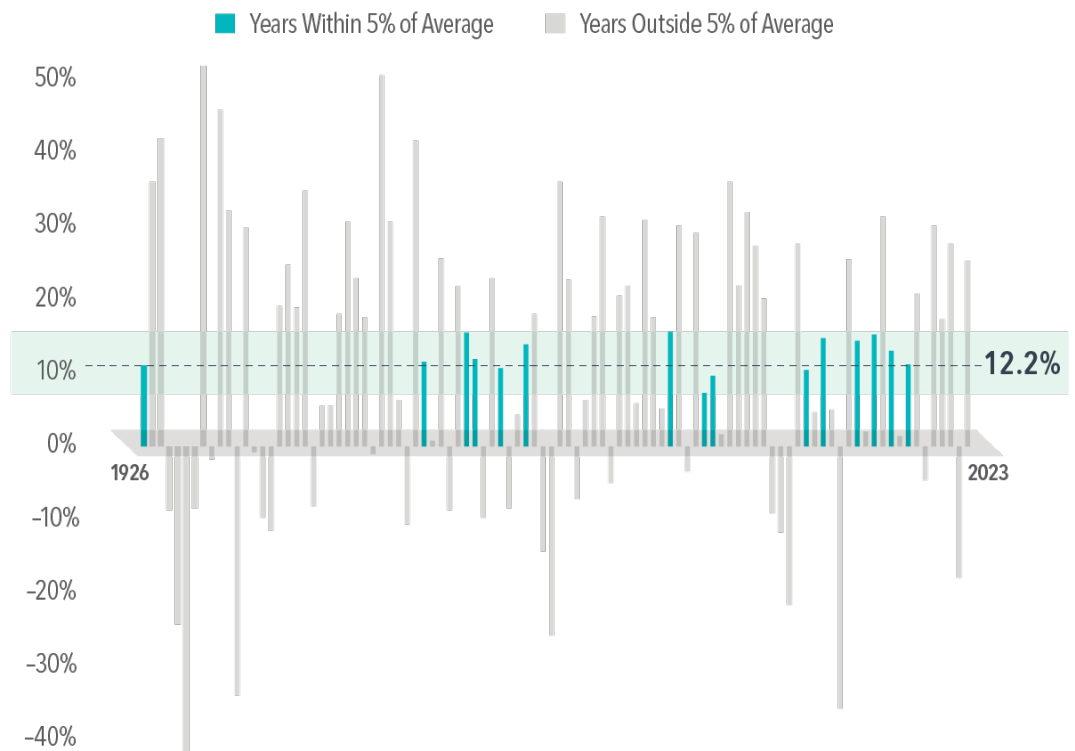
Oct 04, 2024

Ask investors what kind of return they expect out of stocks in any given year, and many will respond with the market's historical average return. For the S&P 500 Index from January 1926 through December 2023, that's been a little over 12%. Unless you have a crystal ball, that's a reasonable guess in any given year.

And yet, history shows us what we end up getting from stocks is likely to be far from the average. Since 1926, only 15 out of 98 years had returns within five percentage points of the 12.2% average. In the other 83 years, the average deviation was over 18 percentage points. Talk about an uncommon average!

Actual returns can deviate from expected returns because information and circumstances change. If the news is better than expected, markets may go up. Of course, the reverse is true if the news is disappointing. In a world with so many potential sources of news—the economy, elections, geopolitical conflict—it shouldn't be surprising that we often receive returns either much higher or lower than the long-run average.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Calendar-Year Returns**  
**for the S&P 500 Index**  
 1926–2023



## Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.

*Shaded area is the range spanning the long-term average, plus or minus 5%.*

*In USD. S&P data © S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, a division of S&P Global. Indices are not available for direct investment; therefore, their performance does not reflect the expenses associated with the management of an actual portfolio.*

*This article originally appeared in Above the Fray, a weekly newsletter for Dimensional clients.*

### LEARN MORE

[When a Duplicate Falls Short of the Original](#)

[Ignoring the Bumps](#)

[Nvidia's \\$30 Billion Letdown](#)

The information in this material is intended for the recipient's background information and use only. It is provided in good faith and without any warranty or representation as to accuracy or completeness. Information and opinions presented in this material have been obtained or derived from sources believed by Dimensional to be reliable, and Dimensional has reasonable grounds to believe that all factual information herein is true as at the date of this material. It does not constitute investment advice, a recommendation, or an offer of any services or products for sale and is not intended to provide a sufficient basis on which to make an investment decision. Before acting on any information in this document, you should consider whether it is appropriate for your particular circumstances and, if appropriate, seek professional advice. It is the responsibility of any persons wishing to make a purchase to inform themselves of and observe all applicable laws and regulations. Unauthorized reproduction or transmission of this material is strictly prohibited. Dimensional accepts no responsibility for loss arising from the use of the information contained herein.

This material is not directed at any person in any jurisdiction where the availability of this material is prohibited or would subject Dimensional or its products or services to any registration, licensing, or other such legal requirements within the jurisdiction.

"Dimensional" refers to the Dimensional separate but affiliated entities generally, rather than to one particular entity. These entities are Dimensional Fund Advisors LP, Dimensional Fund Advisors Ltd., Dimensional Ireland Limited, DFA Australia Limited, Dimensional Fund Advisors Canada ULC, Dimensional Fund Advisors Pte. Ltd., Dimensional Japan Ltd., and Dimensional Hong Kong Limited. Dimensional Hong Kong Limited is licensed by the Securities and Futures Commission to conduct Type 1 (dealing in securities) regulated activities only and does not provide asset management services.

## **RISKS**

**Investments involve risks. The investment return and principal value of an investment may fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original value. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results. There is no guarantee strategies will be successful.**

### UNITED STATES

Dimensional Fund Advisors LP is an investment advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Investment products: • Not FDIC Insured • Not Bank Guaranteed • May Lose Value  
Dimensional Fund Advisors does not have any bank affiliates.

### CANADA

These materials have been prepared by Dimensional Fund Advisors Canada ULC. The other Dimensional entities referenced herein are not registered resident investment fund managers or portfolio managers in Canada.

This material is not intended for Quebec residents.

Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees, and expenses all may be associated with mutual fund investments. Please read the prospectus before investing. Unless otherwise noted, any indicated total rates of return reflect the historical annual compounded total returns, including changes in share or unit value and reinvestment of all dividends or other distributions, and do not take into account sales, redemption, distribution, or optional charges or income taxes payable by any security holder that would have reduced returns. Mutual funds are not guaranteed, their values change frequently, and past performance may not be repeated.

WHERE ISSUED BY DIMENSIONAL IRELAND LIMITED

Issued by Dimensional Ireland Limited (Dimensional Ireland), with registered office 3 Dublin Landings, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1, Ireland. Dimensional Ireland is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland (Registration No. C185067).

WHERE ISSUED BY DIMENSIONAL FUND ADVISORS LTD.

Issued by Dimensional Fund Advisors Ltd. (Dimensional UK), 20 Triton Street, Regent's Place, London, NW1 3BF. Dimensional UK is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) - Firm Reference No. 150100.

Dimensional UK and Dimensional Ireland do not give financial advice. You are responsible for deciding whether an investment is suitable for your personal circumstances, and we recommend that a financial adviser helps you with that decision.

Dimensional UK and Dimensional Ireland issue information and materials in English and may also issue information and materials in certain other languages. The recipient's continued acceptance of information and materials from Dimensional UK and Dimensional Ireland will constitute the recipient's consent to be provided with such information and materials, where relevant, in more than one language.

NOTICE TO INVESTORS IN SWITZERLAND: This is advertising material.

JAPAN

For Institutional Investors and Registered Financial Instruments Intermediary Service Providers.

This material is deemed to be issued by Dimensional Japan Ltd., which is regulated by the Financial Services Agency of Japan and is registered as a Financial Instruments Firm conducting Investment Management Business and Investment Advisory and Agency Business.

Dimensional Japan Ltd.

Director of Kanto Local Finance Bureau (FIBO) No. 2683

Membership: Japan Investment Advisers Association

SINGAPORE

This material is deemed to be issued by Dimensional Fund Advisors Pte. Ltd. (UEN:201210847M), which is regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore and holds a capital markets services license for fund management.

This advertisement has not been reviewed by the Monetary Authority of Singapore or the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board.

FOR PROFESSIONAL INVESTORS IN HONG KONG

This material is deemed to be issued by Dimensional Hong Kong Limited (CE No. BJE760) ("Dimensional Hong Kong"), which is licensed by the Securities and Futures Commission to conduct Type 1 (dealing in securities) regulated activities only and does not provide asset management services.

This material should only be provided to "professional investors" (as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance [Chapter 571 of the Laws of Hong Kong] and its subsidiary legislation) and is not for use with the public. This material is not intended to constitute and does not constitute marketing of the services of Dimensional Hong Kong or its affiliates to the public of Hong Kong. When provided to prospective investors, this material forms part of, and must be provided together with, applicable fund offering materials. This material must not be provided to prospective investors on a standalone basis. Before acting on any information in this material, you should consider whether it is suitable for your particular circumstances and, if appropriate, seek professional advice.

Neither Dimensional Hong Kong nor its affiliates shall be responsible or held responsible for any content prepared by financial advisors. Financial advisors in Hong Kong shall not actively market the services of Dimensional Hong Kong or its affiliates to the Hong Kong public.

dimensional.com



01/04/2025

<https://my.dimensional.com/expect-the-unexpected-with-stocks>