AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

2023 Holiday Stress Survey Data Topline

RESEARCH METHOD AND READING THE REPORT

Research Method

This survey was conducted online within the United States between from November 14-16, 2023 among 2,061 adults (aged 18 and over) by The Harris Poll on behalf of APA via its Harris On Demand omnibus product.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, [employment], and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 2.7 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Reading the Report

The percentage of respondents has been included for each item.

- * represents a value of less than one-half percent.
- A dash (-) represents a value of zero.
- Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses.

DATA SHEETED QUESTIONNAIRE

Screening Questions

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q1. How would you describe your level of stress during the holiday season?

	Total
Base	***2061***
High	21%
Moderate	49%
Low	30%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q2. Thinking about your stress during the holiday season, does it generally increase, decrease, or stay the same compared with other times of the year?

	Total
Base	***2061***
Increase	41%
Stay the same	52%
Decrease	7%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q4. Which of the following typically causes you stress during the holiday season? Please select all that apply.

As a reminder, when we say "holiday season", we are referring to the traditional U.S. holiday season (i.e., November-January).

	Total
Base	***2061***
ANYTHING (NET)	89%
SPENDING TOO MUCH/NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO SPEND (SUB-NET)	58%
Not having enough money to spend	42%
Spending too much	38%
Finding the right gifts	40%
Missing family/loved ones (e.g., those who have passed away, those who I may no longer have a relationship with, etc.)	38%
Having too much to do	32%
Feeling pressure to make the holidays special	30%
FOOD/ALCOHOL (SUB-NET)	25%
Eating/food-related issues (e.g., trying to avoid unhealthy food on a diet, anxiety around food, emotional eating, etc.)	19%
Being around alcohol (e.g., drinking too much, trying to stay sober, anxiety around alcohol, etc.)	10%
Not being able to spend time/be with family/loved ones (e.g., living too far away)	25%
Experiencing or anticipating family conflict	22%

Feeling left out or excluded	20%
Traveling	19%
Hosting gathering(s)	19%
Scheduling (e.g., getting time off of work, taking kids out of school, coordinating with others, etc.)	17%
Upholding traditions	16%
Having too many social gatherings	16%
Feeling like the holiday season doesn't reflect my culture, religion, or traditions	8%
Other	1%
There is nothing that causes me stress around the holiday season	11%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q5. Which of the following words or phrases would you use to describe the holiday season? Please select all that apply.

	Total
Base	***2061***
POSITIVE (NET)	80%
Fun	50%
Joyous	49%
Exciting	45%
Fulfilling	28%
Relaxing	23%
Other positive description	2%
NEGATIVE (NET)	63%
Stressful	40%
Overwhelming	34%
Exhausting	34%
Annoying	11%
Upsetting	8%
Other negative description	2%
A MIX OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE (NET)	43%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q6. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following about the holiday season?

Summary of Strongly/Somewhat Agree (Top 2 Box)

	Total
Base	***2061***
The holiday season creates a sense of togetherness.	84%
The holiday season can feel bittersweet.	72%
The stress surrounding the holidays is worth it.	69%

I have anxiety around attending public gatherings during the holidays.	45%
The stress of the holidays interferes with my ability to enjoy them.	43%
The holidays feel like a competition (e.g., decorating my home, hosting, partaking in holiday activities, etc.).	36%
I don't feel a part of what is considered to be "the holiday season".	36%
This time of year has no meaning for me.	26%
I am worried I am going to be discriminated against for my religion, traditions, or culture around the holidays.	18%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q7. How comfortable are you talking with others (e.g., friends, family, spouse) about your stress during the holiday season?

As a reminder, when we say "holiday season", we are referring to the traditional U.S. holiday season (i.e., November-January).

	Total
Base	***2061***
VERY/SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE (NET)	71%
Very comfortable	32%
Somewhat comfortable	39%
NOT AT ALL/NOT VERY COMFORTABLE (NET)	29%
Not very comfortable	20%
Not at all comfortable	9%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q8. Which of the following, if any, do you do to cope with the stress of the holiday season? Please select all that apply.

	Total
Base	***2061***
ANY (NET)	83%
A MIX OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE (NET)	33%
USE POSITIVE COPING MECHANISMS (SUB-NET)	76%
Talk to those around me (e.g., friends, family, spouse)	38%
Manage my expectations	36%
Try to remind myself that the holidays will pass	33%
Prioritize my well-being	32%
Volunteer/help others in need	15%
Seek help (e.g., talking to a therapist/counselor)	10%
USE NEGATIVE COPING MECHANISMS (SUB-NET)	35%
Isolate myself (e.g., minimize interactions with others, avoid gatherings, make myself unavailable, etc.)	19%
Change my eating habits (e.g., overindulge, restrict myself from eating, etc.)	15%
Rely on/use substances to make me feel better (e.g., alcohol, nicotine/vaping, other substances)	12%
Other	3%
Nothing - I don't do anything to cope with the stress of the holiday season	17%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q9. Regardless of the extent to which you may or may not practice religion, which of the following, if any, do you celebrate around this time of year? Please select all that apply.

	Total
Base	***2061***
ANY (NET)	91%
Traditionally Christian holidays	71%
Non-religious holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, The New Year, Kwanzaa)	37%
Traditionally Jewish holidays	7%
Traditionally Buddhist holidays	4%
Traditionally Muslim holidays	4%
Traditionally Hindu holidays	3%
Other	2%
None - I do not celebrate any holidays around this time of year	9%

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS

Q10. What is your present religion, if any? Please select all that apply.

	Total
Base	***2061***
HAVE A PRESENT RELIGION (NET)	81%
Protestant (e.g., Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, etc.)	27%
Roman Catholic	23%
Agnostic	6%
Jewish	5%
Atheist	4%
Muslim	3%
Buddhist	2%
Mormon	2%
Hindu	2%
Orthodox	1%
Something else	11%
Nothing in particular	19%