
Three in Ten Americans Drink Alcohol Weekly

Beer is top alcoholic choice, followed by domestic wine and vodka

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – May 14, 2009 – Whether it is a martini at the end of a hard day, a nice glass of chardonnay when gathered with friends or a cold beer on a hot summer day, Americans enjoy a cocktail or two. Three in ten (29%) U.S. adults drink alcohol, including beer or wine, at least once a week, with 6% saying they drink daily. One in five Americans (20%) drink at least once a month while 12% say they drink several times a year, 6% drink at least once a year and 8% drink alcohol less often than once a year. One-quarter (25%) of U.S. adults say they never drink alcohol.

These are some of the results of The Harris Poll of 2,401 U.S. adults surveyed online between April 13 and 21, 2009 by Harris Interactive.

Who is more likely to drink?

Men are more likely to drink alcohol at least once a week than women are (40% versus 19%). Women, however, are more likely to say they never drink alcohol (29% vs. 22%). Among generations, one-third (33%) of Echo Boomers (those aged 18-32) say they drink at least once a week compared to 26% of Gen Xers (those aged 33-44).

Easterners are much more likely to drink daily and at least once a week compared to other regions of the country. Over one-third (37%) of those living in the East drink alcohol at least once a week compared to 26% of Midwesterners, 28% of Southerners and 29% of Westerners. Also over one in ten Easterners (12%) drink daily compared to just 3% of both Midwesterners and Westerners.

There is also a political difference – one-third of Democrats (33%) and three in ten Independents (30%) drink alcohol at least once a week but only one-quarter (26%) of Republicans say the same.

What are they drinking?

Among those who drink alcohol at least several times a year, two-thirds (67%) drink beer while half (49%) say they drink domestic wine. Two in five (41%) drink vodka, one-third (32%) drink rum and 29% drink foreign wine. Further down in drink popularity, one-quarter (24%) drink tequila, 18% drink champagne, 16% drink other whiskey such as Canadian or Irish whiskey, 15% drink bourbon 14% each drink gin and cordials, and 13% drink scotch.

Those in the East and in the West are more likely to drink many of these types of liquor than those in the Midwest and South. For example, Easterners are much more likely to drink foreign wine (42%), cordials (23%) and scotch (20%). Westerners, however, are much more likely to drink tequila (32%) and champagne (27%).

Genders also have different drinks. Four in five men (81%) drink beer compared to just half (51%) of women. Over half of women drink domestic wine (56%) compared to 43% of men. Women are also more likely to drink vodka (43% vs. 39%), tequila (25% vs.

23%) and champagne (20% vs. 17%). Men, on the other hand, are more likely to drink foreign wine (31% vs. 26%), bourbon (21% vs. 7%) and scotch 19% vs. 5%).

So What?

Cocktails after work, having a few brews while watching a baseball game, or a nice wine with dinner are just some of the traditions Americans have when it comes to alcohol. Two-thirds of Americans drink at least once a year and one may wonder if the number is any different in how frequently people are drinking due to economic pressures. Alcohol might be associated with celebrations, sports and gatherings, but it is also associated with depression – drowning one’s sorrows, if you will. With worries over paying bills or losing a job, people may be drinking more – either in amount or frequency.

**TABLE 1
DRINKING ALCOHOL**

"How often do you drink alcohol, including beer or wine?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation				Gender	
		Echo Boomers (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Baby Boomers (45-63)	Matures (64+)	Male	Female
		%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	29	33	26	29	28	40	19
Daily	6	8	2	6	9	9	3
Several times a week	12	14	9	12	11	16	8
At least once a week	11	12	15	11	8	15	8
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	20	24	23	16	18	20	20
Several times a month	10	12	15	6	11	11	9
At least once a month	10	11	9	10	7	8	11
Several times a year	12	12	13	12	12	10	14
At least once a year	6	4	4	7	7	3	8
Less often than once a year	8	4	9	9	8	5	10
I never drink alcohol	25	23	24	27	28	22	29

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 2
DRINKING ALCOHOL – BY REGION AND POLITICAL PARTY
 "How often do you drink alcohol, including beer or wine?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Region				Political Party		
		East	Midwest	South	West	Rep.	Dem.	Ind.
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	29	37	26	28	28	26	33	30
Daily	6	12	3	6	3	3	10	5
Several times a week	12	12	10	11	14	12	11	14
At least once a week	11	13	13	10	11	11	11	11
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	20	17	26	17	21	20	19	23
Several times a month	10	10	14	8	9	10	11	10
At least once a month	10	6	11	9	12	10	8	13
Several times a year	12	12	13	11	13	14	12	12
At least once a year	6	4	7	6	5	6	6	6
Less often than once a year	8	8	7	9	6	6	8	7
I never drink alcohol	25	22	22	29	27	28	23	23

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
WHAT PEOPLE DRINK

"Which alcoholic beverages do you personally drink either at home or away from home? If you have mixed drinks, such as sours or martinis, please indicate the type of liquor they contain."

Base: Drink alcohol at least several times a year

	Total	Region				Gender	
		East	Midwest	South	West	Male	Female
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Beer	67	67	69	64	71	81	51
Domestic wine	49	52	44	48	51	43	56
Vodka	41	47	36	37	44	39	43
Rum	32	37	24	31	35	33	30
Foreign wine	29	42	20	27	27	31	26
Tequila	24	26	19	19	32	23	25
Champagne	18	24	12	13	27	17	20
Other whiskey (Canadian, Irish)	16	21	12	16	18	19	14
Bourbon	15	17	11	16	15	21	7
Gin	14	19	8	10	20	16	11
Cordials and liqueurs	14	23	9	9	16	14	14
Scotch	13	20	6	12	14	19	5
Brandy/Armagnac	8	14	6	5	11	11	5
Cognac	8	16	2	6	9	11	5
Other	6	4	8	7	4	5	7

Note: Multiple responses allowed

Methodology

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States April 13 and 21, 2009, among 2,401 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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