

Three in Ten Americans Love to Cook, While One in Five Do Not Enjoy It or Don't Cook

Two in Five Prepare Meals at Home Five or More Times per Week

New York, N.Y. — July 27, 2010 — Whether it be a soufflé, a spaghetti carbonara or just a perfectly flipped and folded omelet, for many Americans there is that one dish that is their signature one or the one they dream of perfecting. While four in five U.S. adults (79%) say they enjoy cooking, just three in ten (30%) say they love it and almost half (49%) say they enjoy it when they have the time. One in five Americans say they either do not enjoy cooking (14%) or do not cook (7%).

These are some of the results of **The Harris Poll** of 2,503 adults surveyed online between May 10 and 17, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

Certain groups love cooking more than others. Perhaps because they have more time, 33% of Matures (those 65 and older) love cooking, compared to 28% of Baby Boomers (those 46-64), who are possibly being pulled in many directions. Men are more likely to say they love cooking (32% versus 28% of women) perhaps because the daily chore of cooking dinner may not fall on their shoulders.

Frequency of cooking

Many Americans enjoy cooking, but how often do they actually do it? Two in five (41%) say they prepare meals at home five or more times a week and three in ten (29%) do so three to four times a week. One in five (19%) of U.S. adults prepare meals at home one to two times a week and 11% say they rarely or never prepare meals at home.

There is a generational difference in frequency of preparing meals at home. Over half of Matures (52%) cook at home five or more times per week, yet younger Americans do so with less frequency—just 33% of Echo Boomers (those aged 18-33) cook at home five or more times per week. When they are cooking at home, just over one in five (22%) say they often cook only for themselves, while three-quarters (76%) often cook for their family and 22% often cook for friends.

How people cook

Among those who prepare meals at home, four in five (81%) say they cook what they are familiar with very often. There is also the issue of cutting corners to save time; three-quarters of those who prepare meals at home (75%) say they very often or occasionally will use pre-prepped and/or frozen ingredients and kitchen appliances such as microwaves and toaster ovens to both speed up the process and clean-up involved.

Looking at where inspiration is gained, 22% of those who prepare meals at home say they very often look for and use new written recipes to try new foods and techniques while almost half (46%) say they are likely to do so occasionally. One in five (20%) say they often gain inspiration from food-related articles, online postings and cooking shows, but do not follow their recipes exactly, while two in five (41%) say they occasionally do this.

So What?

Given the popularity of cooking shows and Americans not dining out as much to save money, cooking at home has probably increased over the past year or so. But, is it more of a necessity or do people actually enjoy it? Very few hate it, but considering the proliferation of cooking channels and cooking shows, one might expect more people to actually say they love to cook. Maybe this is one of those times where people enjoy watching others do what they themselves cannot do or do not like to do.

**TABLE 1
ENJOYS COOKING**

"On another topic, how much do you enjoy cooking?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation				Gender		Children in HH	
		Echo Boomers (18-33)	Gen. X (34-45)	Baby Boomers (46-64)	Matures (65+)	Male	Female	Has children in HH	No children in HH
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
ENJOYS (NET)	79	82	78	78	76	78	79	81	78
I love it.	30	32	29	28	33	32	28	28	31
I enjoy it when I have time.	49	50	50	50	43	46	51	53	47
I do not enjoy cooking.	14	10	17	15	16	12	16	14	14
I don't cook.	7	8	5	8	8	10	5	4	8

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

**TABLE 2
PREPARES MEALS AT HOME**

"How often do you prepare meals at home?"

Base: All adults

	Total	Generation			
		Echo Boomers (18-33)	Gen. X (34-45)	Baby Boomers (46-64)	Matures (65+)
		%	%	%	%
MODERATELY/FREQUENTLY (NET)	89	85	91	90	89
1-2 times per week	19	21	22	19	13
3-4 times per week	29	31	31	27	23
5 or more times per week	41	33	38	43	52
I very rarely or never prepare meals at home	11	15	9	10	11

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

TABLE 3
COOKING PRACTICES

"How often do you do the following?"

Base: Prepares meals at home

	Very often/ Occasionally (NET)	Very often	Occasionally	Rarely/Never (NET)	Rarely	Never
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Cook what I am familiar with.	98	81	18	2	1	1
Use pre-prepped and/or frozen ingredients and kitchen appliances such as microwaves and toaster ovens to speed both the process and clean-up involved.	75	34	41	25	21	4
Look for and use new written recipes to try new foods and techniques.	69	22	46	31	23	8
Gain inspiration from food-related articles, online postings and cooking shows, but do not follow their recipes exactly.	60	20	41	40	28	12

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

TABLE 4
FREQUENT COOKING PRACTICES

"How often do you do the following?"
Percent saying "very often" or "occasionally"

Base: Prepares meals at home

	Total	Gender	
		Male	Female
	%	%	%
Cook what I am familiar with.	98	97	99
Use pre-prepped and/or frozen ingredients and kitchen appliances such as microwaves and toaster ovens to speed both the process and clean-up involved.	75	74	76
Look for and use new written recipes to try new foods and techniques.	69	61	75
Gain inspiration from food-related articles, online postings and cooking shows, but do not follow their recipes exactly.	60	55	65

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

TABLE 5
COOKS FOR WHOM

"Who do you often prepare food for?"

Base: Prepares meals at home

	Total	Gender		Children in HH	
		Male	Female	Has children in HH	No children in HH
	%	%	%	%	%
Only myself	22	26	18	9	27
My family	76	70	81	89	70

Friends	22	23	21	22	22
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Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between May 10 and 17, 2010 among 2,503 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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The Harris Poll® #93, July 27, 2010

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