

Three in Ten Americans Drink Alcohol at Least Once a Week

Beer, Domestic Wine and Vodka the top three choices

NEW YORK, N.Y. – April 6, 2011 – Maybe it's a glass of wine. For some, it might be a beer or a gin and tonic. But whatever the choice is, three in ten Americans, 21 and older (29%) say they drink alcohol at least once a week, including 5% who drink daily and 10% who drink several times a week. One in five Americans 21 or older (20%) say they drink alcohol at least once a month and 15% drink it several times a year. One in five Americans (22%) say they never drink alcohol. Men are more frequent drinkers than women are as almost two in five men (38%) say they drink at least once a week compared to 21% of women.

These are some of the results of **The Harris Poll** of 2,379 adults surveyed online between March 7 and 14, 2011 by [Harris Interactive](#).

What people are drinking

Among those who imbibe at least several times a year, beer is the top choice. Almost two-thirds of drinkers (63%) say they personally drink beer when they drink while over half (54%) drink domestic wine. Two in five (41%) drink vodka while one-third (34%) drink rum. Just under three in ten drink tequila (28%) and foreign wine (28%) while one in five (20%) drink various types of whiskies such as Irish or Canadian. Further down the list of preferred alcoholic beverages are champagne (17%), cordials and liqueurs (17%), bourbon (15%), gin (14%), scotch (11%), cognac (8%) and brandy/Armagnac (7%).

It's probably not surprising that men and women have different drinking preferences. Men are more likely to drink beer (75% vs. 50%), bourbon (23% vs. 6%) and scotch (17% vs. 4%). Women, however, are more likely to drink domestic wine (63% vs. 45%), champagne (23% vs. 13%) and foreign wine (31% vs. 26%).

What people drink most often

While people may drink multiple types of alcohol, when asked which one type they drink most often, beer still comes out on top. One-third of those who drink at least several times a year (34%) say they drink beer most often while just under one-quarter (22%) drink domestic wine most often. One in ten (12%) drink vodka most often while 6% drink rum and 5% drink foreign wine. All other alcohol is below 5%.

Depending on their age, drinkers have a type of alcohol they drink most often. For Echo Boomers (ages 21-34) and Gen Xers (ages 35-46) beer is the clear beverage of choice. For Echo Boomers beer is over domestic wine 37% to 20% and for Gen Xers it is an even larger difference—41% to 14%. For Baby Boomers (ages 47-65), it is a little more narrow as 33% drink beer most often and 22% drink domestic wine most often. Matures (ages 66 and older) flip the order as domestic wine is the drink of choice over beer, 36% to 22%.

So What?

According to many doctors and medical studies, a glass of wine is good for one's health. And even beyond wine, a drink, as long as it's in moderation, is something that people shouldn't be afraid of having--advice Americans seem to have taken to heart. The types of alcohol people drink has held pretty consistent over the past two

years with beer, wine and vodka clearly remaining the top three choices. This is probably a testament to alcoholic trends coming and going (tiki drinks being hot one year, not so the following) but certain tried and true choices staying.

**TABLE 1
DRINKING ALCOHOL**

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

Base: Respondents who are age 21 and older

	Total	Generation				Gender	
		Echo Boomers (21-34)	Gen X (35-46)	Baby Boomers (47-65)	Matures (66+)	Male	Female
		%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	29	33	30	29	26	38	21
Daily	5	3	3	5	11	7	3
Several times a week	10	10	11	11	10	15	6
At least once a week	14	20	16	13	5	16	12
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	20	24	20	17	18	18	21
Several times a month	9	12	8	8	9	9	10
At least once a month	10	12	12	9	10	10	11
Several times a year	15	11	17	17	15	14	16
At least once a year	6	3	7	5	8	4	7
Less often than once a year	8	7	8	9	6	6	10
I never drink alcohol	22	23	18	22	27	20	24

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

TABLE 1A
DRINKING ALCOHOL - Trend

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

Base: Respondents who are age 21 and older

	2009	2011
	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	29	29
Daily	6	5
Several times a week	12	10
At least once a week	11	14
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	20	20
Several times a month	10	9
At least once a month	10	10
Several times a year	12	15
At least once a year	6	6
Less often than once a year	8	8
I never drink alcohol	25	22

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

TABLE 2
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: Respondents who are age 21 and older and drink alcohol at least several times a year

	Total	Total	Gender	
	2011	2009	Male	Female
	%	%	%	%
Beer	63	67	75	50
Domestic wine	54	49	45	63
Vodka	41	41	40	43
Rum	34	32	34	35
Tequila	28	24	27	30
Foreign wine	28	29	26	31
Other Whiskey (Canadian, Irish)	20	16	25	14
Champagne	17	18	13	23
Cordials and liqueurs	17	14	14	20
Bourbon	15	15	23	6
Gin	14	14	15	13
Scotch	11	13	17	4
Cognac	8	8	11	4
Brandy/Armagnac	7	8	10	5
Other	6	6	6	7

Note: Multiple responses allowed

TABLE 3
WHAT PEOPLE DRINK MOST OFTEN

"Although you may drink several types of alcoholic beverages, which one type would you say you drink most often?"

Base: Respondents who are age 21 and older and drink alcohol at least several times a year

	Total	Generation				Gender	
		Echo Boomers (21-34)	Gen X (35-46)	Baby Boomers (47-65)	Matures (66+)	Male	Female
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Beer	34	37	41	33	22	46	22
Domestic wine	22	20	14	22	36	15	29
Vodka	12	17	11	10	8	10	14
Rum	6	6	10	5	1	5	7
Foreign wine	5	4	2	6	9	3	7
Tequila	4	3	6	5	*	3	5
Bourbon	3	2	3	4	6	4	2
Other Whiskey (Canadian, Irish)	3	3	2	3	4	3	3
Gin	2	3	1	1	5	3	1
Cordials and liqueurs	2	1	2	2	1	*	3
Scotch	2	*	2	2	3	3	*
Champagne	1	*	1	1	*	*	1
Cognac	1	1	-	1	-	1	*
Brandy/Armagnac	*	-	*	*	1	*	*
Other	4	4	6	3	3	3	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * signifies less than 1 percent; - signifies no response

Methodology

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between March 7 to 14, 2011 among 2,379 adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 2,300 were 21 years old or older. 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.

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