

## **Three in Five Americans Most Look Forward to Spending Time with Friends and Family in the Holiday Season**

*White Christmas is the song people look forward to hearing while by the end of the holidays Jingle Bells is the one they wish they could never hear again*

**NEW YORK, N.Y. – December 14, 2011** – For almost everyone, the holidays bring out both good and bad feelings. Most people have that one thing they dislike and the one thing they look forward to each year. On the positive side, almost three in five Americans (58%) say they most look forward to spending time with friends and family during the holiday season. Fewer numbers say they most look forward to holiday dinners and parties (8%), finding and giving presents (7%), putting up holiday decorations (4%), watching television specials and hearing holiday songs on the radio (4%) and getting presents (2%) while one in ten (11%) say they do not look forward to the upcoming holidays.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,499 adults surveyed online between November 7 and 14, 2011 by [Harris Interactive](#).

On the other side, three in ten Americans (30%) say the one thing they dislike most about the holidays is spending too much money while for one-quarter (23%) it is the holiday shopping crowds. Less than one in ten say what they dislike most about the holidays is putting up and taking down holiday decorations (6%), television specials and holiday songs (6%), finding and giving presents (5%), eating and drinking too much (4%), and spending time with friends and family (1%). But for almost one in five U.S. adults (18%) there is nothing wrong with the holidays and they say they like everything about the holiday season.

### **Holiday Songs**

For one month each year the airwaves and stores are filled with holiday songs. Some are ones people look forward to and others make people cringe and often the same song has both reactions. Topping the list of the songs people most look forward to each holiday season is *White Christmas*, followed by *Silent Night* and then *Oh Holy Night*. Rounding out the top five are *Jingle Bells* and *Little Drummer Boy*. Tied for sixth on the list of songs people look forward to are *The Christmas Song* and *Winter Wonderland*, followed by *Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer*, *Carol of the Bells* and then *Silver Bells*.

By the end of the season, the one song people wish they could never hear again is *Jingle Bells*, followed by *Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *White Christmas* and *Jingle Bell Rock*. Rounding out the top ten are *Little Drummer Boy*, *Feliz Navidad*, *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*, the *Twelve Days of Christmas* and *Silent Night*. Interestingly, five songs are on both of these lists.

### **TV Specials and Holiday Movies**

Besides the songs, there are also the animated specials and holiday movies. When it comes to favorite holiday animated special, three are bunched on top: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (23%), *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (22%) and *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (21%). Further down the list of favorites are *Frosty the Snowman* (9%) and *The Year Without a Santa Claus* (3%). One in five (22%) say they have another animated favorite.

For holiday movies, one doesn't stand out as a winner. One in five each say *A Christmas Story* (20%) and *It's a Wonderful Life* (19%) are their favorites while 16% each say *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* and *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. Less than one in ten (8%) say *The Santa Clause* is their favorite and one in five (20%) say another holiday movie is their favorite.

**So What?**

Ah holidays; they bring out the best in people but they also have the ability to bring out the worst. Whether it is struggling with fellow shoppers to get the last of something in the sale bin on one hand or gathering the family for an annual showing of *Rudolph* on the other hand, the holidays really do have something for everyone. In fact one person's favorite can be what someone else dreads. But with economic issues looming over the holidays, hopefully the good can outweigh the bad for most people.

**TABLE 1  
LOOKING FORWARD TO THE HOLIDAYS**

"Thinking of the upcoming holiday season, what is the one thing you most look forward to?"

Base: All adults

	2007	2009	2010	2011	Generation			
					Echo Boomers (18-34)	Gen X (35-46)	Baby Boomers (47-65)	Matures (66+)
					%	%	%	%
Spending time with family and friends	66	62	58	<b>58</b>	52	55	61	66
Holiday dinners and parties	9	8	9	<b>8</b>	8	11	6	7
Finding and giving presents	6	7	6	<b>7</b>	10	7	6	3
Putting up holiday decorations	n/a	3	5	<b>4</b>	6	4	4	3
Watching television specials and hearing holiday songs on the radio	4	4	5	<b>4</b>	4	3	3	9
Getting presents	1	2	3	<b>2</b>	5	1	1	-
I do not celebrate any upcoming holidays	2	2	2	<b>2</b>	2	3	2	1
I don't look forward to the upcoming holidays	9	8	9	<b>11</b>	8	11	15	7
Not sure/Other	3	4	3	<b>3</b>	4	4	2	4

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

Note: \* = less than 0.5% and "-" indicates no response

**TABLE 2**  
**WHAT PEOPLE DISLIKE ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS**

“Still thinking of the upcoming holiday season, what is the one thing you dislike most about the holidays?”

Base: Celebrate Holidays

	2009	2010	2011	Generation			
				Echo Boomers (18–34)	Gen X (35–46)	Baby Boomers (47–65)	Matures (66+)
				%	%	%	%
Spending too much money	27	27	<b>30</b>	33	30	30	25
The holiday shopping crowds	23	24	<b>23</b>	21	28	24	16
Putting up and then taking down holiday decorations	6	8	<b>6</b>	4	6	7	10
Television specials and holiday songs	5	4	<b>6</b>	7	3	6	8
Finding and giving presents	4	5	<b>5</b>	5	5	5	4
Eating and drinking too much	4	5	<b>4</b>	4	4	3	4
Spending time with family and friends	2	2	<b>1</b>	2	2	1	1
I like everything about the holiday season	21	18	<b>18</b>	19	16	16	26
Other	8	6	<b>6</b>	6	6	7	5

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

**TABLE 3**  
**HOLIDAY SONG PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING**

“While you may enjoy many, which one holiday song do you really look forward to hearing when the holiday season comes around each year?”

*Unprompted responses*

Base: All adults

	2007	2009	2010	<b>2011</b>
White Christmas	2	2	2	<b>1</b>
Silent Night	1	1	1	<b>2</b>
Oh Holy Night	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
Jingle Bells	4	4	4	<b>4</b>
Little Drummer Boy	=6	5	5	<b>5</b>
The Christmas Song	5	6	7	<b>=6</b>
Winter Wonderland	=10	n/a	n/a	<b>=6</b>
Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer	n/a	n/a	6	<b>8</b>
Carol of the Bells	n/a	10	n/a	<b>9</b>
Silver Bells	=6	8	n/a	<b>10</b>

“=” indicates a tie; n/a indicates not on list that year

Dropped off the list from 2010 – I’ll Be Home for Christmas (was 8), Joy to the World (was 9), Jingle Bell Rock (was 10)

**TABLE 4**  
**HOLIDAY SONG THAT SHOULD GO AWAY**

“By the end of the holiday season, which one holiday song do you wish you could never hear again?”  
*Unprompted responses*

Base: All adults

	2007	2009	2010	<b>2011</b>
Jingle Bells	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer	2	2	2	<b>2</b>
Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
White Christmas	4	4	=4	<b>4</b>
Jingle Bell Rock	5	7	7	<b>5</b>
Little Drummer Boy	7	5	n/a	<b>6</b>
Feliz Navidad	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>7</b>
We Wish You a Merry Christmas	=9	n/a	=8	<b>8</b>
The Twelve Days of Christmas	6	6	6	<b>9</b>
Silent Night	=9	8	10	<b>10</b>

“=” indicates a tie; n/a indicates not on list that year

Dropped off the list from 2010 – I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus (was =4) and Alvin & The Chipmunks (was =8)

**TABLE 5**  
**FAVORITE ANIMATED HOLIDAY TV SPECIAL**

“Which of these is your favorite holiday animated TV special?”

Base: All Adults

	2006	2009	2010	2011	Generation			
					Echo Boomers (18–34)	Gen X (35–46)	Baby Boomers (47–65)	Matures (66+)
					%	%	%	%
How the Grinch Stole Christmas	21	22	22	<b>23</b>	30	24	19	15
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer	26	23	24	<b>22</b>	22	26	22	14
A Charlie Brown Christmas	24	20	20	<b>21</b>	21	21	22	20
Frosty the Snowman	8	10	9	<b>9</b>	8	10	8	13
The Year Without a Santa Claus	3	4	4	<b>3</b>	2	5	3	1
None of these	19	22	22	<b>22</b>	16	15	25	37

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

**TABLE 6**  
**FAVORITE HOLIDAY MOVIE**  
 “Which of these is your favorite holiday movie?”

Base: All Adults

	2006	2009	2010	2011	Generation			
					Echo Boomers (18–34)	Gen X (35–46)	Baby Boomers (47–65)	Matures (66+)
					%	%	%	%
A Christmas Story	20	21	19	20	21	26	17	17
It’s a Wonderful Life	21	21	23	19	11	15	26	23
Miracle on 34 <sup>th</sup> Street	23	17	17	16	10	11	18	28
National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation	12	13	13	16	21	21	13	7
The Santa Clause	11	9	8	8	13	8	7	4
None of these	13	20	19	20	24	18	19	20

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

**Methodology**

This **Harris Poll** was conducted online within the United States between November 7 and 14, 2011 among 2,499 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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Q865, 870, 873, 875, 880, 885

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