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Ghost Encounters: Nearly Half of Canadians (46%) Believe in Supernatural Beings; 13% Have Stayed at Haunted Hotel

Majority open to spooky overnight stay; want to “meet” guest-room ghosts like John Candy, Jimi Hendrix

Toronto, ON, June 9, 2021 – Is there life after death? Haunting numbers from a new Ipsos poll for Blue Ant Media reveal that nearly half of Canadians (46%) believe in ghosts or supernatural beings, while a further two in ten (20%) are unsure – leaving just one in three (34%) firm skeptics.

Gen X’ers (55%) and Millennials (52%) are the most likely to believe in ghosts, followed closely by Gen Z (49%), while only one in three Boomers (33%) say they believe. Looking across the country, Albertans are the most likely to believe in the supernatural: nearly six in ten (57%) say they believe in ghosts, placing them well ahead of BC (39%) and Ontario (42%). Roughly half of those in the Prairies (49%), Quebec (48%) and Atlantic Canada (50%) say they believe in ghosts.

Could a desire to connect with lost loved ones be fuelling belief in supernatural spirits? The survey finds that many Canadians have taken matters into their own hands by actively trying to contact the dead. At some point, nearly half (45%) have used a Ouija board (32%), consulted a psychic (20%) or a medium (11%), or participated in a séance (4%). Among those who believe in ghosts, six in ten (60%) have tried at least one of these methods of connecting to someone from beyond the grave, with Ouija boards (40%) and psychics (30%) being the most popular.

Haunted Hotels, Spooky Experiences

The survey finds that while few Canadians (13%) have stayed at a haunted hotel, motel, inn or rental, many would be eager to do so if they had the chance: two in ten (21%) would “absolutely” want to stay in a haunted hotel – rising to half (49%) of those who have already done so – while a further four in ten (41%) are on the fence, unwilling to commit to more than a maybe.

Those curious about what an overnight visit to a haunted hotel might entail can look to the lived experiences of the more than one in ten Canadians (13%) who have already been brave enough to do so. Nearly half of past visitors (45%) claim to have had a spooky paranormal experience while staying at a haunted hotel, motel, inn or rental.

Celebrity Ghost Sightings

There is no shortage of infamous ghosts, and when it comes to hotels, a number of guest rooms around the world may well be haunted by the spirits of celebrities who have passed away within their walls.

Survey respondents were presented with a handful of legendary choices and asked which personality’s ghost who died in a hotel they would most like to encounter.



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Canadian actor and comedian John Candy tops the list, with one in four Canadians (27%) saying they would most like to encounter his ghost. Rock legends Jimi Hendrix (12%) and Janis Joplin (10%) are next in line, followed by iconic fashion designer Coco Chanel (7%) and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (6%).

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 18-20, 2021, on behalf of Blue Ant Media. For this survey, a sample of 1,001 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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