

The Meaning of Christmas: Comfort, Joy and Traditions Over The Years Remain the Same, But Half (45%) Say Festive Holiday Season Most Stressful Time of the Year

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Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid poll released today and conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television reveals that while most (94%) Canadians celebrate Christmas, the meaning of Christmas is not the same for all Canadians. A majority (60%) who celebrate Christmas say, for them, it is best described as ‘a time for family’, virtually unchanged from the 57% who believed the same in 1995.

Further, just 23% believe that Christmas is best described as ‘a time to reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ’, remaining relatively consistent since 1995 (21%). However, for some (10%) Christmas is just ‘a time for sharing and gift-giving’ (8% in 1995), while others (7%) believe that it is simply ‘a nice festive season in the middle of the winter’ (7% in 1995).

The Christmas season is also a time of tradition for many. In 1995, 86% of Canadians said that they would have a Christmas tree, while in 2007 six in ten (60%) individuals who celebrate Christmas indicate that they will have an artificial tree in their home, while a little more than one third (35%) will have a real Christmas tree. In preparation for Santa’s climb down the chimney, six in ten (60%) will be hanging stockings on Christmas Eve, which is virtually unchanged since 1995 (58%).



Thinking about the religious meaning of December 25th, nearly one half (48%) of Canadians who celebrate Christmas will be going to church either on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, down slightly from the 55% in 1995 who said they would be going to church. However, just as many Canadians in 2007 as in 1995 say they'll be having a nativity scene in their home (47%).

One tradition that is often a favourite for many is Christmas dinner. Specifically, eight in ten (81%) Canadians suggest that they will be having turkey for Christmas dinner, up from 75% in 1995.

While almost all (94%) Canadians, whether they celebrate Christmas or not, say that they love visiting with family and friends during the festive holidays in December and early January, it appears that all of activities associated with the season are having their toll on Canadians. Nearly one half (45%) agree that 'the festive holidays in December and early January are the most stressful times' of the year.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television from Dec 11 to Dec 13, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Canada been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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