

**Current Events (58%) and Family Gossip (23%) Are Hot
Topics at Dinner Parties Across Canada,
But Some Canadians Are Coming Away With More
Than a Full Belly**

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Two in Ten (18%) Have Played Footsie Under the Table,
and One in Ten (13%) Have Even Hooked Up With a Fellow Guest*

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Current Events (58%) and Family Gossip (23%) Are Hot Topics at Dinner Parties Across Canada, But Some Canadians Are Coming Away With More Than a Full Belly

One Quarter (24%) Have Formed Lifelong Friendships at a Dinner Party, Two in Ten (18%) Have Played Footsie Under the Table, and One in Ten (13%) Have Even Hooked Up With a Fellow Guest

Toronto, ON – As the summer season winds down and the cooler weather forces us inside more often, dinner parties are a fun and cost-effective way to entertain friends and family throughout autumn and winter. A new Ipsos Reid poll, conducted on behalf of the W Network, has found that when hosting or attending a dinner party, the preferred dinner party chatter amongst friends is current events (58%), family gossip (23%), sports (10%), gossiping about friends who aren't at the dinner (8%) and celebrity gossip (1%).

But many Canadians appear to be leaving the dining table with more than a fully belly: a quarter (24%) of those polled have said they 'formed a lifelong friendship' while at a dinner party, two in ten (18%) have 'played footsie under the table', and one in ten (13%) have 'hooked up with a fellow guest' they met at the party. Other dinner party activities include meeting a significant other/life partner (6%), landing a job interview (6%) and playing footsie with the wrong person (4%)!

The poll also reveals that Canadians believe certain topics are apparently taboo at dinner parties. The topic that is off-limits according to half (49%) of Canadians is religion while four

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in ten (40%) say sex should not be discussed. Money (37%) follows closely as does a discussion around politics (35%). Illness or death is off-limits according to a quarter (28%) of Canadians while one in ten (11%) say work is not appropriate dinner banter.

The way in which Canadians are inviting their friends to dinner parties has no doubt changed over the years. While the majority of Canadians invite guests to their dinner party via telephone (67%), two in ten (18%) prefer email invitations. Almost one in ten (7%) invite their friends over Facebook, 2% send a written invitation in the mail and 2% send an e-vite.

What dinner party would be complete without an impressive creation by the chef? Almost a majority (45%) of Canadians say they make up the menu as they go along while two in ten (20%) rely on a family recipe. One in ten (13%) cook from a cook book and a similar proportion (12%) plan their menu from online recipe sites. Word of mouth (7%) and magazines (2%) contribute to menu planning as well. Perhaps Canadians ought to host more dinner parties as four in ten (43%) prefer a good meal to having sex.

Curiosity may have killed the cat, but some Canadians appear to be no worse off for satisfying their own curiosity – in fact, they got a free meal out of it, despite two in ten (22%) admitting to have secretly snooped through a host's bathroom cabinets and cupboards.

A common dinner party tradition among gracious guests is to bring a gift for the host or the hostess. Half (52%) of Canadians say they prefer receiving a bottle of wine compared to fewer who prefer dessert (23%), flowers (15%), a small kitchen item (6%) or a holiday décor item such as an ornament (5%).

Canadians' Dinner Party Chit Chat...

The majority of Canadians prefer to discuss current events (58%) at dinner parties, followed by family gossip (23%), sports (10%), gossiping about friends who aren't at the dinner (8%) and celebrity gossip (1%). But some attitudes vary greatly across the demographics studied:

- British Columbians (68%) were most likely to chat about current events followed by people living in Ontario (62%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (60%), Alberta (54%), Quebec (52%) and Atlantic Canada (49%).
- Current events are the favourite discussion topic among all age groups: 67% of 55 year olds and older, 56% of 35-54 year olds and 51% of 18 -34 year olds preferred to talk about contemporary issues.
- The majority of Canadians over 55 (66%) say sex is unacceptable as dinner conversation while 39% of 18-34 year olds and 48% of 35-54 year olds say religion is.
- Most women (54%) say religion should never be discussed at the dinner table while only 43% of men agree.

Invites, E-Vites and Old Fashioned Phone Calls...

Most Canadians invite guests to their dinner party via telephone (67%) while two in ten (18%) prefer email invitations. Almost one in ten (7%) do it over Facebook, 2% send a written invitation in the mail and 2% send an e-vite.

- Three quarters (75%) of women invite guests mainly by phone while six in ten (57%) men are as likely to do so.

- Eight in ten (79%) of 55 year olds invite guest by telephone, as do 70% of 35-54 year olds and 47% of 18-34 year olds.

Curious?

One in five (22%) Canadians have admitted to secretly snooping through a host's bathroom cabinets and cupboards.

- Younger people between 18-34 were more likely (33%) to do this compared to middle aged people between 35-54 (20%) and those over 55 (14%).
- Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba were most likely to admit to snooping (30%), compared to those living in British Columbia (28%), Quebec (25%), Alberta (23%), as well as Ontario (17%) and Atlantic Canada (17%).
- Interestingly, two in ten women (22%) and men (21%) have admitted to getting nosy and looking around bathroom cabinets and cupboards.

To Re-Gift... or Not to Re-Gift...

When it comes to gifts, the majority (52%) of Canadians say, if they were the host or hostess, they would like to receive a bottle of wine compared to dessert (23%), flowers (15%), a small kitchen item (6%) or a holiday décor item such as an ornament (5%).

- A bottle of wine was still the most preferred item to receive by men (59%) and women (44%) but significantly more men (31%) preferred dessert than women (15%). Flowers rated much higher among women (25%) than men (3%).
- The majority of younger Canadians between 18-34 years old prefer a bottle of wine, as do 51% of 34-54 year olds and those 55 and over.



These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between September 7 and 13, 2010, on behalf of the W Network. For this survey, a sample of 1,009 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. 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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