

2026 HomePage News At-Home Entertaining Report

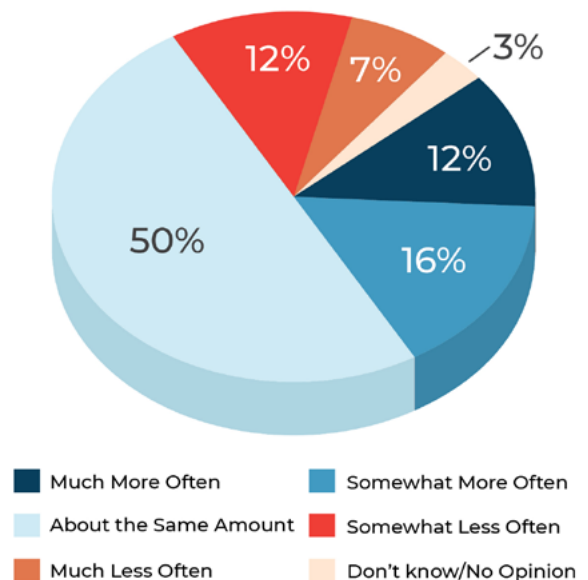


Consumers have been hosting more celebrations at home and plan to keep doing so, according to the 2026 International Housewares Association (IHA) At-Home Entertaining Survey.

Younger generations are driving this momentum, showing strong enthusiasm for having people over to celebrate and for outfitting their homes to get the party right. At a time when market research indicates consumers are making more deliberate spending choices, the survey highlights the home as an increasingly attractive setting for entertaining.

During the next 12 months, respondents anticipate more gatherings in their lives: 12% expect to host much more often and 16% somewhat more often, up from 10% and 14%, respectively, in last year's poll. Younger consumers are leading the shift. Gen Z stands out at 22% much more and 25% somewhat more, compared with 16% and 19%, respectively, in 2025. Millennials also rose to 19% and 20%, up from 15% and 17%, respectively. Gen X declined slightly by two points for each, while Boomers remained relatively stable.

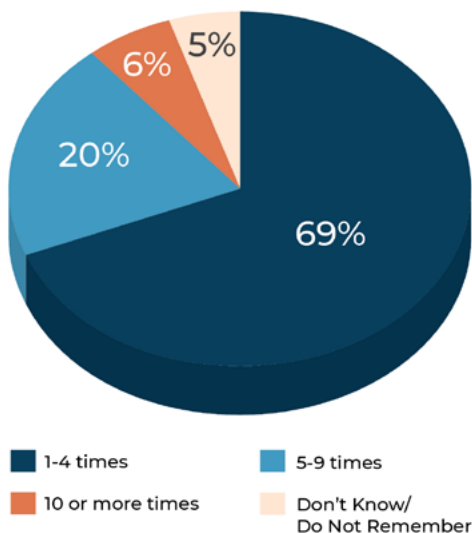
Hosting Outlook for the Next 12 Months



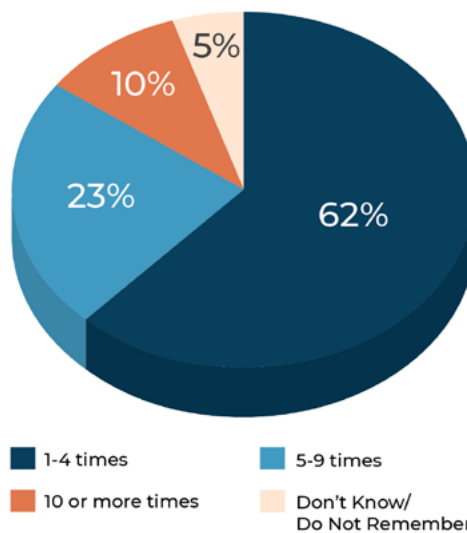
The rise in actual hosting reflects the same trend. In the 2026 survey, 57% of respondents hosted a casual gathering (such as a Super Bowl party or a movie night with food and/or drink) during the past year, up from 47% in the 2025 survey. Gen Z rose 14 points to 64%, Millennials increased 16 points to 62%, Gen X grew two points to 51%, and Boomers increased six points to 53%.

Occasion-based gatherings – such as holidays and significant life events – were also more prevalent. Fifty-eight percent of consumers hosted in the past year, up from 49% in 2025. Gen Z led again at 64% (up six points), followed by Millennials at 62% (up 13 points). Boomers were at 54% (up nine points), narrowly ahead of Gen X at 53% (up one point).

Frequency of Hosting Occasion-Based Gatherings Per Year

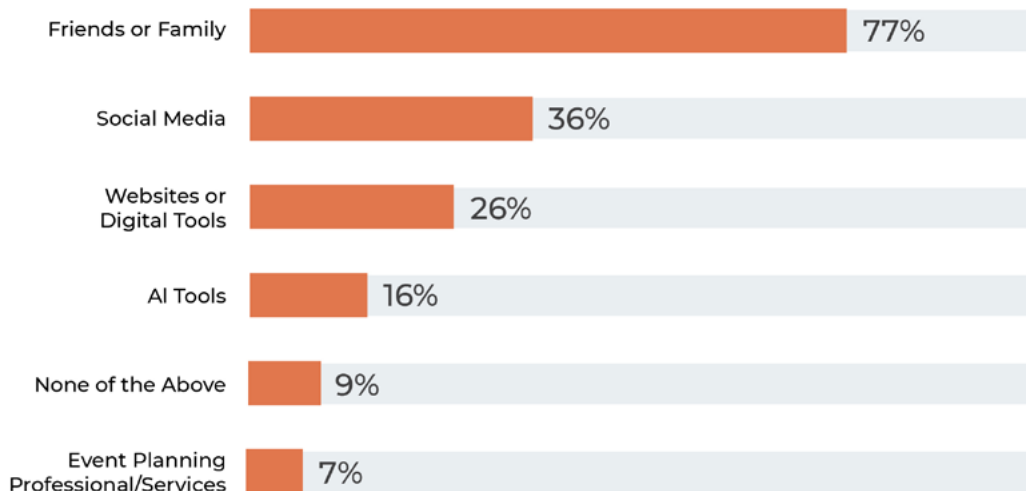


Frequency of Hosting Casual Gatherings Per Year



Most respondents hold one to four casual gatherings a year (62%), with 23% hosting five to nine and 10% hosting 10 or more. Patterns for occasion-based gatherings follow a similar distribution: 69% host one to four, 20% host five to nine, and 6% host 10 or more.

Resources Used for Planning At-Home Gatherings

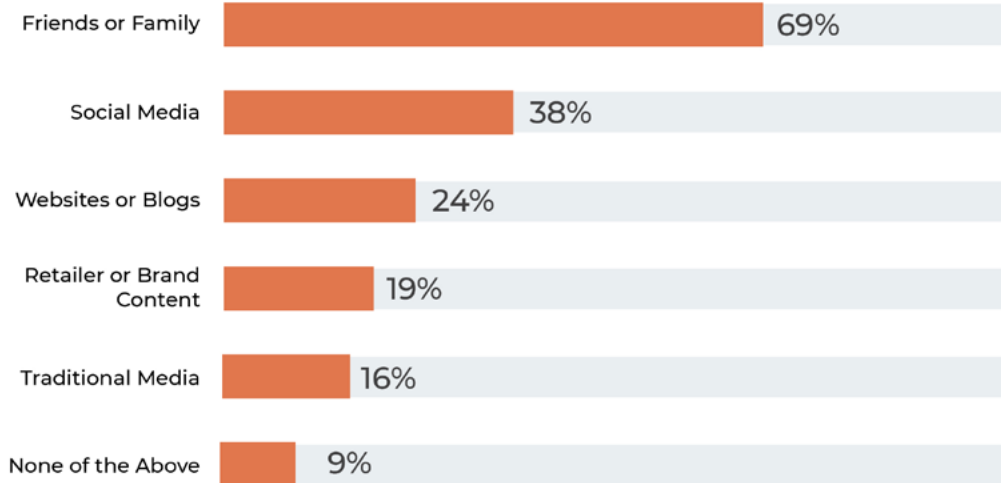


Thirty-six percent of respondents said they would use social media to prepare for a gathering, 26% would use websites or digital tools, and 16% would turn to AI resources such as chatbots, including ChatGPT. Only 7% said they would consider hiring a professional party planner. Still, 77% would rely on friends and family for help, highlighting the enduring importance of personal connections. Younger generations are far more likely than Gen X or Boomers to turn to digital platforms and AI, though the latter two demographics remain slightly more inclined toward family-and-friend advice.

Inspiration similarly tends to start close to home.

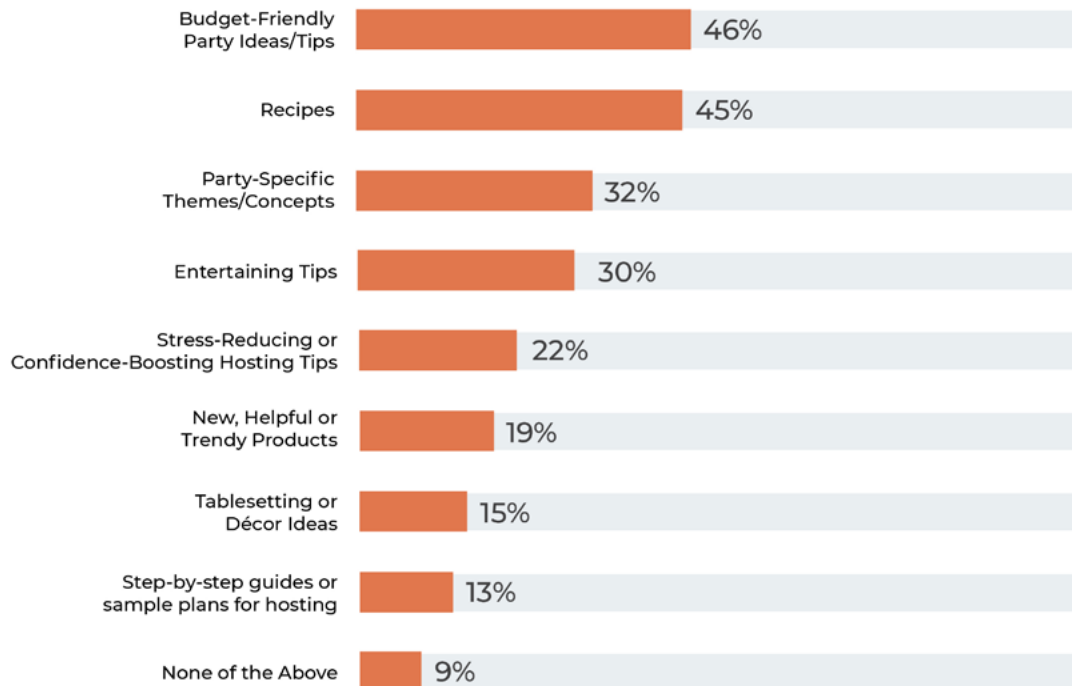


Primary Sources of Inspiration for At-Home Gatherings



Sixty-nine percent look to family and friends for ideas when organizing an event. Some 38% seek inspiration from social media, 24% from websites or blogs, 19% from retailers or brands, and 16% from traditional media. Older consumers rely more on personal networks, while Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to tap brands, traditional media and especially digital platforms for fresh ideas.

Types of Inspiration That Would Encourage Hosting



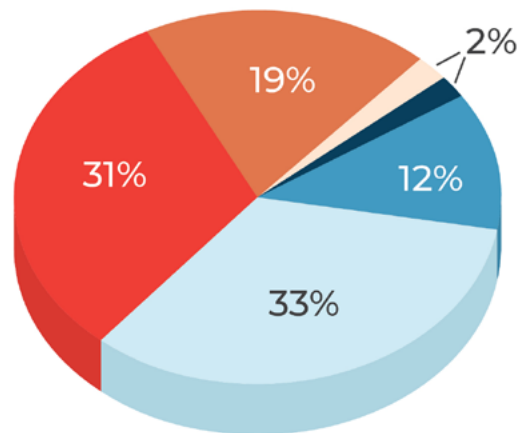
Many survey respondents said certain types of inspiration could help them get into the gathering mood: 46% would be encouraged by budget-friendly tips, 45% by recipes, and 32% by themes or concepts. This reinforces that consumers are receptive to suggestions that simplify or elevate at-home gatherings.

Digital tools play a stronger role in the planning process.



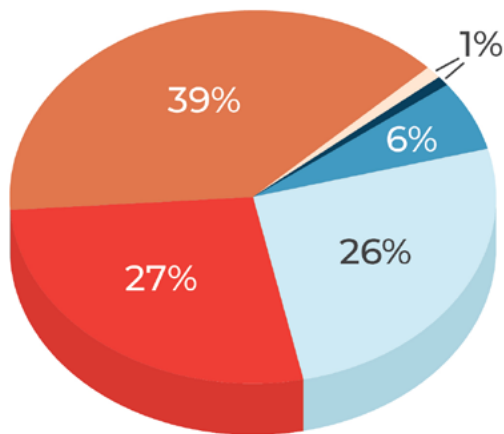
Indoor vs. Outdoor Hosting Frequency

While outdoor entertaining surged during the pandemic, indoor spaces still dominate. Nineteen percent of consumers always hold gatherings indoors, 31% do so more often, while 33% split events evenly between indoors and outdoors. Only 2% always hold events outdoors, with 12% doing so more often next year.



- Always Outdoors
- More Outdoor Than Indoor
- About Even
- More Indoor than Outdoor
- Always Indoors
- Don't know/No Opinion

Catering vs. Self-Prepared Food for Gatherings

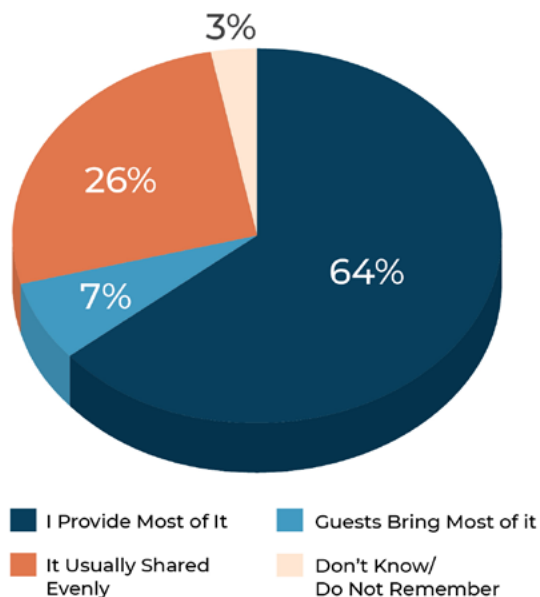


- Always Catered
- Usually Catered
- About 50/50
- Usually Self-Prepared
- Always Self-Prepared
- Don't know/No Opinion

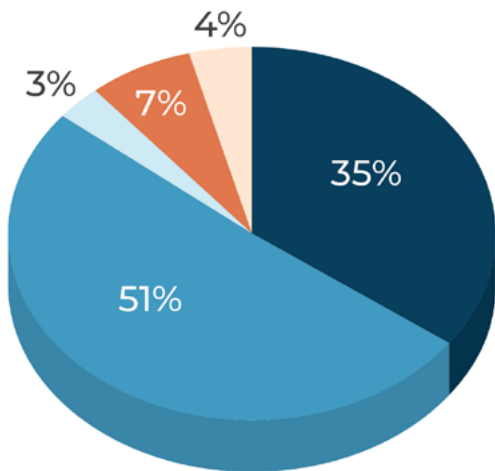
Food habits remain steady. Most gatherings rely on self-prepared meals – 39% always and 27% usually. Twenty-six percent say events include an equal mix of homemade and catered food, while 6% usually and 1% always rely on delivery.

Primary Provider of Food and Beverage for Gatherings

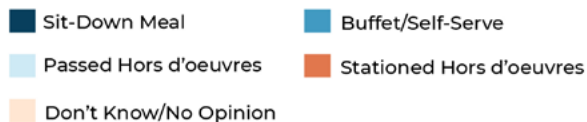
Guests also contribute frequently. Although 64% of hosts provide most of the food, 26% usually have guests bring half, and 7% rely on guests for most.



Preferred Serving Format for Gatherings

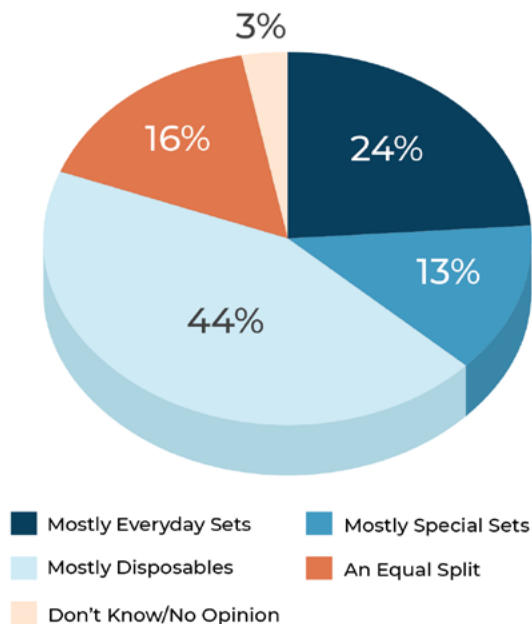


When serving food, 51% of consumers prefer a self-serve or buffet setup, 35% favor sit-down meals, 7% prefer stationed hors d'oeuvres and 3% prefer passed hors d'oeuvres.

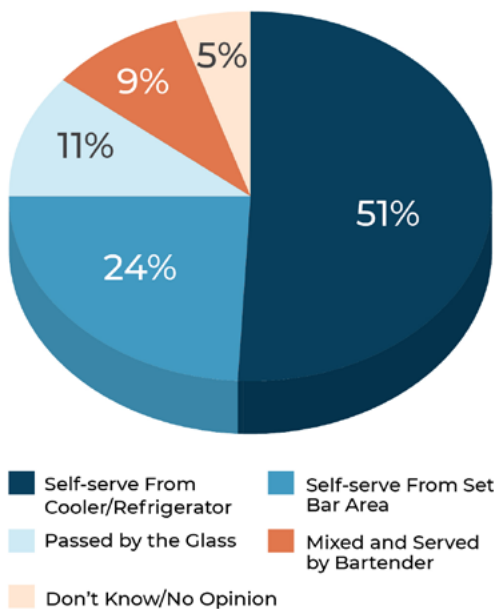


Ease of hosting influences product choices. Forty-four percent of consumers mostly use disposable plates, cups and utensils when entertaining, 24% mostly use everyday housewares, 13% use specialty sets, and 16% split between reusable and disposable items.

Typical Housewares Used When Hosting

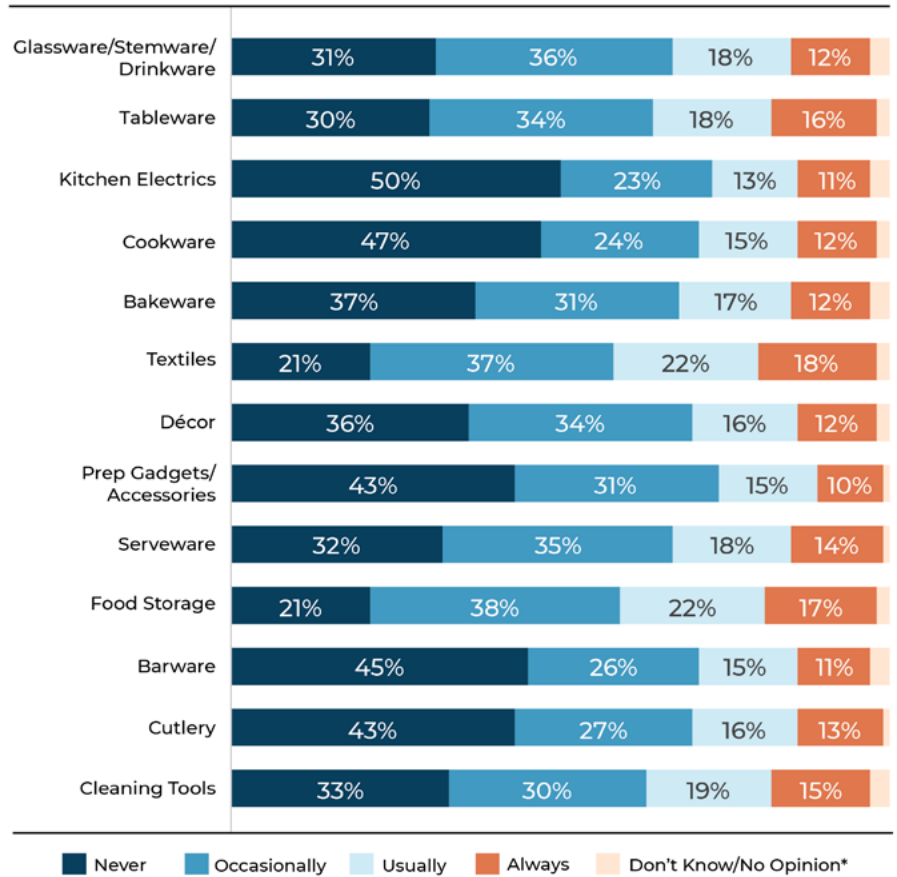


Drink Service Format for Gatherings



Drink service follows a similar preference toward convenience: 51% provide access to a fridge or cooler, and 24% set up a bar area.

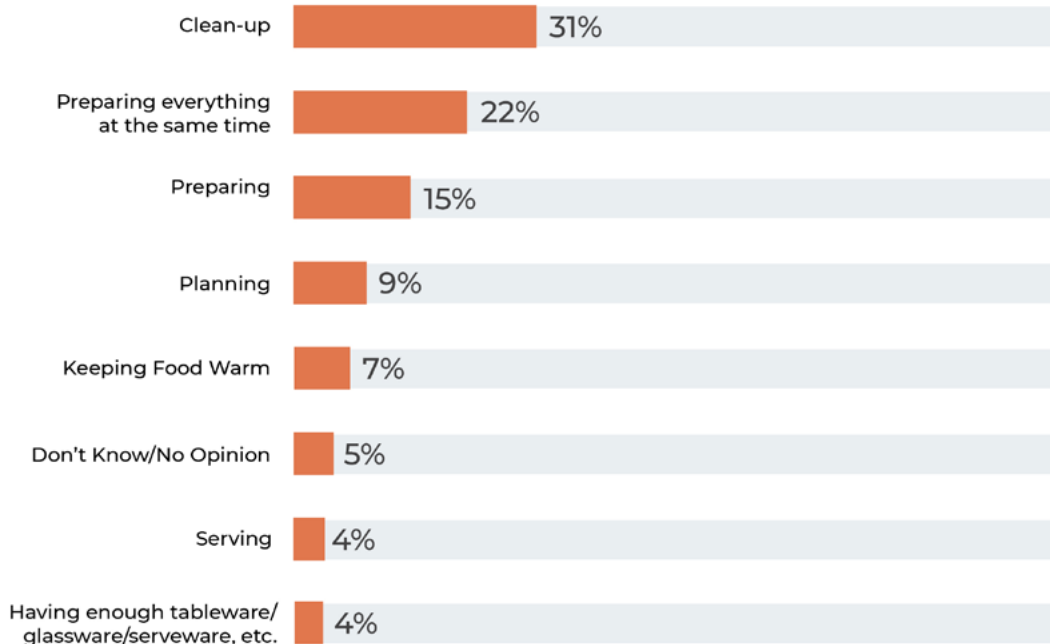
Purchase Frequency of Products for At-Home Gatherings



*All values for Don't Know/No Opinion are 3% or lower.

Preparing for gatherings often requires additional purchases across a wide range of categories.

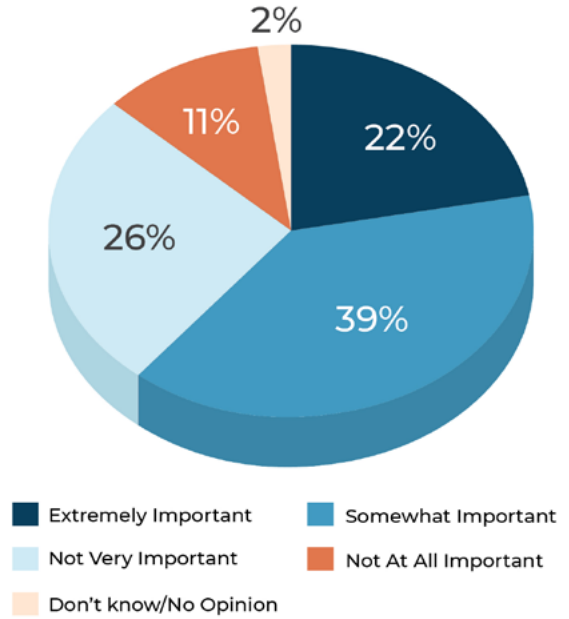
Most Challenging Aspects of At-Home Entertaining



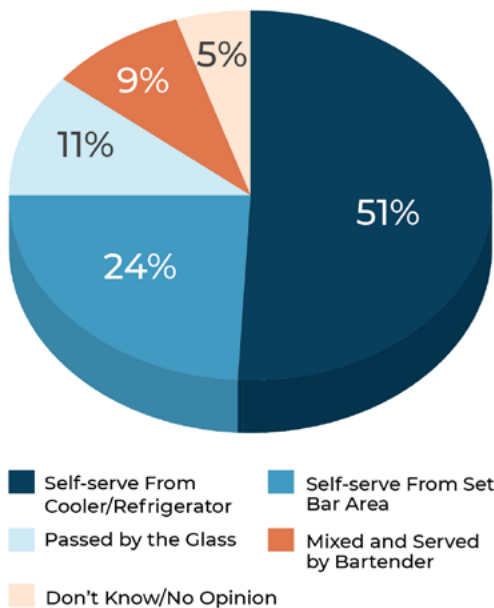
Cleaning is the biggest challenge for many hosts. Thirty-one percent cite cleanup as the hardest part of hosting, followed by preparing everything at the same time (22%), cooking (15%), planning (9%) and keeping food warm (7%).

Creating themes and atmosphere matters to many hosts. Twenty-two percent say themes are extremely important and 39% say they are somewhat important. Fifteen percent of consumers say adopting a particular aesthetic is a must for their gatherings; 23% usually do so; and 50% do so occasionally.

Importance of Look, Theme or Atmosphere When Hosting

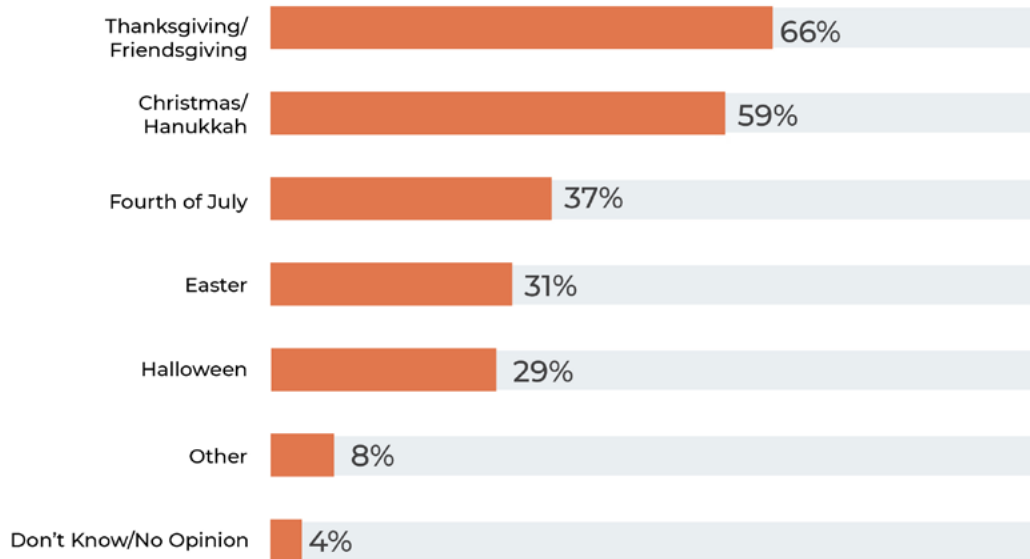


Frequency of Purchasing Specific Items for a Desired Gathering Aesthetic



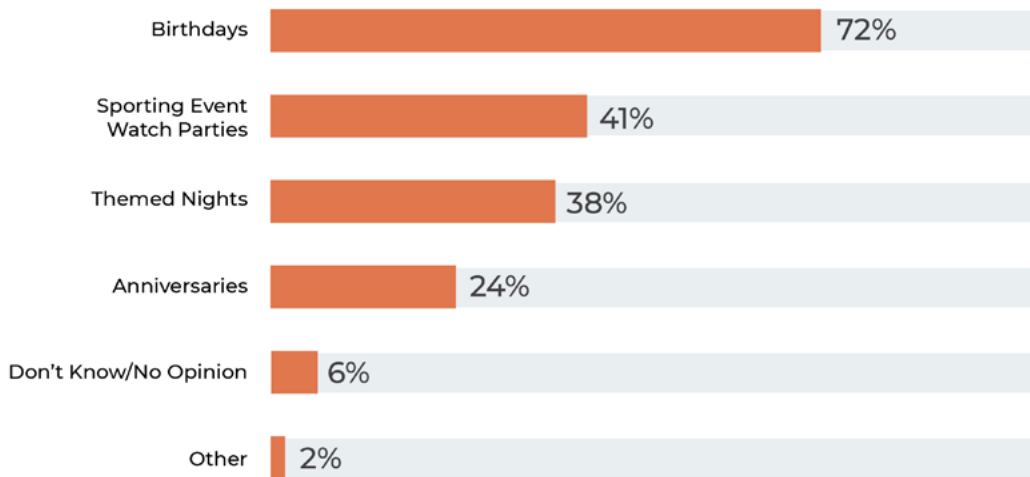
Half of consumers say they occasionally purchase products to create the aesthetic they want, while another 38% do so usually or always.

Casual Event-Based Occasions Typically Hosted



Holiday gatherings remain dominant. Thanksgiving leads at 66%, followed by Christmas/Hanukkah (59%), Fourth of July (37%), Easter (31%) and Halloween (29%).

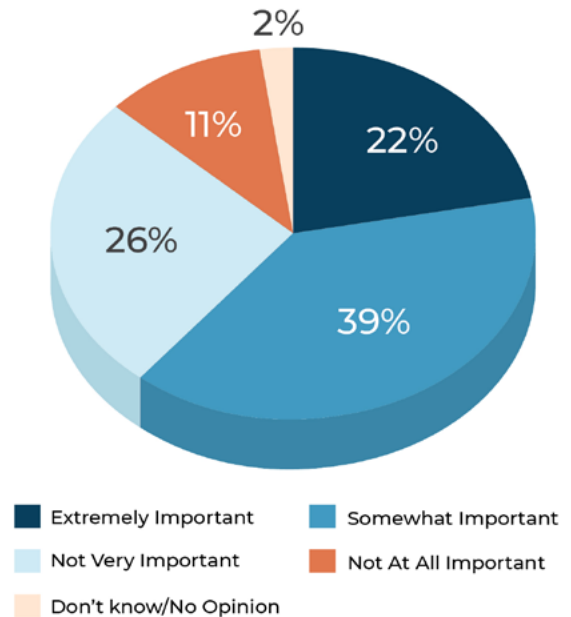
Casual Event-Based Occasions Typically Hosted



Casual gatherings often revolve around birthdays (72%), sporting events (41%), themed get-togethers such as Taco Tuesday, or game night (38%) and anniversaries (24%).

Importance of Sustainability in Entertaining Product Choices

Sustainability continues to influence purchasing decisions, with 26% saying it is extremely important and 44% somewhat important.



Overall, the At-Home Entertaining Survey shows that hosting at home continues to gain momentum, especially among Gen Z and Millennials. Consumers are motivated to gather and willing to invest in products that make home-based celebrations easier and more enjoyable. Even amid economic caution, the appeal of bringing people together in familiar spaces remains strong, reinforcing the home as a central hub for connection, comfort and celebration.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Peter Giannetti, Editor-in-Chief at pgiannetti@homepagenews.com

Chandler Harvey, Senior Managing Editor at charvey@homepagenews.com