

Americans Express Gratitude for Another Year on their Birthdays

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Celebrate (Verb) /'sɛləˌbreɪt/ to do something special because of an important event
Example: The company is celebrating its 100th anniversary this coming February 25.
2. Alive (Adjective) /əˈlaɪv/ living
Example: The old lady is thankful that she is alive and still very strong.
3. Special (Adjective) /'spɛʃəl/ better, greater, or different from normal
Example: My mom makes these cookies only on special occasions.
4. Surprise (Noun) /sərˈpraɪz/ something that is unexpected or amazing
Example: They gave her a surprise party on her 18th birthday.
5. Compare (Verb) /kəmˈpɛr/ to say or consider how similar or different two or more things are
Example: I compared the prices on different websites before deciding where to buy from.



If we were lucky as children, our birthdays came with games, gifts and cake. But as we get older, things can change. And a survey has found that 54% of Americans celebrate their birthdays by thanking God they're still alive. That was the most common answer to a question by YouGov, which asked how people in the US celebrate their birthdays.

The survey company asked 1,000 adult Americans about their birthdays. When thinking about the last five years, just one out of five people said they almost always had a party, while 18% usually took a day off work. Half said that nearly every year they spend the day with family, and 40% usually have a special meal — no surprises there.

Speaking of surprises, 33% of people said they'd love a surprise party on their big day, compared to 7% who would hate the idea. But that doesn't mean most Americans get excited about their birthdays. When the day comes, 47% said they don't like it or dislike it — it's just "fine." That number was even higher among over 65s, with 58% saying they have no strong feelings about their birthday.

Fifty-eight percent of adults even said they prefer Christmas to their birthday — and almost half like the American holiday of Thanksgiving better than their own birthday as well. But 37% of people said they still have cake on their birthday almost every year — with chocolate being the most popular type.

DISCUSSION

1. What are your thoughts on YouGov's findings?
2. How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
3. Do you find it surprising that 47% of people said their birthday is just "fine"?
4. Do you know anyone who always throws a party for their birthday?
5. Have you ever had a surprise party? If so, was it a complete surprise? If not, would you like to?