



Instacart Reveals America's Ideal At-Home Valentine's Day Dinner

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New Instacart survey and search data uncover that most U.S. adults just want to K.I.S.S., that is, "keep it simple, stupid."

SAN FRANCISCO — Ever wish your partner could read your mind about what it takes (or doesn't take) to enjoy the perfect Valentine's Day dinner at home? Today Instacart, a North American leader in online grocery, is revealing what women and men actually crave on February 14 when it comes to the ultimate date night at home. The findings are clear, but might come as a surprise — most Americans just want to K.I.S.S., that is, "keep it simple, stupid."

According to a new Instacart survey of more than 2,000 U.S. adults conducted online by The Harris Poll, Americans are divided on whether they would rather go out to Valentine's Day dinner at a restaurant (51%) or stay in and have dinner at home (49%). For nearly half of the population who plan to turn up the romance at home, what does it take to orchestrate an ideal dinner? Is it dressing up to eat an expensive, involved home-cooked meal complete with caviar, or is it all about indulging in your favorite comfort food in sweats?

"We compared the volume of Instacart customers' search terms the week leading up to Valentine's Day and compared it with the survey data we gathered with The Harris Poll, and it's clear that simplicity is the key ingredient to making an at-home Valentine's Day special," said Laurentia Romaniuk, Instacart's Senior Catalog Product Manager. "However, while most couples would prefer to keep it simple, our data shows that certain details matter more than others."

The New Wow Factors

Gone are the days of impressing your sweetheart with fancy clothing, a multi-course gourmet meal, and indulgent, expensive foods. The real way to your lover's heart is as easy as (pizza) pie:

- **A pizza my heart.** Valentine's Day dinner doesn't need to include fancy dishes. In fact, 41% of Americans say pizza is among the most underrated Valentine's day foods, with 20% secretly wishing their partner would make pizza for their romantic meal at home.

In addition to pizza, dishes Americans secretly wish their partner would make include:

- An all-dessert meal (22%)
 - Fried chicken (20%)
 - BBQ (19%)
 - Tacos (18%)
- **Roses are red, burgers are... sexy?** Thinking about trying out a new Greek or Burmese recipe this V-Day? Think again. Our survey findings show that "American" cuisine tops the list of the most romantic cuisines to have for a Valentine's Day dinner at home — with 46% of U.S. adults backing the claim. Following American, Italian (44%) and French (22%) come in as the #2 and #3 most romantic cuisines, respectively.
 - **It really is the thought that counts.** 63% of Americans describe the perfect Valentine's Day dinner at home as thoughtful and personal (i.e. my partner making my favorite foods), while 45% describe their ideal night as easy and low key. Furthermore, just over half of Americans (51%) would prefer to cook the special meal together with their sweetie versus cooking for their date or having their date cook for them.

And for the record, the fewest Americans want Valentine's Day dinners that require a lot of effort (17%) and cost a lot (8%).

- **Bringing sexy back.** Sure, James Bond suits and LBDs are great, but have you ever worn sweatpants on a date? Surprisingly, more than a quarter of Americans (26%) claim one of the biggest benefits to making Valentine's Day dinner at home is that they can wear their sweatpants. And women are more likely than men to share this sentiment (30% vs. 21%).
- **Love isn't always messy.** 50% of Americans believe a clean house is one of the best ways to set the stage for a romantic Valentine's Day meal at home. Women (53%) especially share this viewpoint — more so than men (47%). Once the house is clean, don't forget the candlelight and tabletop flowers, with more than half of Americans (57% and 55%, respectively) agreeing they help set the mood.

It's All in the Details

While you don't need to pull out the red carpet in order to make Valentine's Day dinner with your sweetie special, it's important to choose the right elements for your romantic night in.

- **Chocolate, yes! Heart-shaped, no.** Chocolate tops the list of foods that people consider a turn-on for Valentine's Day, with 61% of Americans admitting to it setting a mood and Instacart search data showing a 1,125% search increase the week leading up to V-Day. However, be careful about which chocolate you choose ... 43% of people also say that heart-shaped chocolate boxes are among the most overrated, stereotypical Valentine's Day foods.
- **Chocolate-dipped be damned.** While over half of Americans (51%) consider strawberries to be among their biggest turn-ons for Valentine's Day, 33% of people say that the chocolate-dipped version is overrated. Our data tells a different story, however, with searches for chocolate-covered strawberries up 678% in the week leading up to Valentine's Day.
- **Feeling Fishy.** Under-the-sea entrees have a place on the V-Day table, but make sure you choose wisely. While 37% of Americans think lobster is one of the biggest turn-ons for Valentine's Day, more than 1 in 3 Americans consider traditional aphrodisiacs like caviar (36%) and oysters (35%) to be among their biggest turnoffs. Our search data confirms lobster is top-of-mind over other seafood with searches for the popular shellfish up 235% during Valentine's Day week.

If you're thinking turf over surf, then know that 47% of Americans consider a big steak to be among the biggest turn-ons for V-Day dinner.

- **Getting intimate with Italian.** 44% of Americans find Italian cuisine to be among the most romantic cuisine to have for Valentine's Day dinner with 34% of people saying that pasta is a "turn-on." But nix the garlic and leave the spaghetti slurping to Lady and the Tramp – about 1 in 4 Americans find garlic (25%) and 'messy foods' (33%), to be a turnoff.

Just remember, the recipe for modern culinary romance is simpler than you might think. Whether you decide to make pizza, fried chicken, or an all-dessert meal, it's sure to be a great Valentine's Day when spent with your butter half.

Survey Method

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Instacart from January 16-21, 2020 among 2,026 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables and subgroup sample sizes, please contact Instacart.

Instacart Search Term Method

We reviewed our marketplace search data to reveal how customer behavior matched against our consumer survey results. We compared search volume for notable Valentine's Day items for the two weeks leading up to Valentines' Day and the week of Valentine's Day in 2019.

About Instacart

Instacart is a North American leader in online grocery and one of the fastest growing companies in e-commerce. Instacart's same-day delivery and pickup services bring fresh groceries and everyday essentials to busy people and families across the U.S. and Canada in as fast as an hour. Instacart has partnered with more than 350 beloved national, regional and local retailers, including Albertsons, ALDI, Costco, Kroger, Loblaw, Publix, Sam's Club, Sprouts, Walmart Canada, and Wegmans, among others, to deliver from nearly 25,000 stores across more than 5,500 cities in North America. Instacart's delivery service is available to more than 85% of U.S. households and 70% of Canadian households. The company's cutting-edge enterprise technology also powers the e-commerce platforms of some of the world's biggest retail players, supporting their white-label websites, applications and delivery solutions. Instacart offers an Instacart Express membership for unlimited free delivery on orders over \$35. For more information or to start shopping, visit www.instacart.com.

About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is one of the longest running surveys in the U.S. tracking public opinion, motivations and social sentiment since 1963 that is now part of Harris Insights and Analytics, a global consulting and market research firm that delivers social intelligence for transformational times. We work with clients in three primary areas; building twenty-first-century corporate reputation, crafting brand strategy and performance tracking, and earning organic media through public relations research. Our mission is to provide insights and advisory to help leaders make the best decisions possible. To learn more, please visit www.theharrispoll.com.