# THE HIDDEN COST OF HOLIDAY HOSTING

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## 2026 HOLIDAY HOSTING REPORT



A closer look at the cleaning, stress and missed moments behind America's holiday gatherings

**UNITED STATES EDITION**

# THE HOLIDAYS BRING US TOGETHER.

# THE WORK CAN PULL US APART.

Holiday hosting is about more than preparing a meal or welcoming guests through the door. It's a way to show care, celebrate traditions and create lasting memories with loved ones. Yet the effort behind every gathering can be surprisingly demanding, and for many hosts, the pressure to make everything perfect can overshadow the joy of the occasion. In fact, more than half of holiday hosts say the stress of hosting puts a damper on their holiday spirits, with cleaning emerging as a persistent source of pressure before, during and after the celebration.

From hours spent preparing the home to unexpected messes and moments missed with loved ones, the hidden demands of holiday hosting can come at a greater cost than time alone. This report takes a closer look at the cleaning responsibilities weighing on hosts, the impact on their holiday experience and the opportunities to spend less time managing the mess and more time making memories.

## HOW WE SOURCED THE DATA FOR THIS REPORT

**2,000**

**U.S. Holiday Hosts**



**OCT.8–15**

**2026 Survey Dates**

# CLEANING ADDS TO THE HOLIDAY PRESSURE.

More than a third of holiday hosts (35%) describe hosting as stressful. Cooking is the most frequently cited preparation stressor, which is understandable when a meal needs to come together on time. But cleaning also appears on both sides of the guest experience: 25% identify cleaning before guests arrive as a major source of stress, while 19% cite cleaning after or while guests are present.

These are not isolated chores. They reflect the pressure to make a home feel ready, keep it comfortable as people gather and restore it afterward. Unlike the meal, cleaning has no single serving time. It can stretch across the entire occasion, creating a quiet background demand when hosts would rather turn their attention to their guests.

**35%**

DESCRIBE HOSTING AS STRESSFUL

## What's Stressing Holiday Hosts Out?



# ONE GATHERING, TWO AND A HALF WORKDAYS OF CLEANING

- Before guests arrive
  —10.4 hours
- After guests leave
  —10.2 hours



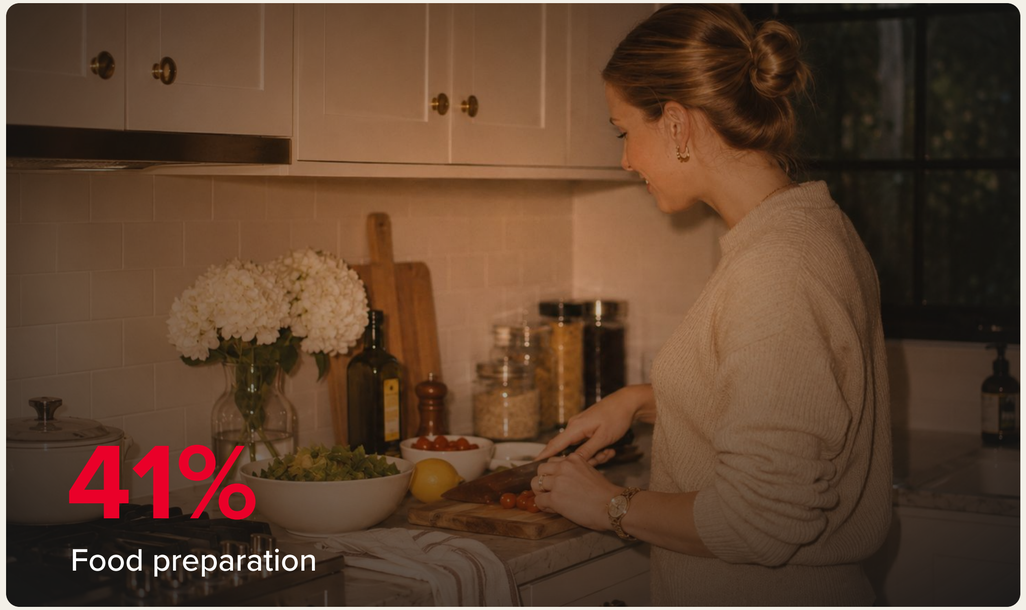
**20.6 hours ≈**

EQUIVALENT TO ROUGHLY **2.5 EIGHT-HOUR WORKDAYS**

Holiday hosting carries a time cost that is easy to underestimate. Hosts report an average of 20 hours spent cleaning their homes before and after a gathering—roughly two and a half eight-hour workdays of cleaning surrounding a single celebration.

That time represents far more than another task on the holiday to-do list. It's time spent cleaning alongside shopping, cooking, decorating and everything else that goes into bringing a gathering to life. And with so much attention devoted to preparing the home, it's easy to see how the work behind the celebration can begin to overshadow the celebration itself.

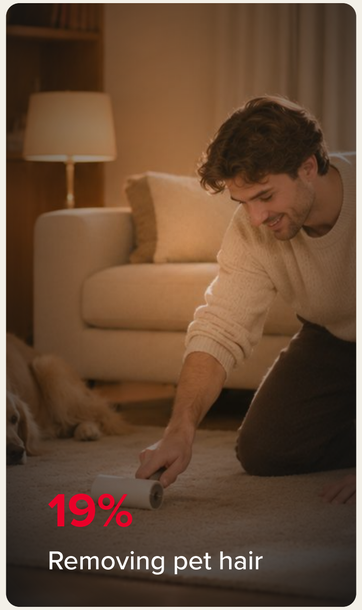
# ONE IN FOUR HOSTS VACUUM OR MOP AT THE LAST MINUTE










The final stretch before guests arrive is predictably busy. While 41% of hosts say they complete food preparation at the last minute, what is more striking is how frequently cleaning is still unfinished at that same moment. One in four (25%) have vacuumed or mopped at the last minute, 30% have wiped down surfaces and 19% have removed pet hair from floors and furniture.

With a meal to finish and guests about to arrive, cleaning should be the last thing hosts need to worry about. Yet for many, the last-minute rush includes a scramble to make the home feel ready. Some hosts (14%) have even delayed the start of a gathering because their home was not clean enough.




**have delayed a gathering because their home wasn't clean enough.**




**hosts vacuum or mop at the last minute**

# BATHROOMS TOP THE PRE-GUEST CLEANING WORRY LIST

As the countdown to guests' arrival begins, hosts have plenty on their minds, including making sure their homes are ready to welcome friends and family. The living room gets the most attention, followed by bathrooms and the kitchen—the spaces where guests are likely to gather and spend much of their time.

But getting these spaces guest-ready involves more than a quick tidy-up. Bathroom cleanliness tops the list of concerns, followed by kitchen messes, dirty floors, clutter and dust. With holiday preparations in full swing, keeping these high-traffic areas clean can feel like a moving target, particularly when homes are at their busiest.

KITCHEN MESSES

35%

DIRTY FLOORS

28%

CLUTTER

25%

DUST

19%

BATHROOM CLEANLINESS

43%

PET HAIR

17%

CRUMBS / FOOD DEBRIS

17%

# HALF OF ALL HOSTS ARE CLEANING WHILE GUESTS ARE PRESENT

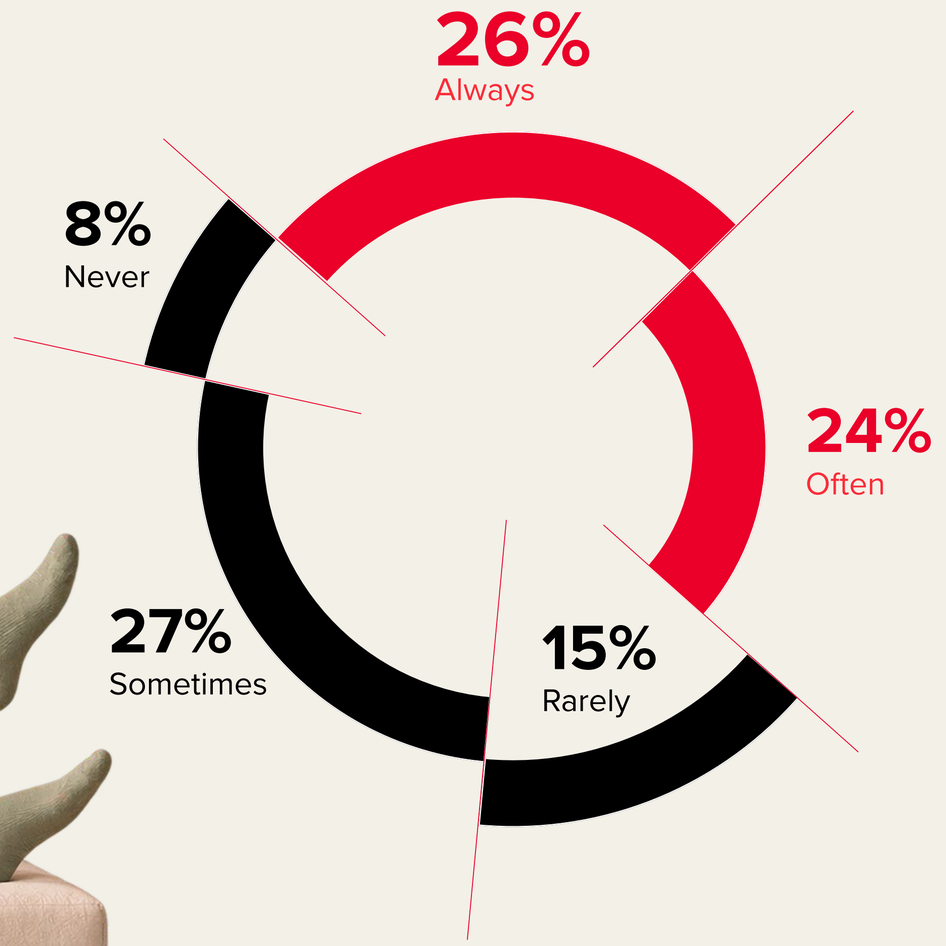
Guests arriving does not necessarily mean hosts can put the cleaning supplies away. One in two hosts say they always or often find themselves cleaning while people are still in their home. That means cleaning frequently overlaps with the time set aside for connecting and celebrating.

The reasons are familiar: food or drink spills during a gathering, creating crumbs and sticky floors. Unexpected messes are part of opening a home to others, but the more attention they demand, the harder it can be to stay present in the conversation, the meal, or the moment.

**50%**

ALWAYS OR OFTEN CLEAN WHILE GUESTS ARE PRESENT






For many hosts, the work doesn't stop when the doorbell rings. Even after hours spent preparing their homes, keeping up with spills, crumbs and everyday messes can pull their attention away from the people they've gathered to celebrate with. It's a familiar tension: wanting everyone to feel comfortable and welcome, while also wanting to be fully present for the occasion.



# ONLY ONE IN FOUR FIND POST-PARTY CLEANUP MANAGEABLE

When the gathering ends, hosts are often left with another round of work. Only 26% say they do not mind the cleanup or find it manageable. By contrast, 21% say they are usually too tired to tackle it immediately, 18% wish someone else would take care of it, and 15% feel stressed or overwhelmed by the amount left to clean.

Many hosts are already trying to make the burden lighter. Nearly one-third (31%) split their cleaning across different days, while 15% hire a cleaner. These strategies reflect a simple desire: to prevent the work from swallowing the time and energy that the gathering was meant to replenish.



**26%**

MANAGEABLE / DON'T MIND



**21%**

TOO TIRED TO TACKLE IMMEDIATELY



**18%**

WISH SOMEONE ELSE WOULD CLEAN



**18%**

ENJOY CLEANUP



**15%**

STRESSED / OVERWHELMED

# MORE THAN HALF SAY CLEANING COSTS THEM HOLIDAY MOMENTS

The emotional cost of cleaning is harder to measure in hours. For many hosts, one of the biggest sacrifices of holiday entertaining is the very thing that brings people together: quality time with loved ones. These aren't just small moments missed along the way. They are often the very reason people host in the first place.

**36%**
Time to relax

**36%**
Conversations with guests

**36%**
Enjoying a meal

**33%**
Taking photos

**33%**
Eating with guests

**21%**
Holiday traditions

There is a quiet contradiction in working so hard to create a memorable experience for others, only to miss out on parts of it yourself. While the care and effort that go into hosting are part of what makes the holidays special, these responsibilities can compete with simply enjoying being together.



# LESS CLEANING COULD MEAN MORE GATHERINGS

For some people, the weight of preparation and cleanup changes whether they host at all. More than one-third have avoided hosting more than once because the work felt overwhelming, while another 19% have done so once. An additional 23% say they have considered avoiding it. The potential cost is not just a more stressful event; it is a gathering that never happens.

The reverse is encouraging, with the majority of hosts stating they would host more frequently if less pre-event or post-event cleaning were involved. This suggests that easing routine household work may help people feel more open to creating the celebrations and connections they value.

**62%**

Would host more often with less pre-gathering cleaning

**59%**

Would host more often with less cleaning afterward

# THE BEST HOLIDAY MOMENTS DESERVE OUR TIME

Holiday hosting is a way to show care, celebrate traditions, and spend time together. But behind every holiday gathering are hours of preparation, cleaning, and countless small responsibilities that can pull hosts away from the very moments they're working so hard to create. It's a reminder that the true cost of hosting isn't just measured in time and effort, but also in the opportunities to connect, celebrate, and simply be present with friends and family we invited into our homes.

A successful celebration should not require hosts to spend so much of it on the sidelines. Instead of chasing an impossible ideal of effortless hosting, everyday work should be made more manageable, with assistance from tools that help preserve the moments people actually want to remember.

Smart-home technology has a thoughtful role to play in that shift. By taking some of the hands-on effort out of routine cleaning, automated solutions can make everyday messes easier to manage, helping hosts spend less time tending to their homes and more time enjoying the conversations, celebrations, and moments happening around them. That benefit extends well beyond the holidays, supporting a home that's easier to care for throughout the year.

For Roborock, that is what making innovation meaningful looks like: giving people more freedom to be present. The holiday home should be a place where memories happen, not another reason to miss them.

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