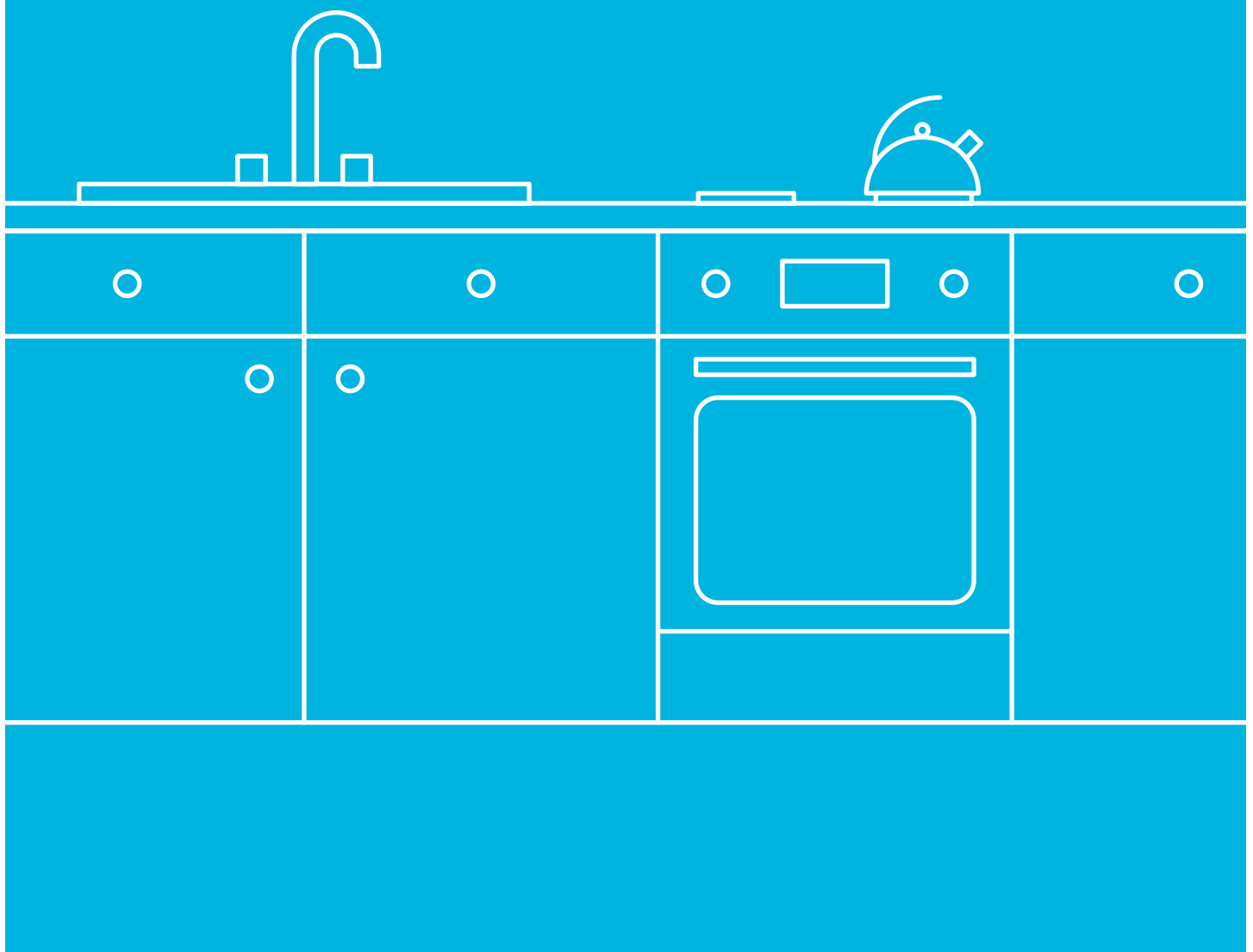


Hosts use the most:

British Columbians cooking up higher holiday electricity bills.



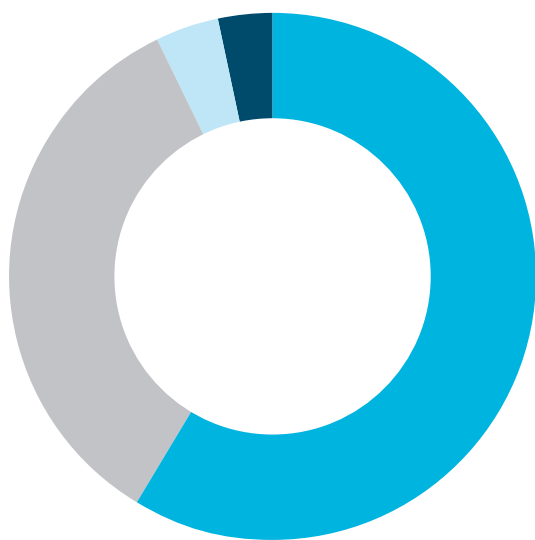
Report

December 2019

Hosts use the most: British Columbians cooking up higher holiday electricity bills.

From cooking, decorating and conversing with family—holiday season hosting takes a lot of energy, in more ways than one. New BC Hydro data shows holiday hosting contributes to a 15% increase in electricity use in B.C. homes.

- On Dec. 25, 2018, British Columbians used approximately 8,000 megawatt hours more electricity than they did on the same day the previous week—around the same amount of electricity needed to cook 1.5 million turkeys.
- BC Hydro also observed a 13% increase in electricity use on Boxing Day when compared with the same day the previous week.
- There is also a noticeable increase in electricity load from BC Hydro’s residential customers between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the week prior to Christmas, as holiday activities ramp up.
 - The rise in electricity usage can partly be attributed to British Columbians doing more cooking and baking in preparation for hosting guests during the holidays.
- A survey¹ commissioned by BC Hydro found cooking and preparing meals for guests is the number one priority for British Columbians when hosting guests over the holidays, this includes:
 - Nearly 95% that plan to have meals with family or friends over the holidays will prepare meals from scratch at home.
 - Over 60% plan to bake holiday treats at home rather than purchasing them from a grocery store or bakery.
- The survey found only 13% are planning to serve their guests takeout, despite the fact that during the rest of the year more than half of British Columbians eat out at a restaurant or take-out once or twice per week.²
- The survey found nearly 20% of British Columbians that plan to host family or friends over the holidays are concerned about the increase in the amount of heat, hot water and electricity used by their guests.
- Of those that are going to be a guest at a friend or family member’s home over the holidays, the survey revealed four different types of holiday guests:



- Santa’s little helper—57%**
Likes to help their host cook and clean.
- The social butterfly—33%**
Rarely on their phone and makes an effort to engage in face-to-face conversation instead.
- Master of distraction—4%**
Often uses their phone or watches T.V. when visiting.
- The entitled one—3%**
Doesn’t lift a finger to help with cooking or cleaning.

¹ Online survey conducted by Majid Khoury of 800 British Columbians between September 27 and October 1, 2019.
² Online survey conducted by Majid Khoury of 800 British Columbians between February 15 and 19, 2018.

Solutions—Sleighting holiday energy costs

The holiday season can be an expensive time—especially for those entertaining at home. With these tips, British Columbians can make their holiday hosting more energy-efficient:

- Cook for conservation: whenever possible, use a microwave or toaster oven. Both use less than half the electricity of a regular oven.
- Bake smart: doing holiday baking in batches saves energy. It is also a good idea to avoid opening the oven to peek as this wastes energy and lowers the cooking temperature.
- Entertain efficiently: for those having a big get-together, turn down the thermostat to 18 degrees Celsius when guests settle in, as the combination of cooking, hot food, and warm bodies will keep the house plenty comfortable.
- Track your usage: see how holiday cooking and activities impact electricity use by using the electricity tracking tools available on MyHydro, which can be accessed a mobile device.

Homemade for the holidays

A recent survey³ commissioned by BC Hydro found most British Columbians embrace a DIY mindset when it comes to hosting holiday guests by opting to do the majority of the cooking and meal preparation themselves. The survey found cooking and preparing meals for guests is the number one priority for British Columbians when hosting guests at their home over the holidays.

In fact, many British Columbians report experiencing holiday-hosting related anxiety, with the survey finding close to a quarter worry about purchasing extra food and cooking holiday meals for guests.

British Columbians are also choosing tradition over technology when it comes to their holiday hosting duties. The survey found, despite a rise in the popularity of food delivery apps and meal prep kits, nearly 95% of British Columbians that plan to have meals with family and friends over the holidays will prepare meals from scratch at home. In addition, over 60% plan to bake holiday treats themselves rather than purchasing from a grocery store or bakery. Only 13% of British Columbians said they would be serving their guests takeout. In comparison, during other times of the year, more than half of British Columbians said they eat out at a restaurant or order in dinner at least once or twice per week.

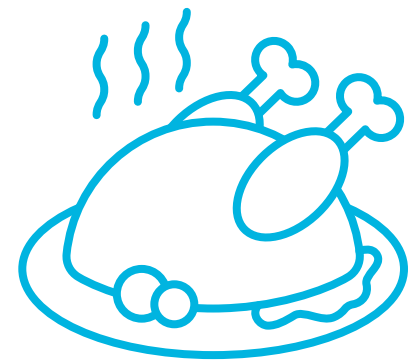
British Columbians cooking up electricity costs

Hosting family and friends is a big part of the holiday season in North America. In fact, a 2018 study by the Retail Council of Canada found most Canadians plan to spend one-fifth of their holiday budget on entertaining costs.⁴ Statistics Canada data from 2016 shows that during the month of December, Canadians spent \$5.1 billion on food and drinks.⁵

Holiday hosting can also mean higher electricity bills. New BC Hydro data shows holiday hosting contributes to a 15% increase in the electricity used in B.C. homes on Christmas Day.

For example, on Christmas Day 2018, British Columbians used approximately 8,000 megawatt hours more electricity than they did on the same day the previous week—this is the equivalent to cooking approximately 1.5 million turkeys. BC Hydro has also witnessed an overall increase in the province's residential electricity load on the days leading up to Christmas. This is likely due to the increase in cooking and baking as British Columbians prepare for the big day. Large kitchen appliances can be a big consumer of power. For example, the traditional holiday turkey takes about four hours to cook at 350 degrees Fahrenheit and uses about 8 kilowatt hours of electricity—almost enough to power an office air conditioning unit for two full working days (16 hours).

BC Hydro also observed a rise in electricity usage on Boxing Day last year with a 13% increase between the electricity used that day, compared to the same day a week prior.



**8,000 megawatt hours
= 1.5 million turkeys**

³ Online survey conducted by Majid Khoury of 800 British Columbians between September 27 and October 1, 2019.

⁴ RCC Holiday Shopping Survey 2018

⁵ Statistics Canada—Christmas... by the numbers

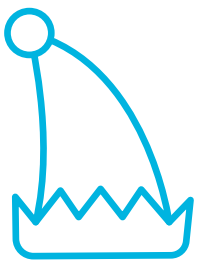
Hosting house guests

The survey found a quarter of British Columbians plan to have family and friends stay with them over the holiday season. Of those, nearly 20% are concerned that house guests will use too much electricity, hot water and heat during their stay—leading to a higher electricity bill.

Heating can account for up to 50% of a residential bill during the fall and winter months, yet 62% of British Columbians said they would opt to turn up the heat if their guests are getting cold, rather than asking them to put on an extra layer of clothing to warm up.

On the other hand, British Columbian house guests may be more energy-efficient than their host may think. The survey found around 80% of those that plan to stay with family and friends over the holidays will be taking extra steps to limit their electricity use when they're a guest in someone else's home. This includes turning off lights when leaving a room, unplugging chargers, and turning down the heat.

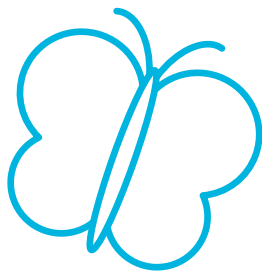
In fact, the survey revealed most British Columbians claim to be good houseguests with many opting to help the host where they can:



Santa's little helper

57%

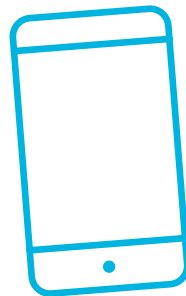
The guest that is rarely distracted while visiting family and friends, and enjoys helping their host cook and clean.



The social butterfly

33%

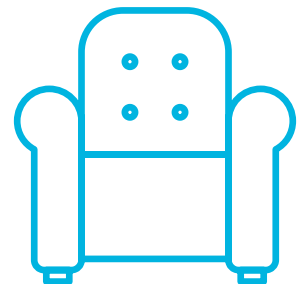
The guest that is rarely on their phone and instead tries hard to engage in face-to-face conversations with family and friends.



Master of distraction

4%

The guest that often uses their phone or watches T.V. when visiting family and friends.



The entitled one

3%

The guest that feels hosts should cater to them and doesn't lift a finger to help cook or clean.

Deck the halls

When it comes to preparing for holiday get-togethers, British Columbians love to decorate.

Over one-third of British Columbians surveyed said they will put up more holiday lights and decorations than usual inside and outside the house when hosting a holiday dinner or get-together.

BC Hydro data indicates a trend toward more elaborate holiday displays has increased the province's power load from electronic decorations and lights by about 15% since 2012.

Solutions: how to sleigh holiday hosting electricity costs

The holidays may be merry and bright, but they can also be hectic and expensive, especially for those hosting family or friends. Keep these simple tips in mind when decorating or entertaining to enjoy a bright and affordable holiday season:

COOK FOR CONSERVATION

- Lower the thermostat by a couple of degrees before starting meal prep if using the stovetop or oven. As the oven heats up, the temperature inside the home will heat up too.
- Whenever possible, use a microwave or toaster oven—these use less than half the electricity of a regular oven and cook for a much shorter period of time.
- Consider making side dishes that can be cooked simultaneously with the main dish at one temperature. This ensures the oven will be running for less time overall, which saves energy.

BAKE SMART

- Baking in batches saves energy—plan ahead and try and bake as many holiday treats as possible at once.
- Avoid opening the oven to peek as treats are baking as this causes heat to escape and will increase cooking times.
- Use tightly fitted lids on pots and pans to help keep the heat in.

ENTERTAIN EFFICIENTLY

- If hosting dinner guests, having more people in the home will generate more heat. Keeping the temperature at 18 degrees Celsius will ensure guests are comfortable and also help keep heating costs to a minimum.

DECORATE WITH LEDS

- British Columbians can save around \$40 over the holiday season by switching eight strands of incandescent lights to energy-efficient LEDs. LED holiday lights also last 10 times longer and come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours.

TRACK USAGE

- See how holiday cooking, decorating and holiday activities impact electricity use by using the electricity tracking tools available on MyHydro, which can be accessed from a mobile device or at [bchydro.com](https://www.bchydro.com).

