Alcoholic Beverage Consumption Statistics and Trends 2023

A summary of alcoholic beverage statistics and trends from resources published at the end of 2022/beginning of 2023.

An updated article with trends and data from mid-2023 is available: Alcoholic beverage consumption and purchasing trends 2024

With each new year comes a new set of alcohol beverage consumption statistics, trends, and predictions. As in years past, this article summarizes data from several sources to help readers understand what is happening in the alcoholic beverage space.

Alcohol consumption

When averaged over two years, 2021-2022, 63% of U.S. adults aged 18 and older consumed alcohol. Gallup, Inc. indicates that "the drinking rate ticks up to 65% when narrowed to adults of legal drinking age" of 21. When segmented based on demographic characteristics:

- Eighty percent of adults, 18 and older, living in households with annual incomes of $100,000 or more consumed alcohol in 2021/2022.
- Only 49% of those living in a household with an annual income of less than $40,000 consumed the beverages.
- Likewise, the higher the level of education, the greater the percentage of adults in the cohort who had consumed an alcoholic beverage, while the incidence of consumption decreased as age increased.
- A nearly equal percentage of men and women consumed alcohol, 66 and 61%, respectively, when averaged over the two years.
- Pertaining to race and ethnicity, 68% of non-Hispanic white adults, 59% of Hispanic adults, and 50% of non-Hispanic black adults consumed alcohol.

Another source, The 2023 Silicon Valley Bank Wine Report, states data from the Wine Market Council:

- 28% of consumers were "abstainer[s]," which "has increased 4 percentage points since the 2017 survey."
- 18% were "core wine drinker[s]" who "drink wine at least once a week," which decreased from 21% in 2017.
- 15% were "marginal" who "prefer wine…and consume wine at least every two to three months…[and] wine consumers who drink wine one to three times a month," which decreased from 19% in 2017.
- The remaining consume "alcohol, not wine" (29%) or are "infrequent alcohol" consumers (10%).

Alcoholic beverage preferences and purchases

When asked to indicate their beverage category of choice, 30% of consumers preferred liquor, 31% wine, and 35% beer. Another source, IRI, reports that 16% of alcoholic beverage consumers drink beer exclusively, 13% drink only wine, and 11% only spirits.

Consumption of more than one category is as follows:

- Beer and wine, 13%,
- Beer and spirits, 12%,
• Wine and spirits, 9%, and 
• All three types, 27%.

When segmented based on consumption frequency, for consumers between ages 21 and 39 years, Wine Opinions found the following:

• Half (51%) of those who drank beer consumed the beverage "weekly or more often," 24% consumed the beverage 2-3 times a month," 8% "about once a month," and the remaining 17% consumed beer "less often or never."

• For wine and spirits, the percentage of consumers who drank the beverages at each reported frequency was similar: 30% of those who drank the beverages consumed them "weekly or more often," a third consumed the beverages "2-3 times a month," 16% "about once a month," and 21% of wine drinkers and 20% of those who drank spirits consumed them "less often or never."

• Those who consumed beer on a weekly, or more frequent, basis were more likely to be males, weekly wine consumers were more likely to be female, and "consumption of spirits is even by gender."

The following table contains data from two sources with consumption statistics segmented based on age range/generation.

IRI, 52-week period ending June 1, 2022

• A greater percentage of hard cider, beer seltzers, and spirits seltzers were consumed by those between the age of 21 and 34 than the other age groups.
• A greater percentage of premixed cocktails in containers larger than 500ml was consumed by adults aged 65 and older

Morning Consult, one-month period ending November 2-7, 2022

• A greater percentage of Millennials consumed each of the following types of alcoholic beverages: spirits, 47%; beer, 45%; wine, 45%; hard seltzer, 39%; craft beer, 37%; and canned cocktails, 29%, than Gen Xers and Baby boomers.
• Between 39 and 43% of Gen Xers consumed spirits, beer, and/or, and wine. Fewer than 29% of these consumers drank hard seltzer, craft beer, and canned cocktails.
• Pertaining to Baby boomers, 31 to 34% consumed spirits, beer, and wine. Eighteen percent of Baby boomers consumed craft beer, 12% consumed hard seltzer, and 7% drank canned cocktails.

When responding to the question "What would you most likely bring to share at a party?" posed by The Harris Poll, conducted in November 2021 and published in the 2023 Silicon Valley Bank Wine Report,

• 45% of consumers aged 65 and older would bring wine, and 18% would bring beer,
• 28-29% of participants between the ages of 35 to 44, 45 to 54, and 55 to 64 would bring wine, and 26 to 29% would bring beer, and
• 20% of 21- to 34-year-old participants would bring beer, and 15% would bring wine.
• Preferences for other beverages were lower. For example, those aged 21 to 34 would bring spirits (17%), flavored malt beverages (17%), hard seltzers (16%), or Ready-to-drink beverages/hard cider (9%).

Morning Consult also asked participants to indicate what attributes they associate with the different types of alcohol.

• Participants associated wine with "timelessness" and "pairs well with food," and both wine and spirits were associated with "elegant" and "better for formal events."
• Beer was associated with attributes such as "affordability," "casual," "convenient," and "good for daytime drinking."

How has spending changed?

Among consumers aged 21 and older, who participated in a Morning Consult study, the average monthly amount they spent on alcohol increased from $25 (February and March 2022) to $38 (May 2022) but declined again to $34 in June 2022. The amount spent on alcohol between April and June 2022, compared to the amount spent during the three months of 2021:

• Decreased by 17% for those with an income less than $50,000
• Decreased by 3% for those with an income of $50,000 to $99,999
• Survey participants with an income of $100,000 or more increased the amount of money they spent on alcohol by 31% from April to June 2022.

No- and Low-alcohol and "Better-for-you" beverages

Consumption of better-for-you alcohol products, increased by 20% for the 52 weeks that ended June 12, 2022. Aside from no- and low-alcohol beverages, better-for-you beverages include:
• lower-calorie alcoholic beverages,
• lower sugar beverages,
• and options with "added benefits."

What "better-for-you" related claims should industry members be aware of that are important to consumers? NielsenIQ reports that the "claim to watch" for beer/flavored malt beverages/cider is "carb-free," for wine it is "calorie conscious," and "no added sugar" for spirits.

Might this interest in "better-for-you" beverages influence consumers to learn about the nutritional values/ingredients in their favorite alcoholic beverages? The Wine Market Council surveyed core and marginal wine consumers in the fall of 2022. "Of wine consumers who have not seen an ingredient list on wine, two in five think wine should have an ingredient list. One quarter does not feel necessary, and the rest are indifferent."

**Dry January**

An annual event that has influenced consumers to decrease their alcohol consumption is Dry January. Morning Consult conducted surveys on January 4-5, 2021, January 4-5, 2022, and January 4-5, 2023. In 2023, 24% of U.S. adults "say they've seen, read or heard at least some about" the campaign, an increase from 21% awareness in 2022. Thirteen percent of U.S. adults participated in Dry January in 2021, 19% in 2022, and 15% in 2023.

When segmented based on generations, in 2023:
• 19% of Millennials responded that they were participating,
• 14% Gen Xers, and
• 12% of Baby boomers.

Not everyone who participates in Dry January abstains entirely from drinking alcohol. In 2023:
• 19% of participants responded that they "will only drink a few" days,
• 11% "will drink more" than a few days, but less than [they] normally would.

Reasons as to why consumers participate in Dry January include "health benefits…whether that is about calorie control and weight management or just feeling better overall." Other reasons for decreasing alcohol consumption are to save money and a change in social life.

**How has spending changed?**

Sales growth of non-alcoholic beverages increased from 0.22% of total alcohol sales in 2018 to 0.47% in 2022. The Adult Non-Alcoholic Beverage Association, which "represents innovative adult non-alcoholic beverage producers and stakeholders who are providing consumers with the best non-alcoholic beer, wine, spirits, and ready-to-drink cocktails that can be enjoyed in every social situation," indicates that "the non-alcoholic drinks category is expected to grow to $30 billion by 2025" (Global Market Insights). According to Future Market Insight, through 2033, the CAGR is expected to grow 2% in the U.S. and 3% globally.

As reported in last year's consumption and purchasing data summary, consumers who purchased non-alcoholic beverages are not restricting themselves to consuming just those beverages. Instead, Nielsen IQ reports that "82% of non-alcoholic drink buyers are also still purchasing drinks that contain alcohol." For a one-year period ending August 2022:
• the volume of non-alcoholic beer grew by 19.5% and accounted for 85.3% of sales,
• non-alcoholic spirits grew by 88.4% during the period to achieve a 1.3% share of sales, and
• the volume of non-alcoholic wine increased by 23.2% over the previous year with a 13.4% share.

Between 2022 and 2026, the no-alcohol category is expected to increase in volume by 25%, while the low-alcohol category will increase by 6%. The most substantial volume growth is expected in the beer category.

According to the IWSR Dinks Market Analysis report, one thing to consider is that "people largely expect to pay less for no- and low-alcohol products…but average no-alcohol spirits prices are nearly double those of low-alcohol and full-strength products." In 2022, the average price for a 750-ml bottle of spirits with alcohol was $15.76, while the average cost for a bottle of non-alcoholic spirits was $24.35. Despite this, as consumer awareness increases, the no-alcohol spirits category is expected to grow.

What does the trade think about growth? Seventy-six percent of U.S. wine trade members who responded to a Wine Opinions survey "at the end of 2022" expect at least "some growth" in the "better for you" wine category, compared to 64% and 61% who expect the same for “zero alcohol” wine and "lower alcohol" wine, respectively.
**Premiumization**

In 2021, 24% of consumers in the U.S. spent $50 or more on a bottle of alcohol, with the percentage growing to 33% in 2022. Who is buying premium alcohol? Several sources indicate that Millennials and Gen Z are prime targets, with the conversation centering on sustainability as “this element is becoming more closely tried to premiumization …it is the core element that consumers use to decide between more premium options.”

Several industry sources mention consumer willingness to spend more on alcohol and are trading up and purchasing premium beverages. The percent change in total volume for certain beverages and the percent change in premium-and-above alcohol volume in 2022, as reported by IWSR are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2022 Change in total volume</th>
<th>2022 Change in premium and above volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice wine/sake</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavored wine</td>
<td>+8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits</td>
<td>+2%</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whisky</td>
<td>+3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vodka</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready-to-drink</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td>+38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No/low alcohol</td>
<td>+15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From another report, compared to the first half of 2021, the volume of premium-and-above Prosecco grew 8% in the first half of 2022.

You may wonder, "How much is a premium-and-above bottle of wine or spirits?" The following table provides price bands as published by IWSR, Forbes.com, Winefolly.com, and IRI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine (75cl bottle)</th>
<th>Wine (75cl bottle)</th>
<th>Spirits (75cl bottle)</th>
<th>Beer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-price</td>
<td>Under $3.00</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Value</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Less than $4.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>$3.00 to $4.99</td>
<td>$4.00-$10.00</td>
<td>Under $10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>$5.00 to $9.99</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$10.00-$22.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular/Popular Premium</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$10.00 to $15.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>$10.00 to $14.99</td>
<td>$15.00 to $20.00</td>
<td>$22.50-$29.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Premium</td>
<td>$15.00 to $29.99</td>
<td>$20.00 to $30.00</td>
<td>$30.00-$44.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultra Premium</td>
<td>$30.00 to $49.99</td>
<td>$30.00 to $50.00</td>
<td>$45.00-$99.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>$50.00 and over</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$100.00-$199.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige Plus</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$200.00 and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>$50.00 to $100.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sustainability is a top consideration among consumers when considering what products to buy, including alcoholic beverages, and consumers are willing to pay more for "sustainable production choices, quality ingredients and responsible employment practices." For consumers to be willing to spend money on premium alcohol they purchase, products must have benefits such as:

- Quality ingredients
- No additives or preservatives
- Describe "where [the alcohol] is from, who made it and how"
- "Sustainable production choices…responsible employment practices"

**Wine**

Since 2019, Chardonnay has maintained an approximate 14 to 16% market share (Silicon Valley Bank Wine Reports for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023). However, during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, from mid-March through mid-July 2020, Sauvignon Blanc sales outpaced all other varieties and blends, resulting in a 38% growth rate. More recently, based on the 12 months ending September 2022:

- Chardonnay’s growth rate decreased by 4.3%,
- Sauvignon Blanc grew by 1.5%, the only one to exhibit positive growth of the sixteen varietals presented (including red and white blends).

Last fall, Wine Opinions’ consumer panel members were asked to indicate a) "the varietals they use to buy often, but no buy seldom, if ever" and b) "any varieties they now buy often, but used to buy infrequently, if ever." Some of the net positive and negative changes reported are below.

**Net positive changes were:**

- Syrah, 2%
- Sauvignon Blanc, 4%
- Cabernet Sauvignon, 18%
- Pinot Noir, 28%
- Red Blends, 36%

**Net negative changes were:**

- Chardonnay, -12%
- Merlot, -12%
- Riesling, -16%
- Pinot Grigio, -20%

The net positive change for Sauvignon Blanc was 6% for women and 2% for men. When segmented by age range, the net positive change for those under 40 years was 14% compared to 2% for those aged 40 and older.

The net positive change for Cabernet Sauvignon and Red Blends was 26% and 33%, respectively, for men and 10% and 40% for women. The net positive change for Red Blends was 22% for those under 40 years of age and 36% for those aged 40 and older.

While rose wine has grown in popularity over the past few years, according to the Beverage Trade Network, the "excitement about and growth in the segment may be waning."

**Beer**

- The beer category is "predicted to continue to contract" in the U.S., but "the rate of decline in beer is easing up slightly". In 2022, imports grew in volume by 4%.
- For the 52 weeks ending in 10/8/2022, wheat ales sales decreased by 4.1%. During that period, unflavored, citrus, berry, and stone fruit wheat ales fell in sales; however, NielsenIQ states that tropical flavored wheat ales grew by 37.3%.
- Another trend is high-alcohol beers, as several 9% ABV beers have been introduced since the fall of 2021.
Hard cider

Based on the 52 weeks ending November 5, 2022, off-premise hard cider sales decreased by 2.1%. While regional/local ciders, which account for 54% of the total hard cider sales, experienced positive growth (a 5.7% increase), national cider brands decreased in growth by 8.9%.

The top **hard cider flavors**, in order, for the 52 weeks were:

- cucumber,
- blueberry,
- passion fruit,
- tea peach, and
- strawberry lemonade.

The "seltzer boom brought variety and flavor to customers," which encourages them to be more willing to try new flavors in other beverage categories.

Cidercraft Magazine indicates that **imperial ciders** are gaining in popularity. Imperial ciders have "bold flavors" and higher-than-average alcohol content (8% or higher) due to "more sugar = more food for yeasts = more alcohol," which can be achieved by:

- using riper apples
- adding fresh sweet juice
- adding sweetening agents

The Cidercraft Magazine article cites a Nielsen report that for the 52 weeks ending in October 2022, **imperial cider sales experienced a 112% increase**.

Hop water

Hop water is a "carbonated beverage made with hops," which "tastes a lot like beer, but contains zero alcohol, as well as zero calories, carbs, sugar or gluten."

Non-alcoholic beer, which goes through "regular" brewing, is energy-intensive, as the process "requires a lot of electricity to evaporate the alcohol out." Hop water is made from "hops, water and carbonation." One manufacturer indicates that to make the beverage, water is "carbon-filtered and pH-adjusted," and then they "essentially dry-hop the water tank." For the 52-week period that ended 7/30/3033, hop water sales grew by 43.9%, reaching $5.5 million.

Ready-to-Drink

For the 52 weeks ending 1/22/2022, nearly half, 47%, "of alcohol buyers [bough] some form of ready to drink" (RTD) beverages. **The dollar share for each RTD category in September 2022, and the change over the previous year, are below.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Dollar share (09/03/2022)</th>
<th>Change 09/03/2022 vs. the previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malt-based</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard seltzer</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>-10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavored malt beverages (e.g., hard teas/coffees/soda)</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits-based (e.g., cocktails, seltzers, frozen novelties)</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine-based (excluding sake, dessert, and vermouth) in any container type that is 355 ml or smaller, 375 ml non-glass containers, or 500 ml tetra pack wine cocktails</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NielsenIQ Scan Off-Premise Channels*
What hard seltzer flavors were the most popular? While not exactly a "flavor," packs of multiple flavors were the most popular, followed by iced tea-flavored hard seltzers and black cherry. "Emerging" hard seltzer flavors include margarita, punch, and ranch water. IWSR indicates that "RTD growth has slowed due to a highly saturated hard seltzer segment."

NielsenIQ indicated that Wine RTD innovation will include "wine cocktail RTDs, especially sparkling versions." Spirits seltzers and cocktails are "driving growth," especially those with an ABV of 5% and under and an ABV between 5.1 and 10%. Vodka was the most popular base for spirits RTDs, followed by whiskey and tequila, then rum and gin.

**Flavors**

Consumers are looking for a beverage made with natural ingredients and coloring for the overall beverage category. For distilled spirits, "color continues to be less of a concern." Spirits have primarily stayed consistent with caramel and natural coloring. "Especially for the new emerging generation of consumers, beer and spirits are more desirable when they are sweeter and have more flavor varieties." The spirits industry is also "exploring lighter options."

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