

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE OCCASIONS – US – 2024

Increasingly casual occasions, consumer concern with lifestyle improvement and the rise of alternatives have all contributed to a shifting drinking landscape.



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Alcoholic Beverage Occasions – US – 2024

This report looks at the following areas:

- State of the alcoholic beverage market
- Alcoholic beverage attributes
- Reasons for alcohol consumption
- Alcoholic beverages and activities
- Alcoholic beverage attitudes and behaviors
- At-home versus away-from home alcohol occasions
- Alcoholic beverage innovation and marketing trends



Increasingly casual occasions, consumer concern with lifestyle improvement and the rise of alternatives have all contributed to a shifting drinking landscape.

Overview

Consumers are increasingly loosening their connections with traditional alcoholic beverage occasions like relaxation and socializing, especially with the rise of alternatives. By shifting focus to collaboration rather than competition with these alternatives, the beverage landscape can feel more fluid and casual for consumers.

Away-from-home occasions have yet to bounce back since 2020, as consumers now face economic concerns. While strong associations with cocktails and socializing at bars and restaurants remain, the experience must continually feel valuable. Most consumers are drinking alcohol at least once a week, particularly younger, higher-income individuals, but physical, mental, and financial health concerns are prevalent as they aim to improve their overall well-being.

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Increased casualization across food and beverage categories is also influencing how consumers approach drinking occasions. While mealtime occasions are less prominent with younger consumers, the emergence of new occasions like snacking, and everyday activities presents opportunities to connect during lower-stakes activities. Alcohol type and brand are not constraining for most consumers, with older individuals more open to trial and pairing suggestions and younger consumers seeking flexibility in mixed ABV and flavor occasions.

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Report Content

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Opportunities

MARKET DYNAMICS

- Market context

State of the market

- Consumers still find the routine in alcoholic beverage occasions
- At home occasions continue to provide more value
 - Graph 1: alcoholic beverage consumption, by location, 2024

Market drivers

- Consumers are increasingly aware of how alcohol impacts their health...
- ...but drinking remains a remedy for increased stress
 - Graph 2: mental health symptoms, 2023
- Cost is the main deterrent to alcohol consumption
- The rise of alcohol alternatives is reinventing drinking occasions

Market size

- Alcohol sales begin to level off as consumers reassess value
 - Graph 3: total US sales of alcoholic beverages at current prices, 2018-23 (est)
- Retail sales of alcoholic beverages at current prices
- Retail sales of alcoholic beverages at inflation-adjusted prices

Market segmentation

- Beer steals share from wine, thanks to casualized occasions
 - Graph 4: value share of sales of alcoholic beverages, by type of alcoholic beverage, 2018-23 (est)
- On-premise struggles to return to pre-2020 levels
 - Graph 5: value share of US sales of alcoholic beverages, by location of consumption, at current prices, 2018-23 (est)

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Consumer fast facts

Alcoholic beverage attributes

- Top attributes set the scene for occasions
- Beer and wine struggle with taste perceptions among Gen Z
 - Graph 6: alcoholic beverage attributes, by generation, 2024
- Female consumers need help connecting with premium

Reasons for alcohol consumption

- Alcoholic beverage occasions have weakened in the past five years
 - Graph 7: reasons for alcohol consumption, 2019-24
- Help consumers unwind at happy hour
- Focus on infusing fun for younger consumers
 - Graph 8: reasons for alcohol consumption, by generation, 2024

Alcoholic beverages and activities

- Younger consumers add alcohol to more casual occasions
 - Graph 9: alcoholic beverages and activities, by generation, 2024
- Connect what consumers are doing and drinking at home
- Give older women a space to socialize

Alcoholic beverage attitudes

- The majority of consumers are flexible when it comes to alcohol and occasions
 - Graph 10: alcoholic beverage attitudes, 2024
- Help Gen Z make the most of their cocktail experience

Alcoholic beverage behaviors

- Occasions and flavor are alcohol-specific for most consumers, for now
 - Graph 11: alcoholic beverage behaviors, 2024
- Daypart flexibility can modernize traditional drink associations
 - Graph 12: alcohol consumption behaviors, by generation, 2024

At-home versus away-from-home alcoholic beverage behaviors

- Experience still drives AFH drinking occasions and new trial
 - Graph 13: at-home versus away-from-home alcoholic beverage behaviors, 2024
- Women get in the spirit in bars and restaurants
- Millennials want the option to turn it up or down at home

INNOVATION AND MARKETING TRENDS

Launch activity and innovation

- Premium claims are still on the rise
- Alcohol launches with premium claims
- Global growth in food pairing suggestions
- Alcohol beverages with pairing suggestions on pack
- Emerging flavors in alcohol borrow from popular beverages
- Alcoholic beverages with emerging flavors
- Interpreting the map US: emerging flavors in flavored alcoholic beverages, 2024

Marketing and advertising

- Brunch is reviving beer and wine (with the help of friends)
- Fun follows format

Opportunities

- Multipacks with a range of ABVs can expand occasions
- Pairing suggestions can move beyond food, to consumer hobbies
- Find balance when it comes to helping consumers improve their mood

APPENDIX

- Consumer research methodology
- Generations
- Abbreviations and terms

Disclaimer

This is marketing intelligence published by Mintel. The consumer research exclusively commissioned by Mintel was conducted by Kantar Profiles ([See Research Methodology for more information](#)).

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