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Low- and no-alcohol beer claimed 1.02% of British bar orders, Square says.

Square’s yearlong data points to more segmented drinking habits, with pints and smaller serves also posting gains.

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Low- and no-alcohol beer is taking a larger share of orders in British bars even as demand for the traditional pint continues to rise, according to transaction data released Wednesday by Square, the payments company.

Square said low- and no-alcohol beer accounted for 1.02% of all bar transactions in the 12 months from June 1, 2025, through May 31, 2026, up from 0.84% in the previous 12-month period. That was an increase of 0.18 percentage points, or 21.4% in relative terms.

The figures point to a market that is expanding across several drinking occasions at once rather than moving in a single direction. Full pint purchases were up 30% from a year earlier, Square said. At the same time, smaller beer serves, a category that includes half pints, schooners, bottles and cans, also posted gains, especially at the start of the workweek.

On Wednesdays, purchases of those smaller serves rose 27% from a year earlier. Monday sales were up 23%, and Tuesday sales rose 20%. Square said most of those purchases were made between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m., with 7 p.m. the busiest hour. London accounted for 44% of all smaller beer serves sold in Britain within the Square data set.

The pattern suggests that many customers are not simply replacing a pint with a no-alcohol option or with a smaller pour. Bars are seeing growth in standard pints, in lower-volume serves and in beers with little or no alcohol at the same time. That points to more segmented drinking habits, with consumers making different choices depending on the day, the time and the reason for going out.

Price appears to be part of the backdrop. Square said the average price of a pint in Britain in 2026 to date was £5.91, up from £5.81 in 2025. That is a rise of £0.10, or 1.7%, in a year. Compared with 2024, when the average pint cost £5.47, the increase was £0.44, or about 8%.

In May, the average spend per bar transaction in Britain was £16.39, according to the company. Square did not break down how much of that spending came from beer, food or other drinks, but the number gives a sense of what customers are paying on a typical visit as menu prices continue to climb.

John O’Beirne, chief executive of Square International, said the data showed that the pint remained central to British pub culture but that some after-work drinkers appeared to be choosing a half pint, either instead of a full serve or after having one. He said that

could reflect health concerns, tighter budgets or a wish to feel fresher the next day.

The rise in no- and low-alcohol beer fits a broader moderation trend that has been building in the drinks business for several years. What stands out in Square’s numbers is that moderation is not showing up as a simple retreat from beer. Instead, bar customers appear to be spreading their choices across different formats, including alcohol-free products, standard pints and smaller serves.

The London figures also suggest that urban drinking patterns are shaping the shift. With 44% of the smaller-serve purchases in the data set coming from the capital, the category appears to be strongest in a city where after-work socializing, public transit commutes and high bar prices can all influence how much people drink on a given night.

Square said the comparison was based on the same set of bar locations in both periods, which helps limit distortions from new openings or closures. But the company’s panel covers only bars in Britain that use Square’s payment system, so it is not a full picture of the national market. The smaller-serve category also combines several formats, including half pints, schooners, bottles and cans, which means the data tracks transactions rather than total liquid volume.