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# China Paid 30% More Per Liter for Imported Spirits in July

The country imported 8.2139 million liters worth $199 million, suggesting the rebound is being driven by higher prices.

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China paid sharply more for imported spirits in July, as the average price rose nearly 30% from a year earlier and pushed import value far above the gain in volume, according to new figures released by the General Administration of Customs.

China imported 8.2139 million liters of spirits in July, up 7.14% from the same month in 2025. Import value reached $199 million, up 39.03%. The average import price was $24.22 a liter, a 29.76% increase from about $18.67 a year earlier. Based on the reported growth rates, that means China bought roughly 548,000 more liters than a year ago and paid about $55.9 million more in total. The customs figures were cited in a Chinese industry report published Friday. A primary customs table linked directly from that publication was not available, so comparable prior-year levels and absolute changes are derived from rounded rates and may vary slightly from official totals.

The July rebound did not reverse the broader trend for the year. From January through July, China imported about 51.6474 million liters of spirits, down 11.2% from the same period last year. That is roughly 6.51 million fewer liters. At the same time, import value rose 16.91% to about $1.002 billion, or around $144.9 million more than a year earlier. The average price for the first seven months was $19.41 a liter, up 31.65%.

The gap between falling year-to-date volume and rising value suggests that the market recovery remains concentrated in higher prices, a more premium product mix, or currency effects rather than a broad return in physical demand. That pattern was most visible in brandy and whisky, the two largest categories by import value in July.

Brandy imports reached 1.9849 million liters in July, up 8.57% year over year. Their value climbed 62.46% to $81.8379 million. The average price rose 49.63% to $41.23 a liter. Whisky imports were larger by volume at 3.2349 million liters, up 7.65%, while value increased 47.24% to $61.4676 million. The average whisky import price rose 36.78% to $19.00 a liter. Together, brandy and whisky accounted for more than $143 million of the $199 million China spent on imported spirits in July.

Baijiu also posted gains in July, though its price trend moved in the opposite direction. Imports totaled 373,600 liters, up 35.59%, and value rose 12.54% to $44.7831 million. The average import price fell 17.00% to $119.86 a liter. The same industry report said some analysts tied the rise in imported baijiu volumes to price gaps between domestic and overseas markets, but that assessment could not be independently verified from the customs release.

Other clear spirits categories were mixed. The report said tequila and gin rose in both volume and value in July, while vodka and rum declined. It did not provide complete summary figures for those categories in the material available publicly.

French brandy continued to dominate the brandy trade. China imported 1.8962 million liters of French brandy in July, up 7.31% from a year earlier, with value up 62.57% to $81.0726 million. The average price climbed 51.50% to $42.76 a liter. French products represented 95.5% of China’s imported brandy volume in July and 99.1% of brandy import value. Spanish brandy remained small in absolute terms but rose quickly, with imports of 23,100 liters, up 501.70%, and value of $268,000, up 380.79%. Japanese brandy moved the other way, falling 49.60% in volume to 16,900 liters and 47.03% in value to $157,900.

Whisky imports showed different patterns by origin. Shipments from the United Kingdom, still the largest source, rose 1.19% in volume to 2.4931 million liters in July, while value increased 45.35% to $53.589 million. The average price rose 43.64% to $21.49 a liter. Japanese whisky imports increased 33.07% in volume to 155,600 liters, and value jumped 152.84% to $4.5949 million. The average price nearly doubled, rising 90.01% to $29.53 a liter. U.S. whisky imports rose 82.29% in volume to 469,700 liters, but value increased only 15.22% to $2.0583 million, as the average price fell 36.79% to $4.38 a liter.

The year-to-date picture for whisky was less uniform. From January through July, imports of British whisky fell 4.33% in volume but rose 25.68% in value, with the average price up 31.37%. Japanese whisky imports rose 7.56% in volume over the same period, but value fell 7.70% and the average price dropped 14.19%. U.S. whisky imports fell 30.50% in volume and 16.14% in value.

The Chinese trade report said some importers and distributors were building stocks ahead of the Mid-Autumn Festival, particularly in brandy, and that leading global suppliers continued to command most of the demand. At the same time, it said retail sales had not shown a comparable recovery, leaving the July rise in imports more consistent with channel restocking and premium positioning than with a broad-based increase in consumer purchases.