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China’s spirits imports rose 11.3% in September to 10,659 kiloliters

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China’s imports of spirits rose 11.3% from August to September, reaching 10,659 kiloliters in September, according to a market update published on Wednesday, November 18, by the Chinese technical portal Jiuye Xinxiwang, which is part of Foodmate and republished data attributed to the China Alcoholic Drinks Association.

The report said those September imports had a nominal trade value of 1.534 billion yuan. It also put cumulative imports for January through September at 69,300 kiloliters worth 9.43 billion yuan.

The figures point to a monthly rebound in spirits entering the Chinese market after August. Based on the published increase of 1,083 kiloliters, September’s total implies an August base of about 9,576 kiloliters. The report did not provide a comparable August value in yuan, and it did not publish year-over-year comparisons for the same period.

That leaves the September change as a month-to-month movement rather than a broader measure of annual growth or contraction. It also limits how far the published figures can be used to judge whether China’s spirits imports are recovering on a sustained basis or simply fluctuating from one month to the next.

The data matter because they isolate spirits from other imported alcohol categories such as wine or beer. In a market as large and segmented as China’s, separate tracking of distilled beverages can offer a clearer view of demand and import activity in that part of the industry.

Jiuye Xinxiwang described the figures as part of a published monitoring of major imported alcohol categories for September. The portal said the information came through the China Alcoholic Drinks Association, known as CADA, a national nonprofit industry association that represents producers, distributors and other entities linked to alcoholic beverages in China.

The same note attributed the customs data to Haiguan Xinxiwang, or Customs Information Network, a customs information platform. But the publication did not clearly identify the legal entity behind that platform. The original CADA link cited in the report was not accessible, which means the published numbers could not be independently checked against the source document referenced by the portal.

Because of that, the figures should be understood as the scope of the published industry tracking rather than as a fully verified accounting of all customs tariff lines that could fall under spirits imports. The note itself does not present the data as a complete

and independently confirmed picture of every distilled beverage entry into China’s customs system.

Even with those limitations, the September figures suggest imports regained momentum after a weaker August in volume terms. An increase of 1,083 kiloliters in one month is meaningful in a category where shipments can vary depending on inventory cycles, distribution schedules, customs timing and seasonal buying by importers and retailers.

The reported trade value of 1.534 billion yuan also indicates that imported spirits continue to represent a sizable commercial segment in China. However, without the missing August value or year-over-year benchmarks, it is not possible to determine from this release alone whether September’s gain reflected stronger prices, a richer product mix, larger shipments of premium brands, or a broad-based rise across segments.

The January-to-September total of 69,300 kiloliters provides some sense of scale for the market across the first nine months of 2026. The cumulative value of 9.43 billion yuan shows that imported spirits remain a high-value category relative to volume. But the release did not break down the total by country of origin, product type, or price band, so it offers no direct evidence about which exporting countries or spirits categories drove the September increase.

The absence of a country breakdown also means the data do not show whether the monthly rise came from stronger demand for whisky, brandy, vodka, rum, liqueurs or other imported distilled products. Nor does the report indicate whether the increase reflected consumer demand, importer restocking, or short-term shipping patterns.

China’s alcohol market is closely watched by exporters because shifts in import volumes can signal changes in consumption, premiumization, gifting patterns and distributor confidence. Spirits import figures are especially important for foreign suppliers seeking to gauge the pace of demand in a market where sales can be affected by economic conditions, regulation, exchange rates and competition from domestic producers.

For now, the clearest conclusion from the published September update is narrow but relevant: the monitored spirits category moved higher from August in volume terms, rising to 10,659 kiloliters. Beyond that, the release leaves several important questions unanswered, including how September compared with the same month a year earlier and how much of the change was due to quantity, price or mix.