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China’s large breweries produced 7.2% less beer in October than a year earlier

The official industrial sample recorded 16.47 million hectoliters, with January-through-October output 2.9% below 2025 levels

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China’s beer production fell in October, with output declining more sharply than the year-to-date pace, according to industry data published Wednesday, November 18.

Trade publication China International Beer Network, citing Beerw, reported that breweries in China covered by the country’s industrial statistics produced 16.47 million hectoliters of beer in October. That was down 7.2% from October 2025. For January

through October, output totaled 305.9 million hectoliters, a decline of 2.9% from the same period in 2025.

The October drop was 4.3 percentage points steeper than the decline recorded for the first 10 months of the year. The figures point to a weaker month than the broader 2026 trend, although the two comparisons measure different periods and do not show whether the slowdown will persist.

The data cover industrial beer production by companies that meet China’s threshold for above-scale enterprises. In this case, that means producers with at least 20 million yuan in annual revenue from their main business. Because of that cutoff, the numbers do not represent the entire beer market and exclude smaller producers that fall below the reporting threshold.

The figures were published as hectoliters after conversion from kiloliters in the source material. No monetary value was attached to the release, and the reports did not provide a breakdown by beer type. There was no separate detail for lager, ale, stout, craft beer, or nonalcoholic beer.

SteelHome also carried the October industrial production table on Wednesday, November 18, in a separate reference checked against the trade reports. Still, the data should be treated with some caution. The cited publications are secondary sources, and although other reports attribute the figures to China’s National Bureau of Statistics, the original table from the bureau could not be independently verified.

That limits how far the production numbers can be taken on their own. They show that output from larger breweries weakened in October and that the cumulative total for the year remained below 2025 levels. But they do not, by themselves, establish the cause of the decline. Industrial production can move for several reasons, including changes in demand, inventories, shipping patterns, or production scheduling, and the published figures do not isolate those effects.

The data release also did not include a seasonally adjusted month-to-month comparison. Without that, it is not possible to say from the published table whether October was weaker than September after adjusting for normal seasonal patterns. Beer

production is often affected by weather and holiday timing, which can make year-over-year comparisons more useful than sequential monthly readings, but the absence of adjusted data still leaves an important gap.

The source material also did not provide a directly comparable absolute production base for October 2025 in the same release. That means the reported 7.2% decline describes the rate of change, but it does not allow a straightforward reconstruction of last year’s output from the published figures alone. The same caution applies to the cumulative 2.9% decline for January through October, particularly because statistical coverage can change over time as companies move in or out of the above-scale category.

Even with those limits, the October reading is a notable signal for analysts tracking China’s industrial activity and consumer-linked manufacturing sectors. Beer output is often watched as one indicator of activity in food and beverage production, especially in warmer months when consumption usually rises. A steeper fall in October than in the year-to-date figure suggests conditions for larger producers were weaker in that month than the broader 2026 average.

China remains one of the world’s largest beer markets by volume, so shifts in domestic production are followed closely by brewers, suppliers, and commodity traders. The October figures suggest that, at least among larger producers included in the official industrial sample, output remained under pressure well into the second half of the year.

Because the published data do not show regional results, there is no way to tell from this release whether the decline was concentrated in specific provinces or spread across the country. The reports also do not separate production for domestic sales from output linked to exports, nor do they indicate whether changes in product mix affected the total.

What the release does show clearly is that China’s above-threshold breweries produced less beer in October than a year earlier and that total output for the first 10 months of 2026 was also below the comparable 2025 level. The sharper October decline adds a fresh sign of weakness in the sector, but the available data stop short of explaining why that weakness deepened during the month.