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China’s beer imports rose 17.9% through October

Imported beer averaged 10.09 CNY per liter, more than twice the 4.68 CNY average for exports

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China’s beer trade expanded between January and October, with imports and exports both rising from the same period in 2025, but the average value per liter moved in opposite directions.

China imported 357.88 million liters of beer in the first 10 months of 2026, up 17.9% from a year earlier, according to figures published on Wednesday, November 18, by China International Beer Network. The nominal value of those imports reached 3,610.75 million CNY, a 20.8% increase.

Exports also increased, though at a slower pace in value than in volume. China exported 685.29 million liters of beer between January and October, up 7.4% from the same period of 2025, while the nominal value of those shipments rose 1.6% to 3,204.96 million CNY.

The gap between volume growth and value growth points to different trends on each side of the trade flow. Imports grew faster in value than in liters, which lifted the average import value to 10.09 CNY per liter, up 2.46% from a year earlier. Exports showed the reverse pattern. The average export value fell to 4.68 CNY per liter, down 5.40%, as shipment volumes grew much faster than export value.

That means China bought far less beer by volume than it sold abroad, but paid more in total for imports than it earned from exports. Imported beer was worth more than twice as much per liter on average as exported beer during the period, based on the nominal trade values reported.

Using the reported year-over-year rates, the increase amounted to about 54.33 million additional liters of imports and about 47.22 million additional liters of exports compared with January through October 2025. Those figures are estimates derived from rounded growth rates and should be read as approximations rather than exact customs totals.

The October data showed a sharper rise in monthly trade flows. Imports in October reached 38.40 million liters, up 43.6% from October 2025. Exports totaled 72.01 million liters, up 27.6% on the same basis. The published data did not include a month-to-month comparison with September.

The figures do not provide a country breakdown, so they do not show which foreign suppliers gained ground in the Chinese market or which export destinations accounted for the additional outbound volume. Without that detail, the numbers alone cannot show whether the shift came from premium imports, changes in package size, greater

sales of lower-value export products, or different contract terms across markets.

The change in average value per liter also should not be read as a direct measure of beer prices. Trade values can move because of changes in product mix, packaging, freight and insurance treatment in customs reporting, destination markets, and currency effects. A higher average import value could reflect a larger share of premium or specialty beers, while a lower average export value could reflect a greater share of lower-priced products or larger-volume shipments to more price-sensitive markets.

The data also do not allow any conclusion about the share of imported beer in Chinese beer consumption. Trade flows measure cross-border shipments, not total domestic sales, production, inventory changes, or retail demand.

China International Beer Network described the figures as import and export data for beer and published both sets on Wednesday, November 18. The outlet is a sector publication and a secondary source. Its pages identify the publication as the source of the information but do not link directly to the underlying customs tables, leaving the figures pending verification against a primary customs release.