vinetur

RTD Alcoholic Drinks Double Market Share in Five Years, Now 8% of U.S. Servings

Younger consumers drive shift from beer and spirits, with RTD sales surging up to 17% each spring since 2019

Tuesday, October 28, 2025



Young people toasting with Wine RTD in glasses

Ready-to-drink (RTD) alcoholic beverages are changing how Americans drink throughout the year. Once seen as a summer trend, RTDs have become a regular part of the beverage alcohol market in the United States. Their rise is affecting the sales of beer, vodka, gin, and aperitifs, especially during certain seasons.

According to data from IWSR, a leading beverage alcohol market analyst, RTD volumes in the U.S. grew by 1% in 2024. This growth is expected to continue at a similar pace through 2029. RTDs' share of total beverage alcohol servings has doubled in five years, from 4% in 2019 to 8% in 2024. By 2029, that share is expected to reach 9%. This growth comes as other categories like beer and some spirits see their market share shrink.

Marten Lodewijks, President of IWSR US, says that while the number of new RTD consumers is not growing as quickly as before, people who already drink RTDs are doing so more often. This is especially true for younger adults. Gen Z and Millennials are driving this trend, attracted by the perceived health benefits, functional ingredients, and variety that RTDs offer. In 2025, more than half of U.S. RTD drinkers described themselves as frequent consumers—meaning they drink RTDs at least once a week. This is up from 44% in 2023.

RTDs appeal to both men and women but are most popular among younger people. IWSR data shows that 57% of RTD consumers in the U.S. are either Millennials or Gen Z. As these drinks become more common, they are taking market share mainly from beer. When asked what they would have chosen before drinking RTDs, large numbers of Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X consumers said beer.

The shift from beer to RTDs is most noticeable in the spring and early summer. IWSR's US Navigator tool tracks state-by-state consumption trends and shows that RTD sales consistently rise between March and April—by as much as 17% in some years since 2019. However, RTD sales tend to drop off in August compared to July, while beer regains some ground later in the year.

Consumer research supports these findings. In April 2023, 14% of U.S. consumers said they had recently consumed an RTD, compared to just 11% in September of the same year. Substitution data also shows that beer is the most common category that RTD

drinkers switch from.

Spirits are also feeling the impact of RTDs' growth. Spirit-based RTDs—those made with vodka, gin, or other spirits—are expected to lead RTD volume growth through 2029. These products have benefited from innovation and new product development. During the summer months of July and August, vodka and gin sales typically decline, while spirit-based RTDs see their biggest gains in April. Since 2019, spirit-based RTDs have grown by up to 10% month-over-month in April and have only small declines in August.

Some vodka and gin drinkers now see RTDs as a good alternative. Consumer research shows that about 7% of RTD drinkers say they switched from vodka. Aperitifs, which saw strong growth between 2019 and 2021, have seen their sales level off since 2022 as spirit-based RTDs continue to grow.

Seasonal preferences play a big role in these shifts. In the spring, more consumers say they drink RTDs because of the season. In the fall, convenience becomes a bigger factor.

Lodewijks says that RTDs now resonate most with consumers during early summer, while beer becomes more popular later in the year. Vodka, gin, and aperitifs are all losing ground to spirit-based RTDs. Consumer motivations and recall show a clear seasonal crossover that is changing how Americans drink throughout the year.

The rise of RTDs is not just a passing trend but a sign of changing habits among U.S. consumers. As these beverages become more established, they are reshaping the traditional patterns of alcohol consumption across the country.