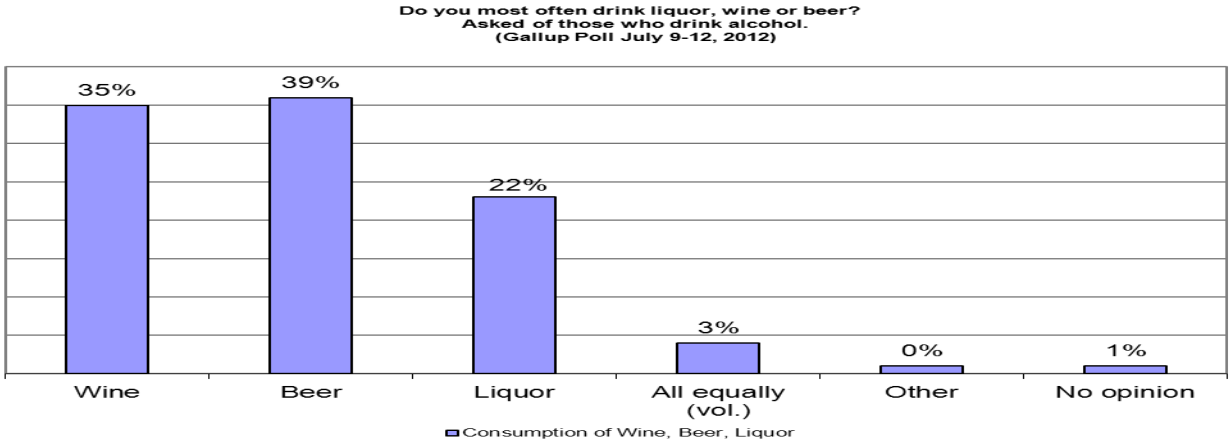
Liquor Popularity

According to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), gross revenue for U.S. spirits reached $21.3 billion in 2012, up from 19.9 billion in 2011. Revenue market share for spirits versus beer and wine grew seven-tenths of a point, rising to 34.3% of the beverage alcohol market. There are several contributing factors to liquor popularity: industry innovation, the resurgence of cocktail culture across America; the powerful growth of premiumization; strong momentum in marketplace modernizations such as Sunday sales and tasting laws; more equitable treatment for spirits in advertising, taxation and market access; record export growth; and a wider appreciation of moderate consumption. Additionally, there is a trend towards open markets and communication of product heritage in new markets. With countries around the world lowering tariffs and other barriers, American spirit products are finding new audiences.

American DrinkingTrends



Although the percentage of Americans who identify themselves as drinkers has remained virtually unchanged (66% in a July 2012 Gallup poll vs. the 63.4% historical average since 1939), there has been a small revival in regular drinking in recent years. Since 2002, polls have shown that the percentage of alcohol drinkers who consumed alcohol in the past week was 65% or higher. In the 2012 Gallup poll, the average number of drinks consumed per drinker in the past week was 4.2.

The rise in regular drinking has paralleled some scientists' claims that daily moderate drinking has health benefits. According to a 2011 Gallup poll, however, only 22% of Americans believe drinking in moderation is good for one's health. Twenty-five percent believe it is detrimental to one's health and 50% believe it has no effect on one's health. Three percent had no opinion.

According to Gallup, there is a significant generational difference in alcohol preferences. Beer is the favorite alcoholic beverage among younger drinkers. Wine is the drink of choice among older drinkers. Gender-wise, the majority of men state they most often drink beer and more than half of women say they most often drink wine. Geographically, beer is most popular in the midwestern states. Drinkers in the East prefer wine.