

56% of US Consumers Have Consumed Alcohol Away From Home in Last Month

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While World Cup fever in the US usually doesn't amount to much more than a case of the sniffles, it finally seems to be heating up, with the US-Portugal match being the most watched soccer match in the US's ever. With this fervor comes a unique opportunity for bars and restaurants across the country to capitalize on this phenomenon, all in the name of patriotism, coupled with a healthy dose of good old fashioned American capitalism.

New Mintel research shows that over half (56%) of consumers have consumed an alcoholic drink away from home in the past month, helping on-premise alcohol sales increase 5.4% in 2013. Furthermore, Mintel forecasts continued growth, to reach \$105 billion by 2018. Despite this, 30% of respondents have chosen to drink at home and 20% at someone else's house while watching a sports game, revealing a large opportunity for bars and restaurants to draw consumers on-premise for game day.

Key findings in Mintel's research include:

- Men are far more likely than women to attach drinking to an activity like watching sports at home (37% v 23%), whereas women are more likely (46% v 42%) to drink at social gatherings at someone's home.
- Beer drinkers are more likely than consumers of any other alcohol type to drink while watching a sports game at home (36% vs 30% of overall sample).
- Millennials are the most likely generation to have consumed alcohol at a pub/brewery (27%) over the past month (vs 20% of overall sample and 18% of Baby Boomers).
- Midwesterners are more likely than any other region to have visited a neighborhood bar in the past month (25% vs 20% overall and compared to 17% for the West Coast).

“As consumers become more discerning and their preferences more fragmented, it is necessary for operators to decide what target group they will go after, as they can no longer be everything to everyone,” says Bethany Wall, foodservice analyst at Mintel. “Every market is different and has its own niches to fill. The key is to provide differentiation that defines and sets expectations as to the consumer experience. However, restaurants and bars must offer some alternative choices so that the outliers of a party can be satisfied and not influence the group to go elsewhere.”

Many restaurants have expanded their alcoholic drink menus, extended hours, and are promoting happy hours and World Cup specials in order to attract guests. The number of alcoholic beverages menued at restaurants over the past three years has grown the most within the fast casual segment (185%), followed by fine dining (27%), and somewhat surprisingly, quick service restaurants (21%).

Bethany continued:

“On-premise drinking tends to be a more social occasion than drinking at home. Since over half of respondents drink while doing something else and an even higher number drink with family and friends, operators can create group activities and events to encourage socialization. Going beyond viewing the game, operators can create large events in which customers are encouraged to sport their team's colors. They can host games and contests during half time, awarding prizes to individuals and groups to get consumers involved and boost interaction. Themed food and drink pairings can be created to match the cuisine of the countries or better yet, plates and tasting flights can offer components from each country as a duel.”