

# Drinks

[Note: "Drinks", here, does not include alcoholic beverages]

They're so much a part of our culture today. Up until recently, Coca-Cola was the most recognized product name in the world. We grew up with sodas, and our parents and grandparents grew up with the local soda fountains. I was always guaranteed to elicit horrified gasps from my students when pointing out that Medieval Europeans had neither chocolate nor soda! It was just too terrible an idea to contemplate.

And speaking of soda, this may come as a surprise, considering what an integral part soda has become in the American way of life, but "over the last 20 years, sales of non-diet soda in the US have plummeted by more than 25%. Soda consumption, which rocketed from the 1960s through the 1990s, is now experiencing a serious and sustained decline....Bottled water is now on track to overtake soda as the largest beverage category in two years, according to at least one industry projection." [mobile.nytimes.com]

Bottled water! Good grief, you'd think the country's supply of tap water had been shut off! In 2012, total U.S. bottled water consumption increased to 9.67 billion gallons, up from 9.1 billion gallons in 2011. In fact, 2012's consumption growth was the strongest it has been in five years, with every person in America drinking an average of 30.8 gallons of bottled water last year. Bottled water increased in absolute volume more than any other beverage category in the U.S. [http://www.bottledwater.org/us-consumption-bottled-water-shows-continued-growth-increasing-62-percent-2012-sales-67-percent] As George Carlson said, "When did Americans get so thirsty?!"





Coffee! The American standard! I remember all the coffee commercials on TV when I was a boy—Folger’s, Maxwell House, and all the rest. 100 million Americans drink coffee every day. [<http://www.statisticbrain.com/coffee-drinking-statistics/>] The 60+ age group drinks the most coffee. Most coffee is consumed at home. But then, of course, there’s the Starbuck’s phenomenon. I’m not a coffee drinker, myself, but I’ve often wondered if you can really call Starbuck’s coffee *coffee*, with all those additives?

Milk! We can’t leave milk out! As of 2014, Americans drink 37% less milk than they did in 1970, according to data from the USDA. Forty years ago, per capita consumption was nearly 1½ cups per day; now it’s nearer to 0.8, and this decline is in all types of milk—whole, low fat, and skim. Why? It seems we’ve simply substituted other drinks for milk. And the decline is largely due to kids not drinking as much milk as their predecessors. Part of this is due to the questioning of the once heralded health benefits of milk. Another factor is that Americans no longer need to turn to milk for vitamin D and calcium, getting those items elsewhere. And, milk has gotten progressively more expensive, jumping 10% in 2013 alone. [<http://washingtonpost.com/news/work/wp/2014/06/20/>]

How about tea? The US is the fourth largest tea market in the world, although that’s based on retail volume rather than consumption. The US is also the second largest importer of tea, after Russia. Tea consumption in the US is actually going up, probably because of the purported health benefits. [[marketrealist.com/2015/06/growing-demand-tea-us/](http://marketrealist.com/2015/06/growing-demand-tea-us/)]

