

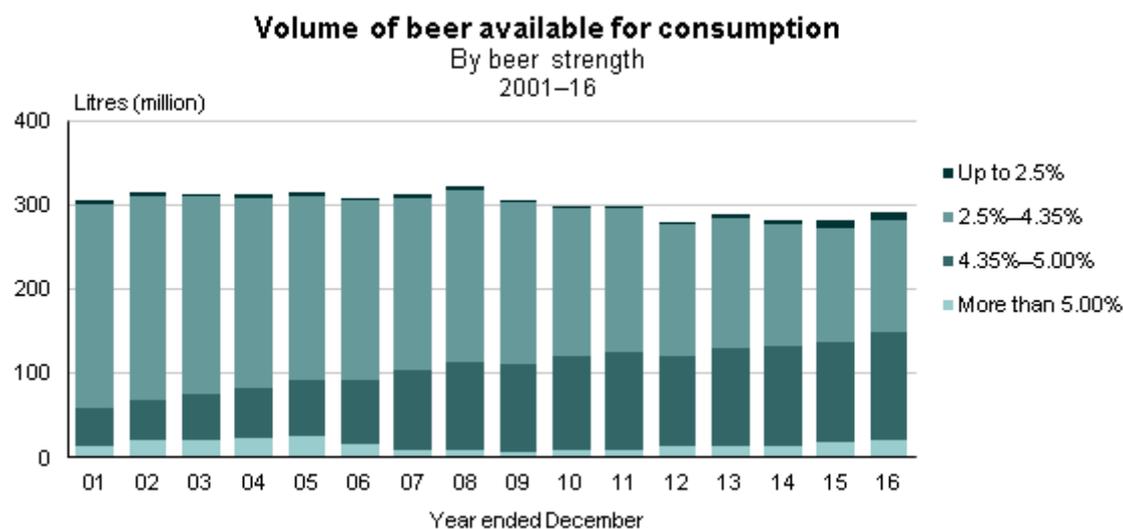
High-strength beer available doubles in five years

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In 2016, 17 percent more high-strength beer was available than in 2015, Statistics New Zealand said today. The rise follows a 38 percent increase in 2015.

“Although the total volume of beer available increased in 2016, low-strength beer was down on 2015,” international statistics manager Nicola Growden said. “In contrast, high-strength beer continued to rise. The volume has doubled in the last five years, reflecting the growing demand for craft beers.”

More high-strength beer, with an alcohol content above 5 percent, helped drive a 3.7 percent lift in total beer volumes. Beer with an alcoholic content between 4.35 and 5 percent (the second-largest category by volume) rose 6.4 percent. In contrast, the volume of low-strength beer (under 2.5 percent alcohol) fell 3.5 percent in 2016.



The total volume of all alcoholic drinks rose 4.2 percent in 2016. Beer, wine, and spirits volumes all rose. This contrasts with 2015 when there was little overall change in the total volume available, and a 2.0 percent fall in 2014. The volume figures reflect the volume of alcoholic beverages released to the domestic market, which includes imports and local production for sale in New Zealand, but excludes exports.

Wine and spirits up

The total volume of wine available to the domestic market rose 4.7 percent in 2016, and the volume of spirits (including spirit-based drinks) rose 5.7 percent.

Wine from grapes increased around 5 percent in volume in 2016. Wine from other fruit and vegetables (mostly cider) was also up on 2015, by 2.5 percent.

The volume of spirits rose 7.7 percent, and spirit-based drinks (such as RTDs) rose 5.3 percent.

To account for the different alcoholic contents of various drinks, we also calculate the total volume of pure alcohol. For example a 750ml bottle of wine with 13 percent alcohol contains 97.5ml of pure alcohol.

The total volume of pure alcohol, expressed as the number of standard drinks available per person a day, rose 5.1 percent in 2016, following a 2.2 percent fall in 2015. Despite the rise in 2016, the latest level is the third-lowest in the last 16 years.

“There was enough alcohol for each adult New Zealander to drink the equivalent of two standard drinks a day,” Ms Growden said. “This is 500ml of 5 percent alcohol beer, or two glasses of wine per person.”

We compile alcohol statistics from figures on alcoholic beverages produced for local consumption, on which duty is paid, and imports less re-exports. The statistics provide information on the volume of alcoholic beverages released to the market, and therefore what is available for consumption rather than actual consumption.

Ends

For media enquiries contact: Stuart Jones, Christchurch 021 241 6874, info@stats.govt.nz
Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician, 24 February 2017