



ESTIMATE OF IRISH ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION PER ADULT IN 2025

WITH SOME INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS FOR 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This objective of this briefing paper is to calculate the 2025 level of average per adult consumption of alcohol. There is no official value of this indicator. The data used is from the CSO Population and Migration Estimates for April 2025 (published in August 2025) and the Revenue Commissioners' alcohol clearances data. The 2025 figures are derived from monthly data for 2025 which are available on the Revenue website.

METHODOLOGY

The level and trend in average alcohol consumption are important elements in public policy evaluation and design. The measurement approach follows standard international practice and also the practice of previous Irish estimates by Foley undertaken for DIGI such as (Foley 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025).

The aggregate alcohol contents of the different beverages are based on 5% alcohol by volume for cider and 12.5% alcohol content for wine. The actual alcohol estimates provided in the clearances data by Revenue for spirits and beer are used. Some international and national estimates use different alcohol contents for wine and cider. The international convention of defining the adult population as 15 years and over is used in this report, although this is, of course, an inaccurate measure of the adult population. The population data refer to April of each year. Obviously, if the adult population was measured as 18 years and over the average per adult consumption would be higher than the level based on the 15 years and older segment of the population.

Consumption is equated with clearances as is normally done in estimates such as these, although the clearances concept is not an exact measure of consumption due to

factors such as unrecorded legal and illegal out of state sourcing including duty free purchases, stock changes and the effects of outward and inward tourism. In addition, the actual alcohol contents used for wine and cider might be different to the contents used in this report. The adult population includes those who do not consume alcohol. These and other limitations of the alcohol consumption measurement methodology are discussed in Foley (2015). There are also other aspects of consumption apart from the average consumption measure, such as the pattern of consumption, which are not considered here.

Since the second quarter of 2024, Revenue publishes monthly data on a more detailed classification than its previous quarterly data. In addition, it publishes the usual annual summary in its Excise Volumes by Commodity series which is available after the monthly figures. At the time of writing the official aggregate 2025 table has not been published. The alcohol data used in this report are from the finalised annual series for 2024 and the aggregated monthly data for 2025 prepared by Revenue. The final 2025 table may contain slight revisions to the aggregate 2025 total derived from the monthly figures.

AVERAGE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION PER ADULT 2024 AND 2025

The primary objective of this paper is to estimate the 2025 average alcohol consumption and compare this with the 2024 level. Some international comparisons of average alcohol consumption are also presented for background.

The relevant data is presented in Table 1. The aggregate alcohol clearances and the “adult” populations are presented. These two are combined to provide the average per adult alcohol consumption.

Table 1. Average per adult alcohol consumption 2024 and 2025

	2024	2025	% change 2024/25
Litres of pure alcohol (LPA), Total consumption	41,453,854	41,452,306	Very small decline (below 0.1)
Adult Population (aged 15 and over), millions	4.370	4.4585	+2.0
Litres of pure alcohol per adult (LPA)	9.49 (rounded to 9.5)	9.30 (unchanged when rounded to 9.3)	-2.0 (-2.1 based on rounded figures)
Beer (LPA)	17,943,359	17,463,850	-2.7
Cider (LPA)	2,543,710	2,539,750	-0.2
Spirits (LPA)	9,256,615	9,272,243	+0.2s
Wine (LPA)	11,710,170	12,176,463	+4.0

Sources. CSO Population and Migration Estimates, August 2025. Revenue Commissioners, Alcohol Clearances monthly data for 2025, Revenue Website, 2026 and for 2024 the Revenue Excise Volumes by Commodity series.

“Total alcohol consumption remained almost unchanged (a very small decline of less than 0.1%) in 2025 compared with 2024

The number of adults (as defined by 15 years and over) increased by 2.0% in 2025. This resulted in a decrease of 2.0% in 2025 compared with 2024 in average alcohol consumption per adult. It was 9.49 LPA in 2024 compared with 9.30 LPA in 2025. In figures rounded to one decimal place, the average per adult consumption is 9.5 LPA in 2024 compared to 9.3 LPA in 2025. This gives a decrease of 2.1% for 2025. By long term comparison, average alcohol consumption was 10.9 LPA in 1990 and peaked at 14.44 LPA in 2001. Since 2001 the average per adult alcohol consumption has declined by 35.6%, or over one third. Average per adult consumption was below 10 LPA in 2023 and continued to drop further below 10 LPA in 2024 and 2025.

BEVERAGE SHARES

There were volume decreases in beer (2.7%) and cider (0.2%) in 2025 compared with 2024. Wine volume increased by 4.0%. The spirits consumption volume increased by a small 0.2%.

In 2025, wine accounted for 29.4% of the total alcohol market by volume of alcohol content. Wine in 2024 accounted for 28.2% of total alcohol consumption The wine share was 13.2% in 2000. Beer was 56.6% of total alcohol consumption in 2000, and is now 42.1% compared to 43.3% in 2024. Cider is 6.1% of the 2025 total which is the same as in 2024. Spirits is almost unchanged at 22.3% in 2024 and 22.4% in 2025.

Table 2. Share of each beverage in total alcohol consumption 2024 and 2025

Beverage	2024 % share	2025 % share
Beer	43.3	42.1
Spirits	22.3	22.4
Wine	28.2	29.4
Cider	6.1	6.1

Source: derived from Revenue data



INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS FOR 2023

The data used in this section are sourced from the OECD Data Explorer on alcohol consumption. Data is available from this source for 17 EU countries (including Ireland) plus the UK for 2023. There is very limited data available for later years. The remaining EU countries' data are only available for years earlier than 2023.

Of the sixteen EU countries plus the UK in addition to Ireland, ten exceeded the Irish average consumption of 9.9 LPA in 2023 and seven were below the Irish level. The average unweighted average consumption for the seventeen countries was 10.0 LPA which is just above the Irish level of 9.9 LPA. By the standards of the seventeen countries in the sample Ireland is no longer an outlier in terms of high average levels of alcohol consumption as measured by the methodology used for that indicator. The full details are in Table 3.

Table 3. Average per adult alcohol consumption 2023, seventeen EU countries +UK

Country	Avg. per adult consumption LPA	Above or below Ireland
Austria	11.3	Above
Czechia	11.2	Above
Denmark	9.3	Below
Estonia	10.9	Above
Finland	7.4	Below
France	10.4	Above
Hungary	10.3	Above
Ireland	9.9	
Latvia	11.7	Above
Lithuania	11.0	Above
Netherlands	7.8	Below
Poland	10.0	Above
Slovakia	9.4	Below
Slovenia	9.7	Below
Spain	11.1	Above
Sweden	7.4	Below
UK	9.3	Below
Romania	12.3	Above
Unweighted average excluding Ireland	10.0	Slightly above

Source, OECD Data Explorer, Alcohol Consumption

SUMMARY

Average alcohol consumption per adult, based on the methodology in this report, declined in 2025.

In 2025, average alcohol consumption per adult remained well below 10 LPA at 9.30 LPA. Measured to one place of decimals it was also 9.3 LPA. Average per adult alcohol consumption decreased by 2.0% in 2025 compared with 2024; from 9.49 LPA to 9.30 LPA. The 2023 level was 9.94 LPA. Total alcohol consumption volume decreased very slightly in 2025 and there was an increase in the adult population of 2.0%.

Two beverage categories, beer and cider, experienced volume decreases in 2025 and spirits, by a small amount, and wine had volume increases.

Beer accounts for 42.1% of the total alcohol market by volume of alcohol in 2025. Wine accounts for 29.4%. Spirits accounts for 22.4% and cider accounts for 6.1%.

The two key features of the 2025 average alcohol consumption estimate are the continuing decline in 2025 and the average consumption remaining well below the 10 LPA level.

In a sample of sixteen other EU countries plus the UK for 2023, available from the OECD, Ireland's average consumption was lower than ten countries and was higher than seven countries. The unweighted average for the seventeen countries was 10.0 LPA which was a little above the Irish 2023 level of 9.9 LPA. By the standards of the seventeen countries in the sample Ireland is not a substantial outlier in terms of high average levels of alcohol consumption as measured by the methodology used for that indicator.

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