Control and sale of alcoholic beverages, year ending March 31, 2019

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COVID-19

Data for this release was compiled before the COVID-19 pandemic. It forms the baseline estimate for sales of alcohol by beverage type in Canada. As these figures represent the year ending March 31, 2019, they do not reflect impacts from COVID-19.

The monthly release of retail trade sales by province and territory (table 20-10-0008-01) on May 22, 2020 will contain total sales by beer, wine and liquor stores for the March 2020 reference period.

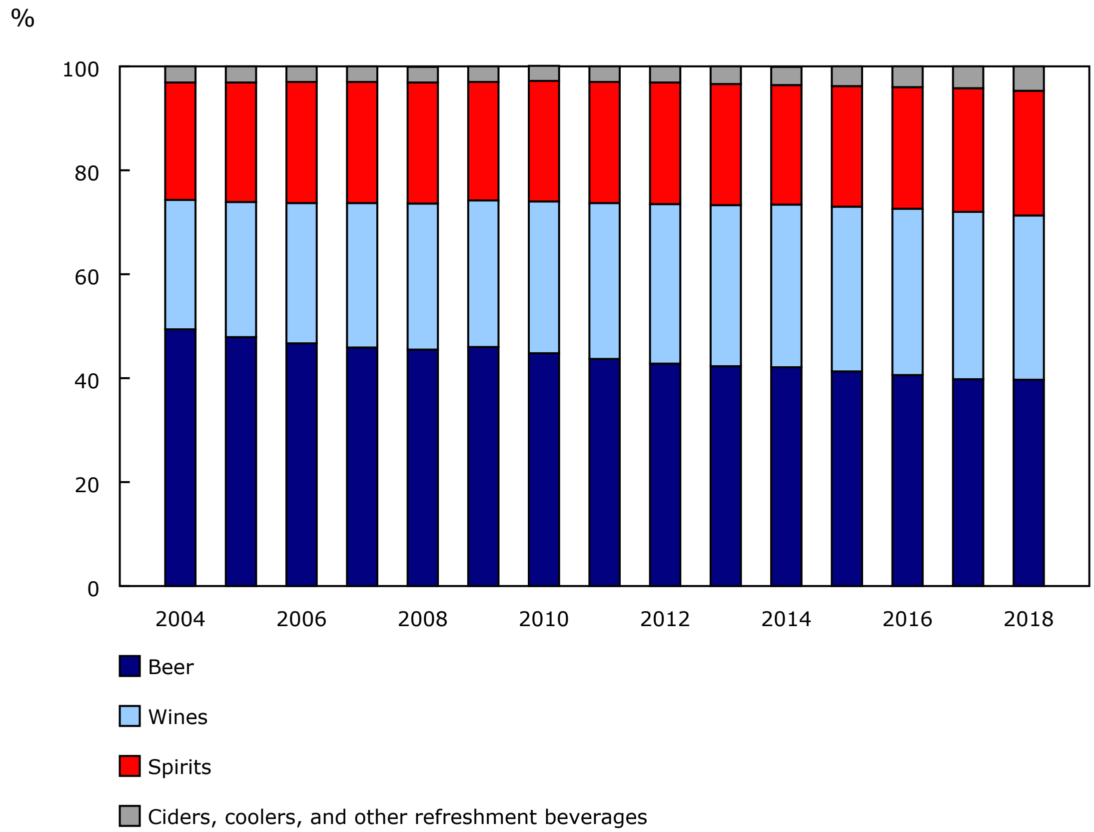
The total volume of alcohol sold increased 0.2% to 3,094 million litres in 2018/2019, equivalent to 9.5 standard drinks per week per person over the legal drinking age in Canada.

Total wine sales by liquor stores, agencies and other retail outlets edged up 0.2% to $7.5 billion during the fiscal year 2018/2019—the slowest pace since Statistics Canada began tracking alcohol sales in 1950. In contrast, beer sales grew at their fastest pace since 2014/2015, rising 2.0% to $9.4 billion.

Sales of spirits increased 3.1% to $5.7 billion. Sales of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages rose 15.0% to $1.1 billion, making it the fastest growing beverage type by sales for the seventh year in a row.

In terms of market share—the percentage of total sales by value—wine sales decreased 0.7% to account for 31.6% of total alcoholic beverage sales, while beer sales edged down 0.1% to 39.7%. The market share of spirits rose 0.2% to 24.0% of total alcohol sales, while ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages increased 0.5% to 4.7%.

Chart 1
Market share by type of beverage and year, 2004/2005 to 2018/2019



Note(s): Chart years represent fiscal years (2004 = 2004/2005).
Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

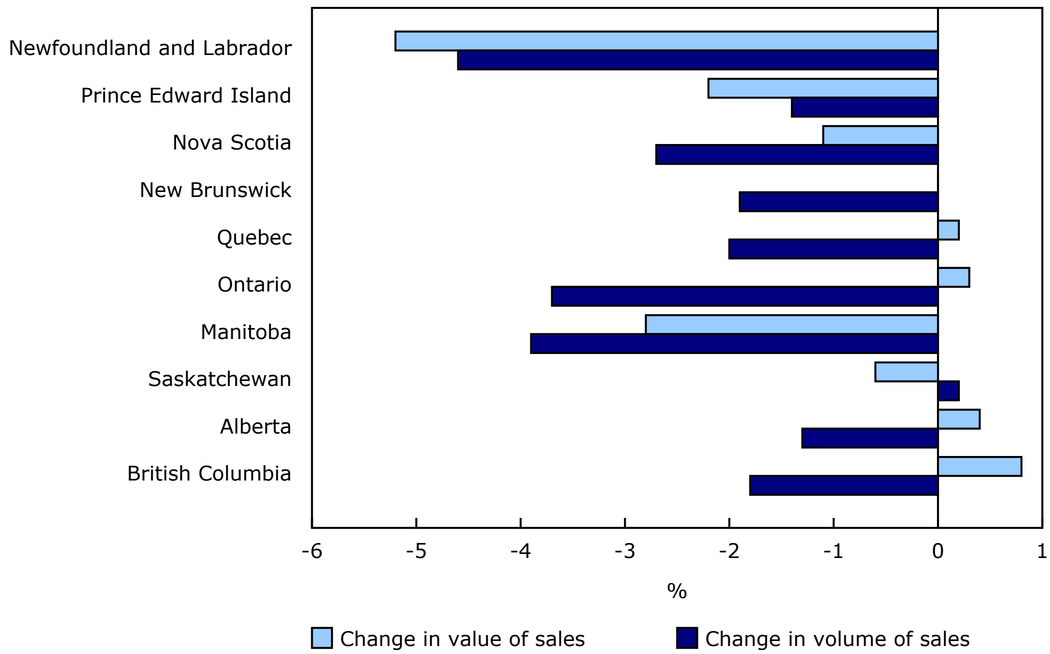
Overall, $23.6 billion worth of alcoholic beverages were sold in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019, up 2.2% from the previous year.

Net income and other government revenue derived from the control and sale of alcoholic beverages, including excise taxes, retail sales taxes, specific taxes on alcohol, and licence and permit revenues, increased 2.1% from the previous fiscal year to $12.4 billion in 2018/2019.

Growth in wine sales stalls on lower volumes

Wine sales edged up 0.2% to $7.5 billion in 2018/2019—the slowest pace since Statistics Canada began tracking alcohol sales in 1950. The value of wine sales was down in five provinces, while the volume sold decreased in nine provinces.

Chart 2
Percentage change in wine sales by value, volume and province, 2018/2019



Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

Wine accounted for the largest market share in Quebec at 43.3% of total sales of alcoholic beverages in 2018/2019, while the lowest share was in Saskatchewan (15.0%).

Red wines accounted for 53.7% of total wine sales in Canada, followed by white (33.1%) and sparkling (6.3%) wines. Rosé, fortified and other wines accounted for the remaining wine sales.

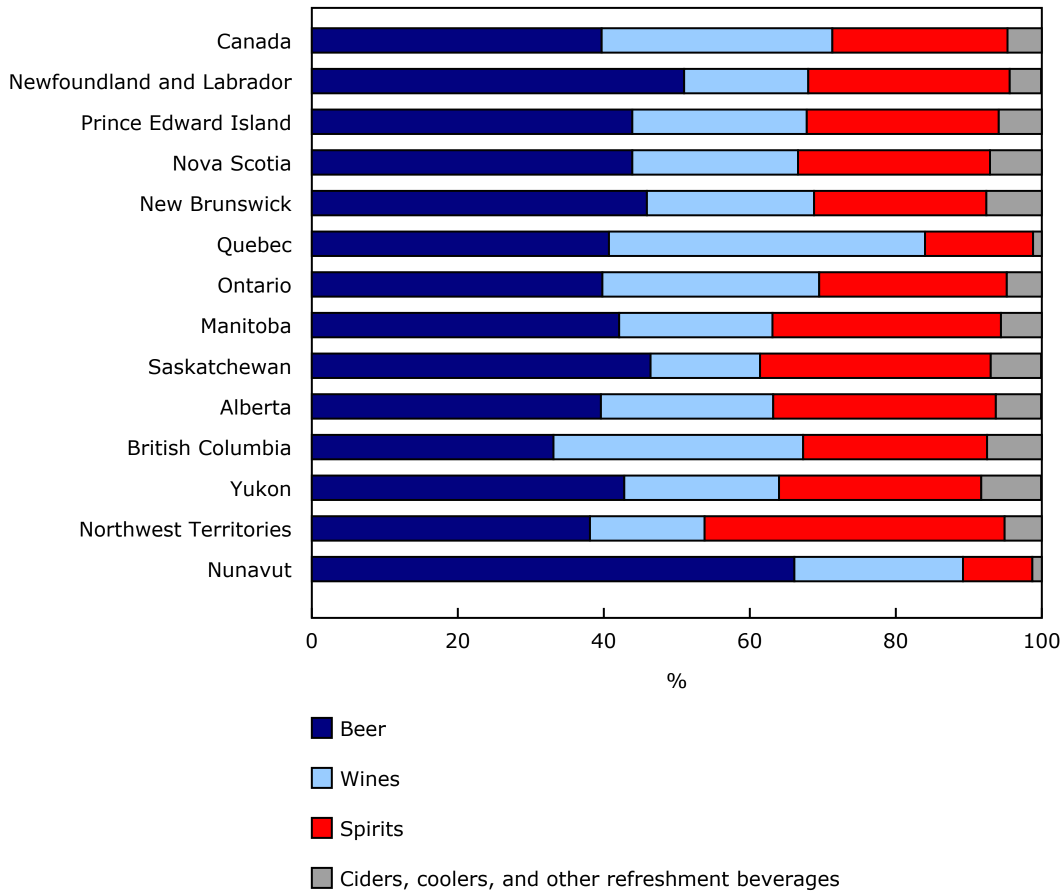
By volume, wine sales decreased 2.5% to 506 million litres in 2018/2019, the first decline in the total volume of wine sold by liquor authorities since 1994. The total volume sold was equivalent to 2.4 glasses of wine per week per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 glass = 142 ml or 5 oz., 12% alcohol content).

Beer sales increase while volumes decline

Beer sales rose 2.0% from a year earlier to $9.4 billion in 2018/2019—the fastest pace of growth since 2014/2015.

Beer accounted for the largest market share of total alcoholic beverage sales in Nunavut (66.1%) and the lowest share in British Columbia (33.1%).

Chart 3
Market share of alcohol by type and geography, 2018/2019



Source(s): Table 10-10-0010-01.

By volume, beer sales declined 0.3% from a year earlier to 2,209 million litres of beer in 2018/2019. This volume is equivalent to 4.1 bottles of beer sold per week per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 341 ml, 5% alcohol content).

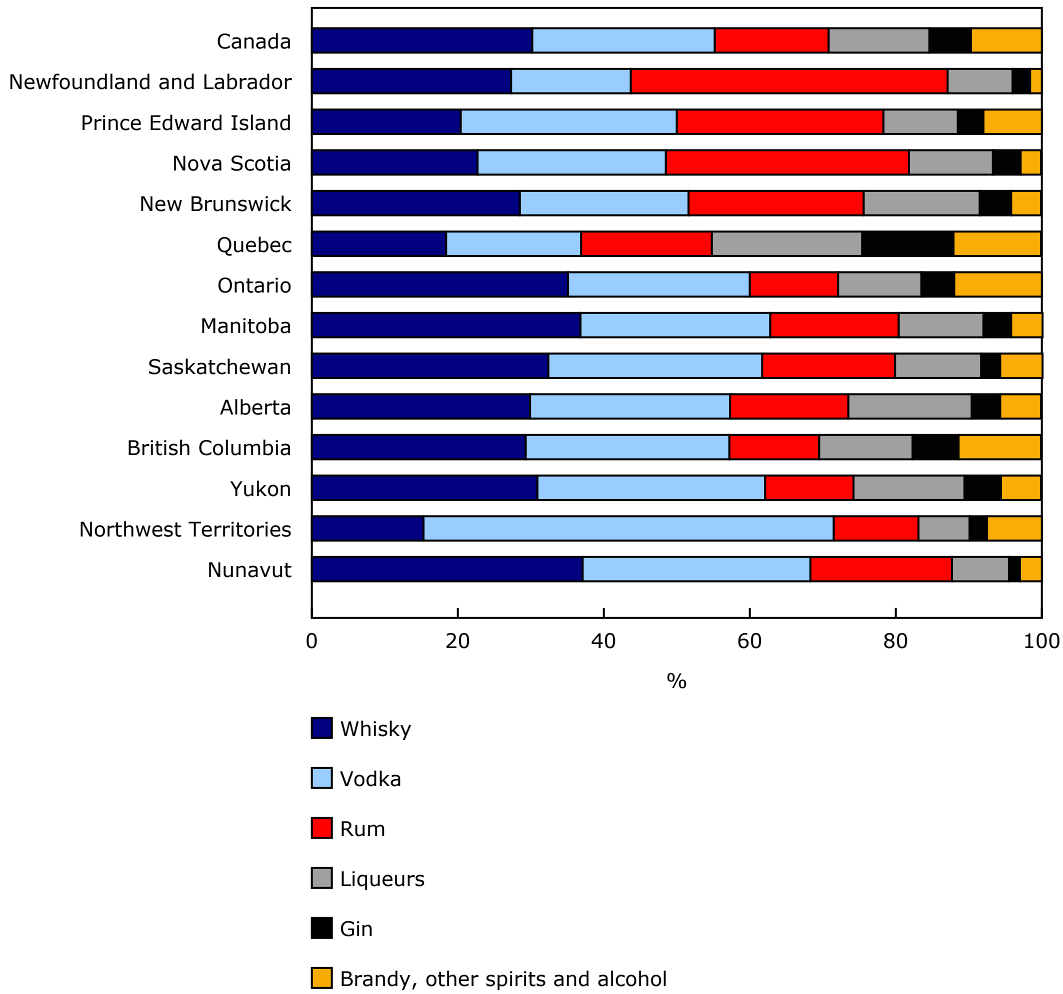
Spirit sales rise

Spirit sales rose 3.1% from a year earlier to $5.7 billion.

Spirits accounted for the largest market share in the Northwest Territories at 41.1% of total alcoholic beverage sales and the lowest in Nunavut (9.5%). Overall, sales of Canadian spirits increased 0.4%, while sales of imported spirits rose 5.5%.

At the national level, whisky (30.2%), vodka (25.0%) and rum (15.6%) were the most popular spirits sold in Canada in 2018/2019, accounting for 70.8% of total spirit sales.

Chart 4
Market share of spirits by type and geography, 2018/2019



Source(s): Table 10-10-0011-01.

In terms of volume, spirits sold increased 1.4% to 174.3 million litres in 2018/2019, equivalent to 2.5 standard drinks per week per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 drink = 42 ml or 1.5 oz., 40% alcohol content).

Popularity of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages continues to grow

Ciders, coolers, and other refreshment beverages was the fastest growing beverage category for the seventh consecutive year in 2018/2019. Overall, $1.1 billion worth of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages were sold in 2018/2019, up 15.0% from the previous fiscal year. This is more than double the growth rate of 7.2% in 2017/2018.

Sales of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages had the largest market share in the Yukon, at 8.2% of total sales of alcoholic beverages, and the lowest share in Quebec (1.2%).

In terms of volume, 205.0 million litres of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages were sold in 2018/2019, up 13.4% from the previous fiscal year. This volume is equivalent to 0.5 bottles of ciders, coolers and other refreshment beverages sold per week per person over the legal drinking age in Canada (1 bottle = 341 ml, 5% alcohol content).

Note to readers

Comparability and limitations of the data

Statistics on sales of alcoholic beverages by volume should not be equated with data on consumption. Sales volumes include only sales as reported by the liquor authorities and their agencies, including sales by wineries, breweries, and other outlets that operate under license from the liquor authorities. Consumption of alcoholic beverages would include all of these sales, as well as any unreported volumes of alcohol sold through ferment-on-premise operations or other outlets, and any unrecorded or illegal transactions.

Statistics on sales of alcoholic beverages by dollar value should not be equated with consumer expenditures on alcoholic beverages. The sales data refer to the revenues received by liquor authorities and their agents, and a portion of these revenues include sales to licensed establishments such as bars and restaurants.

The value of sales of alcoholic beverages excludes all sales taxes, the value of returnable containers, and deposits. Absolute volume of sales of alcoholic beverages is calculated by multiplying the sales volume by the percentage of alcohol content for each product category.

Standard drink

According to Health Canada guidelines, a standard drink is defined as a 341 mL (12 oz.) beer, cooler, or cider with 5% alcohol content, a 142 mL (5 oz.) glass of wine with 12% alcohol content, or a 43 mL (1.5 oz.) spirit drink with 40% alcohol.

Available tables: 10-10-0010-01 to 10-10-0013-01 .

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 1726.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; **STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca**) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; **STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca**).