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US Alcoholic Beverages: Winning Innovation Territories, 2026

Report brochure

Essential Foresight for Innovators

The US alcoholic beverages market is evolving as consumers seek drinks that deliver on wellness, experience, and authenticity. With strong growth forecast for trends like functional benefits, immersive social experiences, and sophisticated flavor innovation over the next three years, brands have a unique opportunity to capture demand by aligning with shifting preferences and emerging lifestyle values.

Powered by Black Swan Data and utilizing the predictive analytics of millions of real social conversations, this report highlights the US alcoholic beverage trends with the strongest momentum today, plus the early signals set to shape tomorrow's innovation.

Naturally adding another lens to the Mintel suite of consumer intelligence, this report pinpoints the most lucrative innovation territories with clear, actionable direction on **where** to play, **what** to prioritize and **how** to win.

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What is a 'Trend Territory' and what is it telling me?

The dataset used in this report consists of 18,949,871 consumer conversations around US alcoholic beverages, that ladder up into 5 identified **Trend Territories**.

- A Trend Territory is a big-picture view of what consumers are genuinely interested and excited about. These reports **group millions of consumer conversations into smaller, related topics**, which each feed into larger meaningful themes, we call Trend Territories.
- The rigorous algorithms find the right signals specifically **focusing on trends that are either generating a lot of conversation now, or showing signs of rapid growth**.
- Each trend is ranked by its future potential giving you a clear and practical roadmap of which trends to **act on right away**, and which ideas you should **keep an eye on** for future innovation success.



Timeframe: 1st August 2023 – 1st September 2025

Includes: Liqueurs, Beer, Cider, Perry & Mead, Wine, Low & De-Alcoholised, Hard Seltzers, Fermented Hard Variants, Mixed Alcoholic Beverages, Aperitifs, Digestifs & Mixers

What will you see in each report?

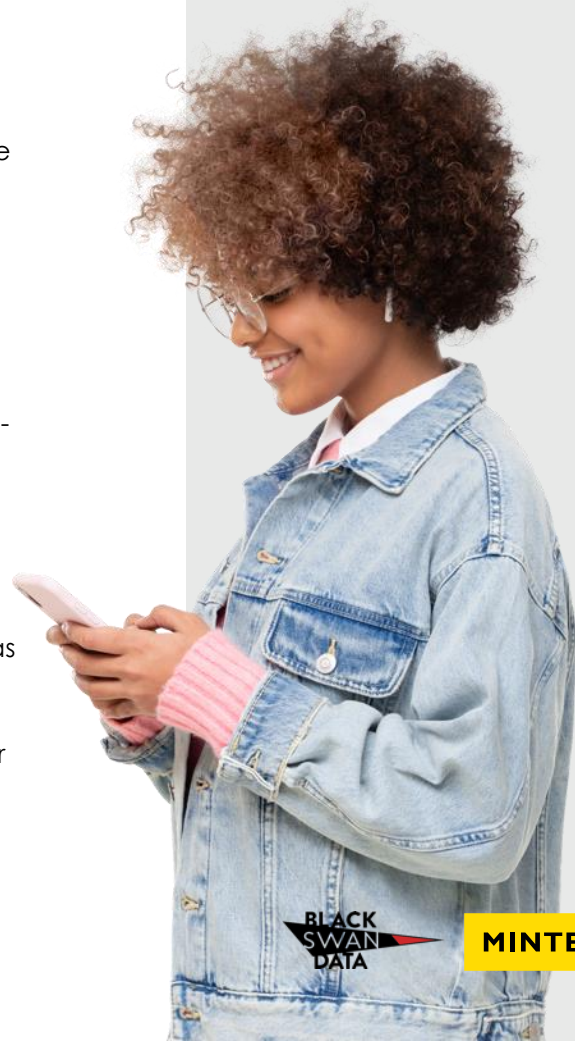
Report Overview: An introduction highlighting how to use this report, the data set used and the topline opportunities that exist in the US alcoholic beverages category.

Executive Summary: A concise overview of the report's key findings and the strategic importance of innovation in the US alcoholic beverages market.

Key Trend Territories The five most influential innovation territories shaping the future of the US alcoholic beverages market.

1. **Feel-Good Function:** Consumers seek alcoholic beverages that offer enjoyable flavors alongside functional benefits like relaxation and wellness, blending indulgence with health-conscious
2. **Social Sips:** Drinking occasions are becoming more experience-led and shareable, with a focus on creativity, premium quality, and social connection both in and out of home
3. **Beyond Bold!:** There is growing demand for drinks with layered intensity, inventive flavors, and multi-sensory experiences that balance boldness with sophistication and drinkability
4. **Rooted in Origin:** Authenticity, craftsmanship, and local sourcing are increasingly valued, as consumers gravitate toward beverages that tell genuine stories of place, people, and production methods
5. **Balance > Buzz:** Moderation and mindful drinking are on the rise, with consumers opting for non-alcoholic, low-ABV, and functional drinks that prioritize wellness and intentional enjoyment over intoxication

How to Win: Actionable strategies and practical recommendations throughout each territory directing brands how to activate on key trends, drive differentiation in the market, and meet evolving consumer expectations.



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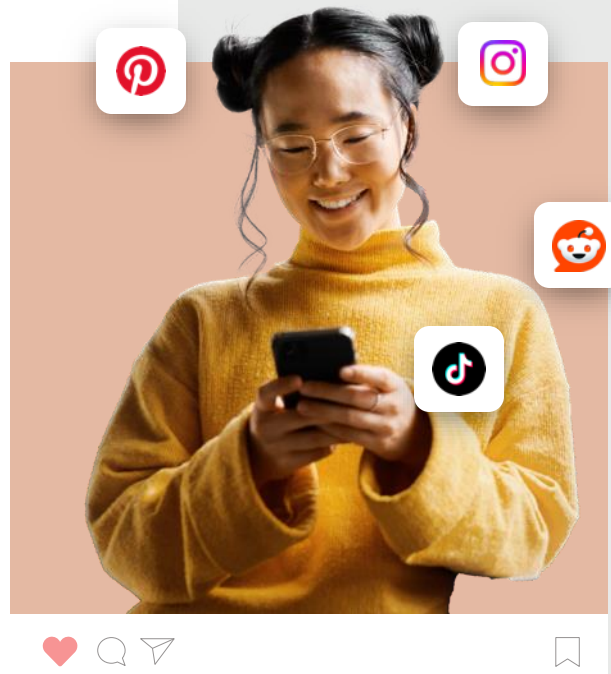
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Why does my business need this report?

By looking at conversation volume and growth over the last two years, these reports give the expert insight needed to make confident, forward-looking decisions to drive winning innovation.

Use these insights to:

- **Discover and prioritize high-potential market opportunities**, with key 'Trend Territories' poised for consumer growth. Determine which opportunities to act on NOW (within 12 months) and which to prepare for NEXT (1-3 years).
- **Accelerate and refine the innovation process** by leveraging unpromoted social media data as an additional lens, alongside an understanding of consumer needs and the existing innovation landscape.
- **Support ideation and understand ways to win in the market**, with granular detail on the associated factors (themes/benefits/ingredients/products) that offer clear opportunity and activation points.
- **Be inspired and grasp what good could look like** with Mintel Spark to instigate innovation ideas and creativity.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Trend Territory overview: activate on authenticity and moderation now, look to wellness, experiences and sophistication next

#1 Trend Territory: Feel-Good Function

- Centers on consumers seeking drinks that combine enjoyable flavors with functional benefits like relaxation, mood enhancement, and wellness, using natural ingredients and mindful formulations that align with health-conscious and sustainable lifestyles, especially among younger adults

#2 Trend Territory: Social Sips

- Focuses on experience-led, visually appealing, and shareable drinking occasions that emphasize creativity, premium quality, and social connection both in and out of home

#3 Trend Territory: Beyond Bold!

- Highlights consumers' desire for alcoholic drinks with layered intensity, inventive flavors, multi-sensory experiences, and expertly balanced profiles that deliver intrigue without overwhelming the senses

#4 Trend Territory: Rooted in Origin

- Emphasizes consumers' preference for alcoholic beverages that showcase authentic craftsmanship, local sourcing, transparent production, and genuine stories of place and people

#5 Trend Territory: Balance > Buzz

- The "Balance > Buzz" trend reflects a shift toward mindful moderation, with consumers choosing non-alcoholic, low-ABV, and functional drinks that support wellness and intentional enjoyment over traditional intoxication

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TREND TERRITORY #1 – FEEL-GOOD FUNCTION

Overview

- Feel-Good Function Key Takeaways, including why its popular, how to win, what's trending NOW and what's trending NEXT?

Associated themes

- Innovation drives the rise of cleaner, functional and lifestyle-aligned beverages
- Feel-Good Function: top 10 growing associated themes in conversations

Associated ingredients

- Consumers seek drinks where flavor and functional effects combine to create enjoyable, holistic and wellbeing-focused experiences
- Feel-Good Function: top 10 growing associated ingredients in conversations

Associated products

- Functional attributes are enhancing well-loved beverages, creating easy, soothing and elevated drinking experiences beyond flavor alone

Innovation inspiration

- Opportunities for more better-for-you alcoholic beverage innovation
- Recent global launch examples: opportunities for more better-for-you ingredient positioning in alcoholic beverage innovation
- Mintel Spark imagines functional palm wine infused with lavender, jasmine and honey

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TREND TERRITORY #2 – SOCIAL SIPS

Overview

- Social Sips Key Takeaways, including why its popular, how to win, what's trending NOW and what's trending NEXT?

Associated themes

- Experience-led drinking is taking shape through design, convenience and cultural storytelling
- Social Sips: top 10 growing associated themes in conversations

Associated ingredients

- Consumers seek bold, innovative flavors that fuel experimentation and spark shareable, conversation-worthy drinking experiences
- Social Sips: top 10 growing associated ingredients in conversations

Associated products

- Products that inspire creativity, connection and effortless enjoyment define social drinking
- Social Sips: top 10 growing associated products in conversations

Innovation inspiration

- Growing potential for shareworthy drinks
- Recent global launch examples: growing potential for shareworthy drinks
- Mintel Spark imagines a trio of vibrant cocktails with distinctive flavors

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TREND TERRITORY #3 – BEYOND BOLD!

Overview

- Beyond Bold! Key Takeaways, including why its popular, how to win, what's trending NOW and what's trending NEXT?

Associated themes

- Consumers redefine what it means to indulge with balance and precision in drinks that marry bold sensory appeal with sophistication
- Beyond Bold!: top 10 growing associated themes in conversations

Associated ingredients

- Beyond one-dimensional: consumers seek balanced drinks that spark intrigue through contrast
- Beyond Bold!: top 10 growing associated ingredients in conversations

Associated products

- Classic spirits are evolving as consumers experiment with inventive, multi-sensory combinations
- Beyond Bold!: top 10 growing associated products in conversations

Innovation inspiration

- Combine flavor and texture innovation with an aesthetic sensibility
- Recent global launch examples: combine flavor and texture innovation with an aesthetic sensibility
- Mintel Spark imagines a sophisticated Rum Milk Punch

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TREND TERRITORY #4 – ROOTED IN ORIGIN

Overview

- Rooted in Origin Key Takeaways, including why its popular, how to win, what's trending NOW and what's trending NEXT?

Associated themes

- Provenance evolves from tradition and heritage to purpose-driven, premium experiences
- Rooted in Origin: top 10 growing associated themes in conversations

Associated ingredients

- Consumers explore ingredients that celebrate natural distinctiveness, sensory depth and regional storytelling
- Rooted in Origin: top 10 growing associated ingredients in conversations

Associated products

- Mastery and meaning are celebrated as drinkers gravitate toward those that honor true craftsmanship and the origins that make them iconic
- Rooted in Origin: top 10 growing associated products in conversations

Innovation inspiration

- Opportunity for innovation that celebrates craftsmanship and authenticity
- Recent global launch examples: opportunity for innovation that celebrates craftsmanship and authenticity
- Mintel Spark imagines a sustainable gin made with local ingredients

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TREND TERRITORY #5 – BALANCE > BUZZ

Overview

- Balance > Buzz Key Takeaways, including why its popular, how to win, what's trending NOW and what's trending NEXT?

Associated themes

- Drinking less is no longer just about what's taken out but what's added in, from functional boosts to holistic wellbeing benefits
- Balance > Buzz: top 10 growing associated themes in conversations

Associated ingredients

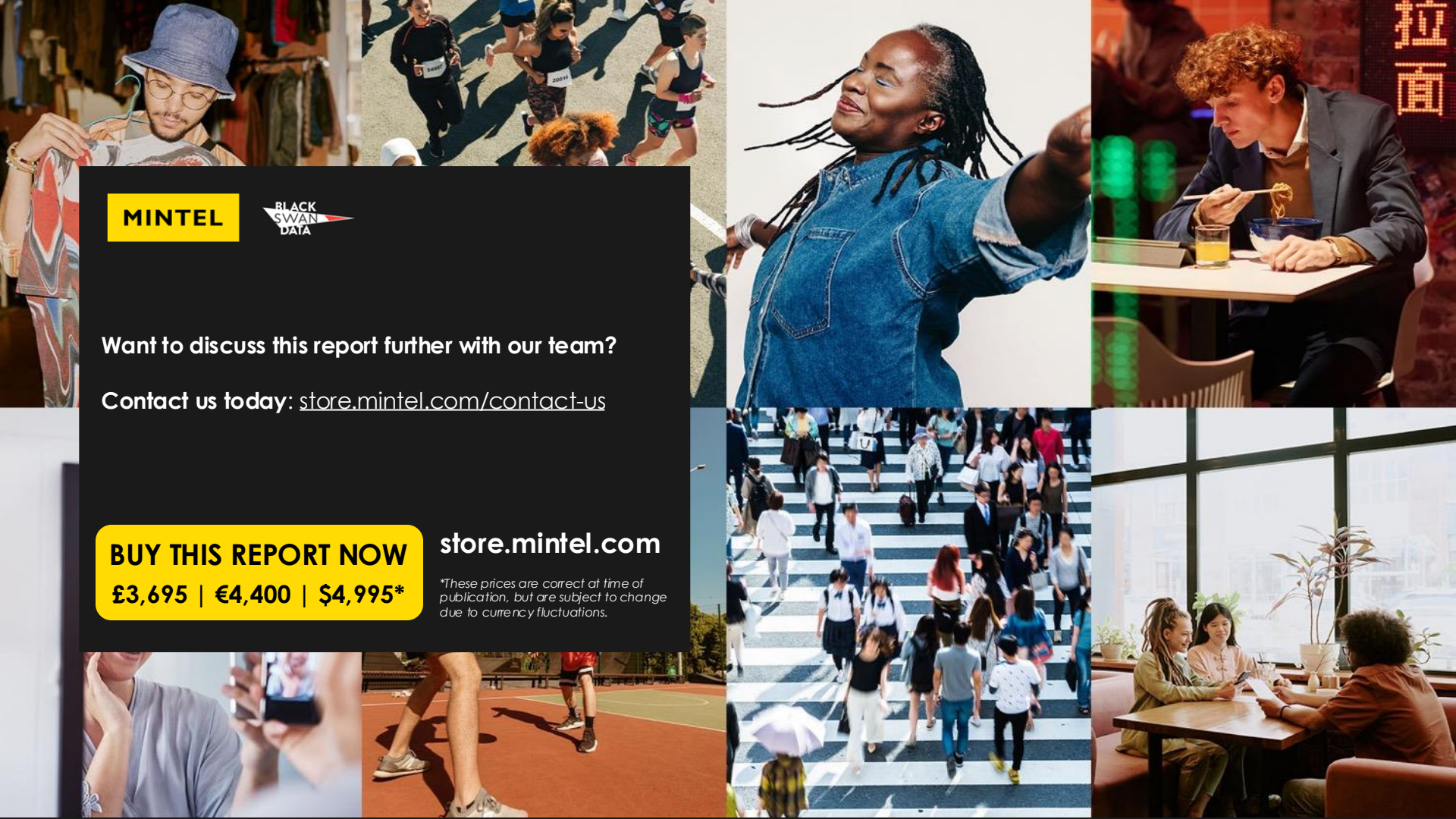
- The new buzz comes from within, as energizing and functional ingredients power a lighter, more intentional way to drink
- Balance > Buzz: top 10 growing associated ingredients in conversations

Associated products

- Lighter serves and refined rituals bring moderation into moments of connection and celebration
- Balance > Buzz: top 10 growing associated products in conversations

Innovation inspiration

- Alcohol moderation trends inspire better-for-you innovation
- Recent global launch examples: alcohol moderation trends inspire better-for-you innovation
- Mintel Spark imagines an alcohol-free Daiquiri with functional benefits



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