

Hard Seltzers Are Here to Stay in 2021

Hard Seltzer Wars in 2021

If you made it through 2020 without seeing an ad for hard seltzers, then there is a good chance that you pay extra to remove commercials from your streaming and music services.

Whether it was the quarantine blues, excessive binge-watching *The Bachelor*, or just admitting to the fact that we prefer fruity flavors over wheat, hard seltzers have taken over the headlines going into 2021. What started with a simple idea in 2013 has grown to a widespread phenomenon, competing heavily with light beers as the drink of choice for low-cal consumers. [Cox's neighborhood market](#) is ready for what is to come for hard seltzers in 2021!

What is Hard Seltzer?

Before the "war" of the seltzers began in 2020, sparkling water had been building in popularity across the United States. At the beginning of the 2010 decade, non-alcoholic seltzers had already begun to compete with their sugary soda counterparts, with LaCroix becoming one of the most popular brands of 2016.

As LaCroix dominated the soda market, hard seltzer brands like Truly, White Claw, and Smirnoff brought a new kind of popularity to the flavored alcohol game. Of these brands, White Claw specifically generated the highest interest among consumers, bringing attention to the new form of beverage and attracting other alcohol producers to jump on the bandwagon for hard seltzers in 2021.

Leading into this period, several well-known beer companies decided to enter into the fray, including Natural Light in late 2019 and Budweiser in early 2020. At this point, White Claw and its competitors had flooded the alcohol market with their low-cost, low-calorie, zero sugar drinks, becoming the main drink of summer 2019.

Hard seltzer plays off of the popularity of sparkling water mixed drinks from the 1930s and '40s, bringing new flavors and ideas to an age-old classic concept. Brands combine fizzy water (similar to Perrier and San Pellegrino) with an appropriate amount of alcohol and usually mixed with fruit flavoring or juice to round out the drinking experience. Unlike cocktails, however, the alcohol content in hard seltzers is more similar to a beer — between 4% and 6% — since most hard seltzers use fermented cane sugar as the alcohol base. Some hard seltzer brands like Smirnoff Seltzer and High Noon Hard Seltzer use trace amounts of vodka as their alcohol of choice.

Because the seltzers stay away from wheats, real fruit, and syrups they contain fewer calories, carbs, and sugars than beer, wine, and cocktails. The drinks usually sit around 90-110 calories, based entirely on how much alcohol is in the drink, and make for wonderfully refreshing beverages regardless of the season.



Brands to Consider at Cox's

WHITE CLAW® HARD SELTZER VARIETY PACKS



White Claw

In 2020, White Claw had ten flavors: Mango, Black Cherry, Natural Lime, Raspberry, Ruby Grapefruit, Tangerine, Watermelon, and Lemon. All have an alcohol content of 5%. They also had the lower-calorie, 3.7% ABV Seltzer 70 in Pineapple and Clementine.

Now, as we look towards what is in store for hard seltzers in 2021, White Claw is banking on further success by releasing a variety pack of new flavors. Its Flavor Pack 3 is introducing Blackberry, Strawberry, and Pineapple with the regular 100 calorie, 5% ABV. White Claw is also releasing their higher alcohol White Claw Surge in Blood Orange and Cranberry with 8% ABV.

The biggest release coming for these hard seltzers in 2021 is their new Iced Tea Seltzers. These new Iced Teas will have all of the fizz of a normal hard seltzer, but with the extra taste and caffeine of an iced tea. White Claw will release the new Iced Teas in a 12 pack variety with four flavors: Lemon, Mango, Peach, and Raspberry. All will have 5% ABV and are set to release in April.

You can purchase these and more online from Cox's Louisville to have them hand-delivered through our ongoing partnership with [Drizzly.com](#)



Truly

As the top competitor to White Claw, Truly boasts more flavor options and larger can size in some bundles. Truly has 12 flavors: Black Cherry, Wild Berry, Blueberry & Acai, Raspberry Lime, Orange, Lime, Grapefruit, Lemon, Passion Fruit, Pineapple, Watermelon & Kiwi, and Mango. All have an alcohol content of 5%.

Truly was also the first of the US brands to break into Hard Lemonade Seltzers, which are quickly gaining popularity as Bud Light and Mike's Hard Lemonade join the market. Truly Lemonades come in four flavors: Original, Black Cherry, Mango, and Strawberry.

While White Claw is set to release their Iced Tea this upcoming April, Truly beat them to the punch late last year. Truly Iced Tea Seltzers feature real iced tea and fruit flavoring with a 5% ABV. They are currently available in Lemon, Peach, Raspberry, and Strawberry.

Also coming soon is Truly's take on the higher alcohol seltzer: Truly Extra Hard Seltzer. This will feature 8% ABV and come in completely new flavors: Black Raspberry and Peach Mango. It is set to release early this year

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Smirnoff

Smirnoff uses its premium No. 21 vodka instead of the more common sugar alcohol of other brands. If you are looking for something closer to a cocktail but not looking for the alcohol content or sugar, it is safe to say that Smirnoff has you covered. Several of their vodka seltzers are made to imitate rosé sangrias and piña colodas, making them the perfect drink to cap off a nice weekend.

Smirnoff boasts ten flavors: Red, White, & Berry, Raspberry Rosé, Berry Lemonade, Cranberry Lime, Piña Colada, Pink Apple Rosé, Strawberry Rosé, White Peach Rosé, Blackberry, and Blood Orange. All have an alcohol content of 4.5%.

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Mike's Hard Lemonade

Mike's Hard Lemonade Seltzer is the newcomer on the scene in the United States. Over the past year, their UK version of regular Seltzer has gained a lot of popularity. This March, they will release a completely new line of Lemonade Seltzers into the US for our consumption. These seltzers promise the refreshing taste of lemonade with the light flavors (and low sugar, low calories) of seltzers.

Mike's will arrive with four new flavors: Original Lemon, Mango, Strawberry, and Pineapple. Each will have all the flavor profiles of Mike's Hard Lemonade, but with only 100 calories and 1g of sugar. All four have 5% ABV.

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Bud Light Seltzer

Bud Light Seltzers hit the market in early 2020. While a newcomer, they seem to be holding their own against White Claw, Truly, and other major competitors. With less sugar, all of the alcohol, and lower cost than the forerunners of the market, they seem to have found a nice niche in the hard seltzer market. Flavor-wise, Bud Light went with simple over interesting, making any choice a good choice from their top sellers.

They have four regular flavors: Strawberry, Lemon Lime, Black Cherry, Mango and four holiday flavors: Peppermint Pattie, Ginger Snap, Apple Crisp, and Cranberry. All regular seltzers from Bud Light have an alcohol content of 5%.

In addition, Bud Light recently joined Truly in the market of Lemonade Seltzers. Trying to keep up with Truly while preparing for Mike's Hard Lemonade to enter the scene, Bud Light introduced a Peach flavor that is separate from the others. They offer Original Lemon, Black Cherry, Strawberry, and Peach.

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Michelob Ultra Seltzer

Just breaking into the seltzer war, Michelob Ultra decided to go a different route from the frontrunners of the race and launched an 'Organic' seltzer. Michelob is hoping to enter into the "healthy" label of hard seltzers by providing a 0g sugar, 0 carb, 80 calorie drink — making their offering 'healthier' than any of their competitors. The cost of having 0 sugar, though, is a lower alcohol content than the others at only 4% ABV.

Michelob also decided to create a different profile of flavors as well, focusing on more unique styles as opposed to what is tried and true. Their breakout flavors include Cucumber Lime, Peach Pear, and Spicy Pineapple.

So, if you're looking for some more refined and complex flavors, Michelob may be the place to start.

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Hard Seltzers In 2021

Luckily, your local Spirit Shoppe has just about every hard seltzer brand available. So come on over and discover your favorite!

Do you need to stock up on drinks? Are you in the Kentucky area? Head to a Cox's Spirit Shoppe and Smoker's Outlet [location in your area](#). Or, use our [delivery service](#) at your convenience.

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