

New Thinking, New Drinking: How Societal Shifts Are Changing Drinking Culture and Beverages Forever

Understanding the Shift

Alcohol has a longstanding history of more than [13000](#) years with its strong association with social bonding, celebration, and influence on human thoughts and behavior.

Most millennials can hazily remember their year-end parties with dizzy minds, uncontrolled bodies, projectile vomits, and funny drunk pictures that used to be cool those days. The era of the popular "Tik Tok" song by Ke\$ha, "We Found Love" by Rihanna, "Someone Like You" by Adele, and many more. The time when TV shows like "How I Met Your Mother" and "Mad Men" normalized drinking, and it was more on the aspirational and romantic side. Not just the media but the drinking culture penetrates most of our lives through family and society itself. In fact, some [social customs](#) and beliefs across the world promote daily drinking. It's tough to say when it started and where it will go.

Until COVID hit the globe, drinking was quite celebrated, and drinks like nonalcoholic beer or sugary soda with different infusions were a joke. But now, a considerable percentage decline in alcohol consumption has been reported globally.

Not just doctors but many celebs, musicians, artists, and social media influencers are promoting a new trend: the "**sober curious**" movement. Ruby Warrington started this movement through her famous book, Sober Curious, launched in 2019. This movement promotes a low- to alcohol-free lifestyle.

It encouraged many people across the globe to focus on their mental and physical wellness by abstaining from alcohol for at least a short time in a low-pressurized way. It suggests multiple [small steps for cutting back](#), such as:

- Choosing an alternative non-alcoholic beverage
- Rewarding yourself with a carb-loaded dessert
- Picking a hobby

- Preparing a response to why you aren't drinking
- Focusing on mental, physical, and relationship benefits

Overall, the movement encouraged people to practice **mindful drinking**, which is another counter-movement to binge drinking after the "sober curious movement." Mindfulness involves paying attention to every emotion and thought before taking any automatic action.

Mindful drinking is a simple concept involving thinking before drinking. It encourages people to pause for a moment while drinking and ask themselves questions about how it would help them, how they would sleep after this, how their morning would be, and whether it is required.

Research also suggests that [mindfulness can be helpful](#) in problematic alcohol use patients, and this exercise could help make them more aware of their feelings and thoughts, even if it doesn't translate to an immediate desire to stop drinking.

The Rise of Mindful Drinking & Sober Curiosity

Social and Psychological Dimensions

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According to 2024 data from [CivicScience](#), 27% of the US respondents (with three in four GenZs) participated in the Dry January resolution. Similarly, the estimated alcohol-free months in the UK were around 16% adults, approximating 8.5 million people.

According to the [PBS News Hour](#) report, a 40% increase in sales has been reported in the consumption of non-alcoholic beer, wine, and spirits between 2021-2023. And a fascinating new culture of fully non-alcoholic bars started popping up. These bars, such as the famous Sans Bar in Texas, aim to maintain social gatherings, night outs, and date nights in a fun way, mimicking the look of alcohol bars but serving an interesting menu of mocktails, non-alcoholic spirits, coffee, etc.

A model study released by [Lancet](#) on the Increase in taxes on the ethanol content of alcoholic beverages in the U.K. (enacted in August 2023) projects that **cost increase in the lowest taxed beer and ciders will discourage heavy alcohol consumption**, potentially benefiting public health.

Overall the media, society and government are trying to mend the dimensions of changing drinking culture!

Changing Generational Habits

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Neuroscience, Nootropics, & Cognitive Well-Being

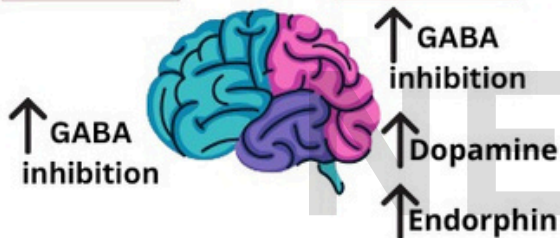
Brain Health Spotlight



Low - Moderate Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)

Low BAC-
0.02%-0.04%

Moderate BAC-
0.05%-0.08%



Reduced anxiety and calm body

Increased motivation and urge to drink

Calm and relaxed
GABA



Motivated
Dopamine



Euphoric
Endorphin



Forgetful and drowsy
Glutamate

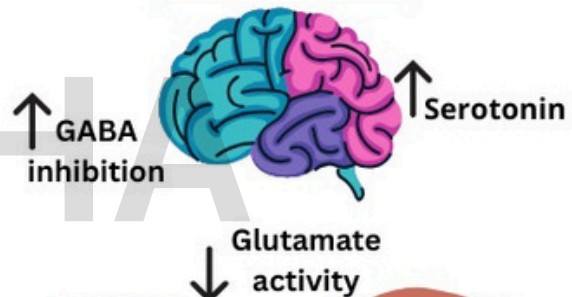


Wobbly and Puckish
Serotonin



High - Chronic Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)

High to chronic
BAC-0.15%+



Nausea and vomiting reflex with chances of blackouts

High level anxiety with potential brain and immune dysfunction

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Category	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Classical nootropic compounds	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
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This trend is now being seen in NoLo wines and other spirits. Australian brewers are leading in

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Industry Response

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Shifting Social & Cultural Norms

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Impact on Relationships & Networking

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Potential Downsides & Points of Tension

Scepticism & Cultural Resistance

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Marketing & Health Halos

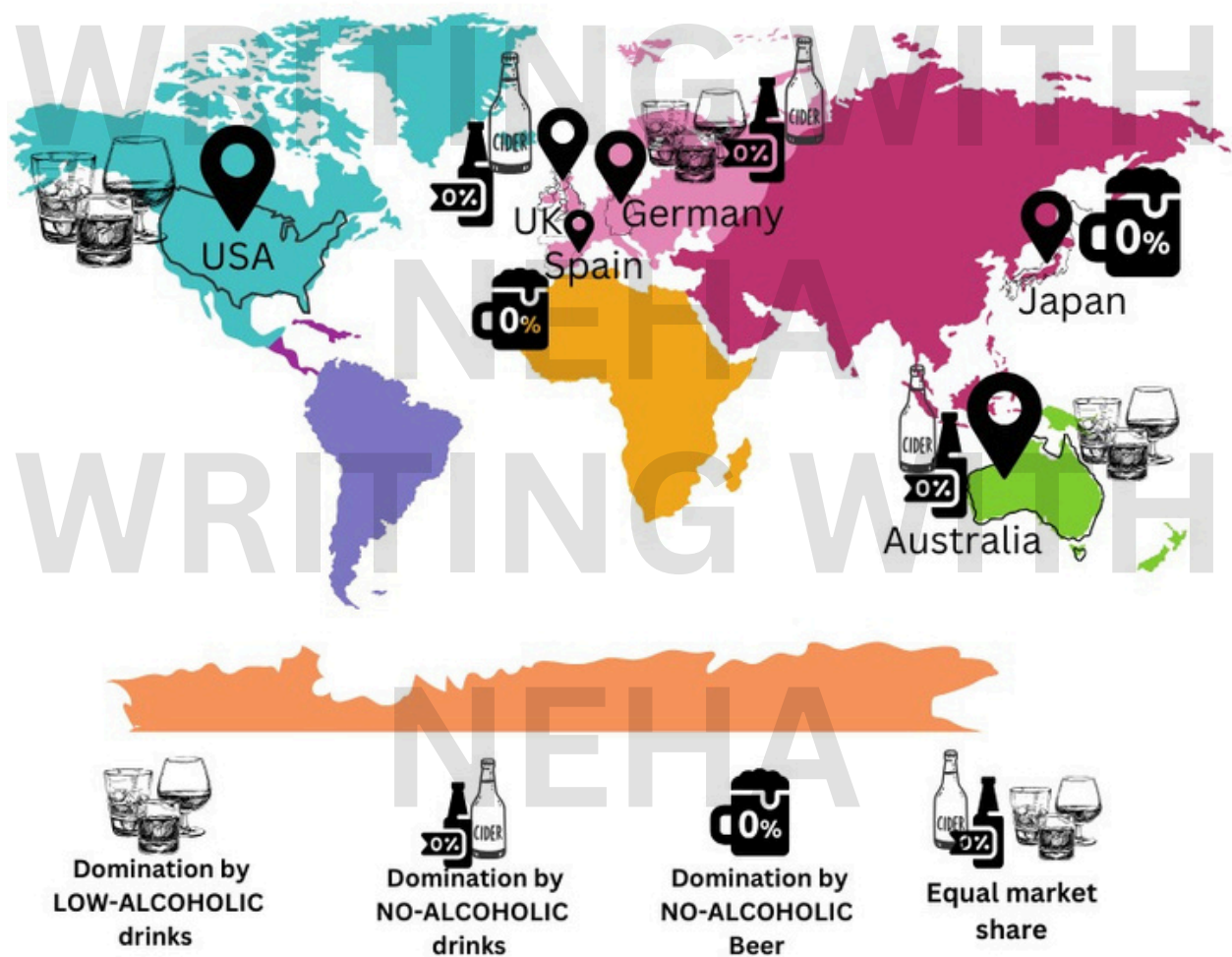
No-alcohol and low-alcohol drinks are rooted in the well-embraced health and wellness trend

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Share of Low vs. No Alcohol in Major Markets



Some of the pitfalls of the NoLo hyped beverages could be:

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Future Outlook

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Conclusion

The post-pandemic era changed many people's perceptions of life! It taught us the hard way and gave us time to reflect on our mental wellness and self-care. The concept of mindful drinking is not new but is more accepted now. It relies on multiple key factors, such as changing lifestyles, environments, disposable income, and awareness.

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