



Washington State Liquor Control Board

Vodka



5 Things You Need To Know

Origin

Simply put, Vodka is the world's most popular distilled beverage. It's almost always clear and traditionally usually distilled from wheat (although product distilled from potatoes and grapes can be found on LCB shelves). Classic Vodka originated in Russia in the 14th century and mass production began in 1894. Vodka was introduced to the American market in the 1940's and overtook Bourbon Whiskey as the most widely consumed alcoholic beverage in the 1970's.

What does it taste like?

By definition, Vodka should be odorless and tasteless. However, one would be hard pressed to say that's true upon tasting any particular Vodka. There are nuances and characteristics that are apparent in all unflavored Vodka's- that remind the drinker that it is indeed, alcohol. Flavored Vodkas of course, take on their flavoring component's taste – sometimes with very true character. Some of the most popular flavors are citrus, vanilla, raspberry and blueberry.

Vodka in WSLCB Stores: By the numbers

- There are currently 130 Vodkas available in the 750 ml size.
- Flavored Vodka is available in 64 brands.
- In 1979, by comparison, 42 Vodkas were available to the consumer (none were flavors!).
- The current price range for Vodka ranges from \$9.25 to \$59.95 (with a majority of selections under \$35).
- As a category, Vodka contributes nearly 26 percent of profits returned to the State.
- As a category, Vodka is up 7 percent overall and flavors are up over 21 percent in the past 12 months.

Category Leaders

In Washington the leaders in the import category are:

1. Grey Goose
2. Absolut
3. Stolichnaya

The leaders in the domestic category are:

1. Smirnoff
2. Skyy
3. Burnett's

The leaders in the economy brands are:

1. Monarch
2. Potters

Note: Signpost brands (brands that are easily identifiable to the consumer and lead the category in Washington) are Smirnoff, Skyy and Absolut.

How it is used and what the future holds

The future for Vodka growth is bright. Mixability and the ever increasing desire by the consumer for “smart” cocktails will lead to an increase in new cocktails at home and while out at clubs and bars. Currently the Cosmopolitan (single handedly made popular by the HBO show “Sex and the City”) and premium martinis are still favorites. Standards such as the Screwdriver and Bloody Mary are still called for and new drinks like the Van Gogh ‘Podcast’ and Absolut ‘New Orleans’ are being created every day ensuring Vodka’s well established position.