



# Washington State Liquor Control Board

## Liqueurs



5 Things You Need To Know

# Origin

Think of any flavor at all and it probably is represented somewhere in the liqueur section. Liqueurs encompass fruit, herb, coffee, spice, nuts and other flavors to create the most diverse category in any liquor store. Liqueurs are made in one of two ways, by infusing grain neutral spirits with natural flavors or by artificially creating a flavor and combining with another type of alcohol (grain neutral or Irish whiskey, for example). Liqueurs hail from all over the world (many with well kept secret recipes) and with some types being specifically associated with the country from which they originate. Liqueurs are most often sweet and low in alcohol but not always. Some are very strong (more than 80 proof) and not necessarily with a pronounced sweetness although sugar in some form is almost always added. Liqueurs in their various forms are a favorite ingredient of bakers, cooks and the bartender as widely used additions to many classic cocktails including martinis as well as in the creation of new designer cocktails. Liqueurs are especially associated with holidays or special occasions, but of course can be and are enjoyed throughout the year.

# What does it taste like?

Name a flavor, any flavor, and that taste is what some liqueur somewhere tastes like. Citrus, berry, coffee, licorice, herb, peppermint, chocolate, vanilla, watermelon – the list goes on and on and will surely increase in years to come. The consistency of liqueurs varies from clear to creamy to dark in color to one that has gold flakes. Creativity and variety are the hallmark of the liqueur section.

# Liqueurs in WSLCB Stores: By the numbers

- There are currently over 130 different brands of liqueurs available in the varying sizes in WSLCB stores.
- In 1979, by comparison, there were 52 brand choices.
- Current price ranges for liqueurs is between \$9.95 and \$40 with a majority in the \$20-\$30 range.
- As a category, liqueurs contribute nearly 15 percent of liquor profits returned to the State.
- As a category, liqueurs are trending up at three percent.

# Category Leaders

In Washington the leaders in the Liqueur category are:

1. Baileys Irish Cream
2. Kahlua Coffee Liqueur
3. Jagermeister

Although there are over a hundred more liqueurs available in LCB stores, the ones mentioned above are by far the biggest sellers and the largest profit generators, but the popularity of products such as Grand Marnier, Drambuie, Yukon Jack and others is great and the brands very identifiable.

*Note:* Signpost brands (brands that are easily identifiable to the consumer and lead the category in Washington) are Baileys, Jagermeister and Kahlua.

# How it is used and what the future holds

The future of liqueurs will always include new flavors and types. Even though a few brands dominate the market, the uniqueness of the category leaves plenty of room for more brands to be introduced. Liqueurs are the one category where the sky is literally the limit in regards to what can be available. The variety of uses in cooking, baking and drink making demand that the category is large. And the consumer is savvier than ever and wants the very best in this category leaving the door open for more premium products. One of the most popular perennial favorites is the B-52 which is equal parts of Kahlua, Baileys and Grand Marnier.