

Dark Spirits and Liqueurs: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - September 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on the dark spirits and liqueurs market.
- The outlook for the market in the recession and the following years.
- The latest new product development (NPD) trends and key concepts of interest to consumers.
- Consumer behaviour surrounding and attitudes towards dark spirits and liqueurs.

Given the uplift in interest in at-home cocktail making sparked by lockdown, brands should engage with drinkers by providing expert advice and inspiration on cocktail making. Underlining the opportunities here, 32% of dark spirits/liqueur drinkers are interested in knowing more about making cocktails using dark spirits. Recipes need to be both made more compelling and put directly into the path of consumers to effectively inspire people.

Echoing the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the on-trade across the entire alcoholic-drinks industry, the value of the dark spirits and liqueurs market is expected to slump by a fifth in 2020 due to significant loss of high value sales through this channel. Volume sales have been much more resilient thanks to the low share held by the on-trade. Consumers' spending power and financial confidence has been hit hard and wariness around visiting pubs/restaurants – especially as the UK enters a second wave of the virus – will linger for some time to come. Therefore, while the market's value will rebound in 2021, volume sales are expected to continue to fall over the next five years.

The sharpened focus on health, which is anticipated to be a lasting legacy of the pandemic, will further fuel the burgeoning alcohol moderation trend. This presents a major threat to the market, with half of dark spirits/liqueur drinkers noting that health concerns would make them cut back on the amount of these products they consume.



“Despite being a major threat to the market, the re-energised focus of health since COVID-19 also presents opportunities. Being almost non-existent in this category, the rapidly growing low-/no-alcohol space is ripe for development in dark spirits, as is NPD in lower sugar/calorie liqueur drinks.”

– Emma Clifford, Associate Director – Food and Drink

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Companies should react to this by exploring the low-/no-alcohol space in this category, given the substantial unmet demand for these options. Lower sugar/calorie liqueurs are also ripe for development in light of consumer interest uncovered by the research for this report.



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