

What's shaping SA's spirits consumption this World Cocktail Day?

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Latest Bacardi Cocktail Trends Report reveals the new flavours, sensations and experiences being sought locally and abroad.



The latest international cocktail trends will soon feature prominently in restaurants and bars around the country on **World Cocktail Day**, which is coming up tomorrow, **13 May**. Trends in cocktail drinking are changing all over the world and South Africans have shown how keen they are to experiment with new and exotic tastes and flavours.

Gone are the days of limited choices and flavours when it comes to our tipples of choice. The fourth annual [Bacardi Cocktail Trends Report](#) released by Bacardi recently unveiled the extent to which trends in cocktail and spirit consumption are changing the world over, with South Africa being no exception. Experimental new flavours and changes in consumer behaviour are heralding new cocktails with new tastes and visual appeal capturing the nation's imagination.

Produced in collaboration with London-based **The Future Laboratory**, extensive external research, Bacardi-led consumer surveys and bartender insights have revealed that locally, 44% of the 1,000 South African respondents surveyed indicated that they anticipate drinking more cocktails in 2023, demonstrating a marked shift away from ciders, beers and wine. Furthermore, keeping up with conscious eating and drinking trend taking place globally, 48% reported that they will be drinking more cocktails containing natural ingredients.

"This trend is partly due to globally interconnected consumers sharing their cocktail experiences on social media and partly due to the boom in at-home mixology, which gained prominence during the pandemic," says Edgar Mntungwa, Customer Marketing manager at Bacardi South Africa. "Google searches for cocktail names and recipes have spiked during the past year, with a remarkable increase of 59% being seen between October 2021 and September 2022, an indicator of the growing culture of **cocktail curiosity**."

Some of the macro trends defining how, what, where and why consumers will be sipping more cocktails in 2023 include:

1. The Pleasure Revolution

Fresh ingredients and more fun and frivolous flavours are coming to the fore. Interestingly, 44% of South African respondents indicated that relaxing with friends and family is their preferred cocktail-drinking occasion, outpacing happy hours, date nights and parties. This research shows that over the next 12 months, over half of respondents (54 %) plan on preparing more cocktails at home.

2. Transforming tastes

Redefining when and where they celebrate special occasions and with which drinks and flavours has seen more than 50% of South Africans surveyed **going out to eat, drink and socialise earlier in the evenings**. During the week, 45% of respondents based in South Africa reported that they most often drink cocktails or spirits/liquors between 8pm and midnight, while 43% drink between 4pm and 8pm. This pattern is similar to the drinking habits over a weekend, with 42% drinking between 8pm and midnight and 35% between 4pm and 8pm.

Spicy drinks, with jalapeño and Tabasco inspired Tequila and vodka-based cocktails has seen an increase in popularity, with bitter flavours and the use of fermented ingredients such as kombucha also remaining popular.

3. Sophisticated sips

An emerging trend in minimalism at premium venues and a focus on quality ingredients is further backed by 46% of South Africans prioritising drinking cocktails made with high-quality spirits and liquors. 32% of bartenders expect this **preference for premium spirits** in the Tequila, single malt, aged rum and mescal categories to continue.

4. All about the delivery

How South African consumers purchase their spirit of choice has also changed over the last few years. 61% of those surveyed currently use a retailer website or app to buy spirit-based drinks or cocktails for at home delivery. Over a third order cocktails to go from a bar or restaurant, while 24% use a third-party delivery service.

5. Conscious cocktails

Environmental awareness is transforming how the drinks industry operates with 38% of consumers reporting that spirit and liquor brands which stand for sustainability are of extreme importance to them. High-end venue bartenders are increasingly conscious of reducing waste, looking for sustainable ingredients, and thinking about what happens to the items used, from bottles to garnishes. The focus on zero-waste is peaking, with 44% of bartenders interested in the issue, according to Bacardi's Global Ambassador Survey 2022.

Another related trend includes the rise of **NoLo (no and low alcohol) drinkers**. The concept of Dry January is also gaining momentum, with over a fifth of the respondents polled saying that they will be doing a Dry January for the first time next year.

6. Nostalgia with a twist

While new flavours and experiences are trending, old school is still proving to be cool with many consumers enjoying **cocktails that transport them back to memories of earlier times**. As a result, mojitos, daiquiris, vodka soda, Bloody Marys and gin and tonic are still the top five cocktails ordered globally.

According to the Bacardi Cocktail Trends Report, we can also expect to see **a rise in new drinking occasions**, with consumers choosing to celebrate times that really matter to them with premium spirits and adventurous ingredients.

"More and more consumers are enjoying these moments in non-traditional places. Around 43% of South Africans say they are clubbing less and 44% indicate that they are visiting members-only clubs less frequently. A third say they are hosting more special occasions at home and intend to continue to do so in 2023," says Mntungwa. "At Bacardi, we are setting the pace at the forefront of these changing trends."

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