

# Home wine consumption has significantly increased during confinement

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The frequency of wine consumption has increased significantly during the confinement caused by the coronavirus in Spain, as well as in the rest of Europe. However, this is not the case regarding the number of buyers, which has decreased, as well as the average expenditure per bottle, due to domestic self-supply, among other issues. These are the conclusions that can be drawn about the behaviour of European wine consumers after more than a month of confinement, with over 6,600 people polled in eight European countries (Spain, Belgium, Italy, France, Austria, Germany, Portugal and Switzerland), which included the participation of researchers from the Polytechnic University of Valencia, University of Zaragoza and Public University of Navarre.

A total 2,560 Spaniards have taken part in the study, which has been promoted by the European Association of Wine Economists, EUAWE, and the Chaire Vins et Spiritueux de INSEEC U. Its objective was to analyse frequency of consumption, purchase patterns, key purchasing factors and long-term consequences.

## A growing frequency of consumption

In all countries, wine consumption frequency has increased significantly during confinement. Specifically, in Spain, 45% of people have not changed their frequency of consumption, 36% consume more frequently and 19% consume less often. This behaviour is different for wine compared to beer and liquor, because, although 45% also declare they

have not changed the frequency of consumption for these two types of beverages—inertia is the driving force of this behaviour—in the case of beer there has been a net drop in frequency of 11 points, which shoots up to 42 points in liquors. Furthermore, it is shown that beer is mainly consumed by students and, in general, by young adults under the age of 30, whereas older people tend to drink wine. However, Spain stands out for having significantly greater beer consumption compared to other countries.

The study shows changes in the patterns of purchase and consumption: people polled spend less, in general, on alcoholic beverages, and the average wine purchase price decreases significantly.

## **Why is more consumed?**

Among the factors behind the increase in wine consumption, are concern and precariousness, but also taste and the digital environment. An essential characteristic of confinement is that the anxiety generated by the pandemic is a factor linked to the increase in consumption of all alcoholic beverages in all countries. More than the fear of the virus itself, people polled express a strong fear for the economic consequences of the health crisis. This economic concern has a specific impact on the increased frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages.

## **Where do we buy the wine?**

Regarding where the wine is bought, there has been a decrease in all channels, except online; there has been a slight decrease in supermarket shoppers—although this continues to be the most frequently used channel—a collapse in wine shop and winery purchases and a moderate reduction of purchases in grocery stores.

However, two supply channels have gained ground during the confinement: online purchasing, which has gone from 12% to 15%, although the amount is relatively small. This weak increase is in line with the result that just under 20% of the sample has purchased wine online during the confinement, and only 7% of Spaniards have purchased wine over the Internet for the first time during the confinement. This means that the crisis has come at a time when this channel is not greatly developed in Spain, and whose future use requires a more intense and continued effort by wineries in order to generate sustainable increases.

The other channel is destocking, which emerges as the main point of supply to increase the frequency of wine consumption at home, as up to 21% of wine consumers has not purchased wine, but has instead turned to their own supply. Personal wineries have therefore become the second supply source behind supermarkets, and the sector foresees an increase in wine acquisition to restock the wine consumed, especially the more expensive wines (aged wines).

## **And how much do we spend?**

The study also reveals that there has been a decrease of the per-unit expense in wine purchases in all price segments, except the lowest price level (less than €5).

The authors of the report state that this result is negative for the wine industry, as the confinement has not only entailed the closure of the catering channel, with a relatively more intense loss in sales of medium and high ranges, but also regarding the average purchasing price of wine for home, which has decreased substantially.

As many as 67% of people polled declare not to spend more money on wine during the confinement, whereas 33% declare the spend more. As the average expense has decreased, it is foreseeable that the total

expense has increased slightly due to the net increase in frequency and the emergence of new buyers.

## **Solitary consumption increases and the phenomenon of digital snacks emerges**

The study also highlights an increase in solitary consumption (from 25% to 32%), as well as a significant increase of wine consumption among single consumers, especially men with modest income and the unemployed, as well as an explosion of the digital snack phenomenon. This key emergence of digital snacking is spectacular among Italian youths, especially students, and the French.

Three quarters of the people believe they will no longer organise online snacks after the confinement, but 25% of people polled who have taken part in this type of snacks wish to continue.

The survey also raises questions on future consumption and wine purchasing trends, and offers some possible responses, as around 70% of people polled believe it is necessary to favour the purchasing of local wine in this period of crisis.

## **Strengths, opportunities and threats**

In these moments of concern, for Raúl Compés, professor at the Department of Economy and Social Sciences, one of the authors of the study, it is important to underline the foothold of the cultural, hedonistic, gastronomic and social components of [wine](#) consumption in Spain, which represents a strength for the future of the sector. As an opportunity, he presents the growth in sales of the online channel, which until the confinement, represented a very low percentage of purchases—8.55%—and which during the confinement has increased

slightly—6.6%. Lastly, he highlights the increased fear of an economic crisis caused by the pandemic as a threat.

Provided by Asociacion RUVID

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