

South Korea Craft Beer Market Report by Product Type (Ales, Lagers, and Others), Age Group (21-35 Years Old, 40-54 Years Old, 55 Years and Above), Distribution Channel (On-Trade, Off-Trade), and Region 2026-2034

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Abstracts

South Korea craft beer market size reached USD 2.9 Billion in 2025. Looking forward, IMARC Group expects the market to reach USD 6.2 Billion by 2034, exhibiting a growth rate (CAGR) of 8.19% during 2026-2034. The rising consumer demand for unique flavors, increasing disposable incomes, a growing number of microbreweries, supportive government regulations, and the influence of global craft beer trends are bolstering the market growth.

SOUTH KOREA CRAFT BEER MARKET ANALYSIS:

Major Market Drivers: Increasing consumer preference for diverse and unique beer flavors drives the market, with craft breweries catering to this demand by offering a variety of innovative and artisanal beers. Besides this, inflating disposable income and the proliferation of small-scale breweries and brewpubs, particularly in urban areas, fostering a vibrant craft beer culture, is promoting the growth of the craft beer market in South Korea.

Key Market Trends: Breweries experimenting with local ingredients and unconventional flavors to cater to adventurous palates represent a key trend influencing market growth. Moreover, changing consumer preference toward healthier living leading to the development of low-calorie and low-alcohol craft beer varieties is driving the market's expansion.

Competitive Landscape: The competitive landscape of the market has been examined in the report, along with the detailed profiles of the major players operating in the industry.

Challenges and Opportunities: The craft beer market faces challenges such as intense competition from established breweries, high production costs, and stringent regulations despite recent relaxations. On the other hand, extending market reach through online sales and distribution, utilizing social media for marketing, and experimenting with new flavors and sustainable brewing techniques to draw in a wider customer base are presenting lucrative opportunities for market expansion.

SOUTH KOREA CRAFT BEER MARKET TRENDS:

Increasing consumer preference for unique and diverse flavors:

Traditionally, the South Korean beer market was dominated by a few large-scale breweries producing similar-tasting lagers. However, as consumers become more adventurous and discerning, there has been a growing demand for variety and innovation in beer flavors. South Korea craft beer market provides a diverse selection of beers with unique flavors, such as India pale ales (IPAs), stouts, sours, and seasonal specialties. Younger people are looking for craft beers that offer fascinating and unique sensory experiences. This shift in consumer behavior is further fueled by the increasing influence of global beer culture, which celebrates experimentation and diversity in brewing.

Rise of microbreweries and brewpubs :

The rise of microbreweries and brewpubs across South Korea resulted in a noticeable increase in the number of small-scale breweries and brewpubs, especially in urban areas like Seoul, Busan, and Jeju Island. South Korea craft beer market data reveals that the number of microbreweries in Korea saw a significant rise, growing from 58 in 2014 to 85 in 2016. Brewpubs often offer a unique experience by combining on-site brewing with a bar or restaurant setting, allowing customers to enjoy fresh beer directly from the source. In addition to this, craft beer made by these businesses is served at social hubs for beer lovers to congregate, sample various brews, and interact with the brewing community, creating a vibrant craft beer culture in South Korea, and fostering community engagement and consumer loyalty thus supporting the market growth.

Supportive government regulations :

Supportive government regulations are positively impacting the South Korea craft beer market outlook. The South Korean government has changed a number of laws in recent years in an effort to encourage the expansion of the nation's craft beer market. For example, tax reforms have reduced the financial burden on small breweries, making it easier for them to enter and compete in the market. Along with this, the Korean government sets high entry barriers for obtaining a regular brewery license, which permits product distribution to off-premise retail stores, such as supermarkets and liquor shops, as well as to alcohol beverage wholesalers. This license mandates a minimum capacity of 250,000 liters for fermentation tanks and 500,000 liters for holding tanks thereby propelling the South Korea craft beer market size.

SOUTH KOREA CRAFT BEER MARKET SEGMENTATION:

IMARC Group provides an analysis of the key trends in each segment of the market, along with forecasts at the country and regional levels for 2026-2034. Our report has categorized the market based on product type, age group, and distribution channel.

Breakup by Product Type:

Ales

Lagers

Others

The report has provided a detailed breakup and analysis of the market based on the product type. This includes ales, lagers, and others.

Ales are a broad category of craft beers that are fermented at warmer temperatures using top-fermenting yeast. This process results in a quicker fermentation period and often produces beers with robust, complex flavors and aromas. The rising demand for different types of ales like pale ales, India Pale Ales (IPAs), stouts, and porters is impelling the market growth. They are known for their fruity and spicy notes, making them popular among craft beer enthusiasts seeking rich and varied taste profiles.

On the other hand, the fermentation process of lagers is slower than that of ales because bottom-fermenting yeast is used during the brewing process at lower temperatures. This method results in a clean, crisp taste with a smooth finish, often characterized by lighter, more subtle flavors. The rising popularity of pilsners, helles, and bocks, known for their refreshing qualities, among those who like softer, more approachable brews is aiding in market expansion.

Breakup by Age Group:

21-35 Years Old

40-54 Years Old

55 Years and Above

A detailed breakup and analysis of the market based on the age group have also been provided in the report. This includes 21-35 years old, 40-54 years old, 55 years and above.

Individuals aged 21-35 are key drivers of the craft beer market, drawn by their desire for unique and diverse flavors, social drinking experiences, and the cultural trend of supporting local and artisanal products. This age group is highly engaged with digital media, often discovering new beers through social media, online reviews, and craft beer apps.

Additionally, the 40-54 age group appreciates craft beer for its quality, craftsmanship, and the nostalgia of traditional brewing methods. They often have higher disposable incomes and seek premium products that offer a sophisticated drinking experience.

Furthermore, consumers aged 55 and above are increasingly exploring craft beer, appreciating its artisanal qualities and the variety it offers compared to mass-produced options. This group often favors moderate alcohol content and balanced flavors that align with their refined taste preferences. They tend to enjoy craft beer in more relaxed settings, such as home gatherings or local brewpubs and are attracted to the heritage and tradition behind many craft breweries.

Breakup by Distribution Channel:

On-Trade

Off-Trade

The report has provided a detailed breakup and analysis of the market based on the distribution channel. This includes on-trade and off-trade.

On-trade refers to the consumption of craft beer within establishments such as bars, restaurants, pubs, and hotels. These venues provide a social and experiential setting where patrons can enjoy a wide variety of craft beers, often served on tap.

Consequently, there is a surging demand for on-trade sales as they benefit from the ambiance, knowledgeable staff, and the opportunity for customers to pair beers with food, enhancing the overall drinking experience and encouraging repeat visits.

Along with this, off-trade encompasses the purchase of craft beer from retail outlets like supermarkets, liquor stores, and online shops, for consumption at home or private events. This sales channel allows consumers to explore and enjoy craft beer in a more personal and convenient setting.

Breakup by Region:

Seoul Capital Area

Yeongnam (Southeastern Region)

Honam (Southwestern Region)

Hoseo (Central Region)

Others

The report has also provided a comprehensive analysis of all the major markets in the country, which include Seoul Capital Area, Yeongnam (Southeastern Region), Honam (Southwestern Region), Hoseo (Central Region), and Others.

The Seoul Capital Area, encompassing Seoul and its surrounding cities, is the economic and cultural hub of South Korea. It boasts a vibrant craft beer scene with

numerous microbreweries, brewpubs, and craft beer festivals. The region's diverse and cosmopolitan population drives high demand for innovative and premium craft beer offerings.

Concurrent with this, Yeongnam, an industrial and commercial powerhouse has a growing craft beer market, supported by a burgeoning tourism sector and a rising number of local breweries. Coastal cities like Busan also attract visitors with their unique craft beer bars and seaside brewpubs.

Furthermore, Honam is known for its rich cultural heritage and culinary traditions. The craft beer market is expanding, with a focus on locally sourced ingredients and traditional brewing methods. The region's vibrant food scene pairs well with the diverse range of craft beers available.

Besides this, Hoseo's educated consumer base interested in artisanal products and innovative brewing techniques is providing an impetus to the market growth. Local breweries in this region, often collaborate with universities and research institutes to develop unique beer varieties.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE:

The market research report has also provided a comprehensive analysis of the competitive landscape in the market. Detailed profiles of all major companies have been provided.

The competitive landscape is characterized by a dynamic mix of small local breweries, innovative brewpubs, and established domestic beer companies entering the craft segment. Local breweries have become prominent players, known for their unique and high-quality brews that cater to the evolving tastes of South Korean consumers. These craft brewers focus on artisanal brewing techniques and often use locally sourced ingredients to differentiate themselves. Additionally, the market has seen the entry of larger domestic breweries, which are launching their own craft-style beers to capitalize on the growing trend. Collaboration and partnerships among breweries, both local and international, are also becoming common, fostering innovation and expanding the variety of craft beers available. This competitive and collaborative environment is driving rapid growth and diversification in the industry.

KEY QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN THIS REPORT

How has the South Korea craft beer market performed so far, and how will it perform in the coming years?

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on the South Korea craft beer market?

What is the breakup of the South Korea craft beer market on the basis of product type?

What is the breakup of the South Korea craft beer market on the basis of age group?

What is the breakup of the South Korea craft beer market on the basis of distribution channel?

What are the various stages in the value chain of the South Korea craft beer market?

What are the key driving factors and challenges in the South Korea craft beer market?

What is the structure of the South Korea craft beer market, and who are the key players?

What is the degree of competition in the South Korea craft beer market?

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