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Water Consumption Statistics

Water, an essential resource for life, plays a pivotal role in various sectors ranging from agriculture and industry to domestic use and ecological balance. The study of water consumption is paramount in understanding how societies interact with this finite resource and the implications of their consumption patterns.

This research explores the multifaceted aspects of water consumption, offering a comprehensive examination of its drivers, trends, and consequences within the broader context of sustainability and resource management. Through rigorous research and analysis, we seek to shed light on the critical challenges and opportunities associated with water consumption, ultimately contributing to informing a large audience.

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Key Takeaway

- Our global freshwater consumption reaches a staggering **4.3 trillion** cubic meters each year.
- As of the beginning of **2023**, humanity has already consumed over **2.9 trillion** cubic meters of this precious resource.
- An astounding **1,111,836,984,179 tons** of 'virtual' water have been traded globally.
- India, China, and the United States emerge as the largest consumers, with water consumption rates of a staggering **761 billion**, **581.29 billion**, and **444.29 billion** cubic meters, respectively.
- The agricultural sector is the primary user, drawing upon **72%** of all groundwater resources.
- Projections indicate that urban water demand will surge dramatically, with an estimated **80%** increase expected by **2050**.
- Water dominates the global consumption of packed beverages, accounting for almost **34%**.

Topics Covered



Water Access

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Water
Consumption
Trends



Groundwater
Consumption



Industrial and
Agricultural
Water Use



Urban Water
Consumption



U.S. Water
Statistics



Bottled Water
Consumption



Water
Awareness

Water Access

From 2000 to 2022, a remarkable milestone was achieved as 2.1 billion individuals gained access to secure and well-managed drinking water sources.

This significant progress resulted in a notable reduction in people lacking essential drinking water services, which decreased from 1.2 billion to 703 million.

Access to secure and well-managed
drinking water:

2.1 billion

individuals

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Water Consumption Trends

Our global freshwater consumption reaches a staggering

4.3 trillion cubic meters

each year.

As of the beginning of 2023, humanity has already consumed over

2.9 trillion cubic meters

of this precious resource.

Current global water consumption statistics

As of the current year, 2023, global water consumption statistics reveal a significant snapshot of our interaction with this vital resource:

The **global water** for human consumption is a staggering **6,217,438,741,710 tons**. This figure encompasses both direct and indirect water consumption, emphasizing the extensive impact of human activities on the world's water resources.

Approximately **2.9 tons of freshwater**

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worldwide since 2023.

An astounding **1,111,836,984,179 tons** of **'virtual' water** have been traded globally.

Virtual water is the indirect water footprint of producing and exchanging goods and services. It refers to the hidden water used in

This figure reflects the direct consumption of freshwater for various purposes, including agriculture, industry, and domestic use.

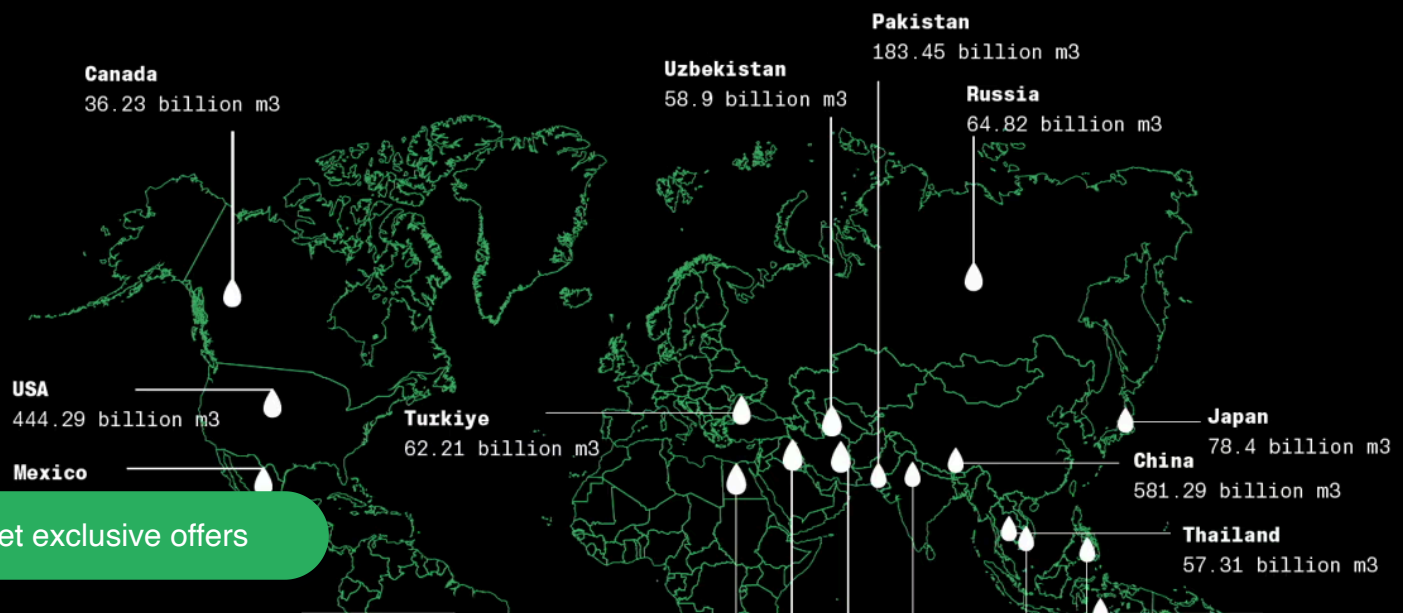
the supply chains of products transported and consumed across borders.

Water consumption by country

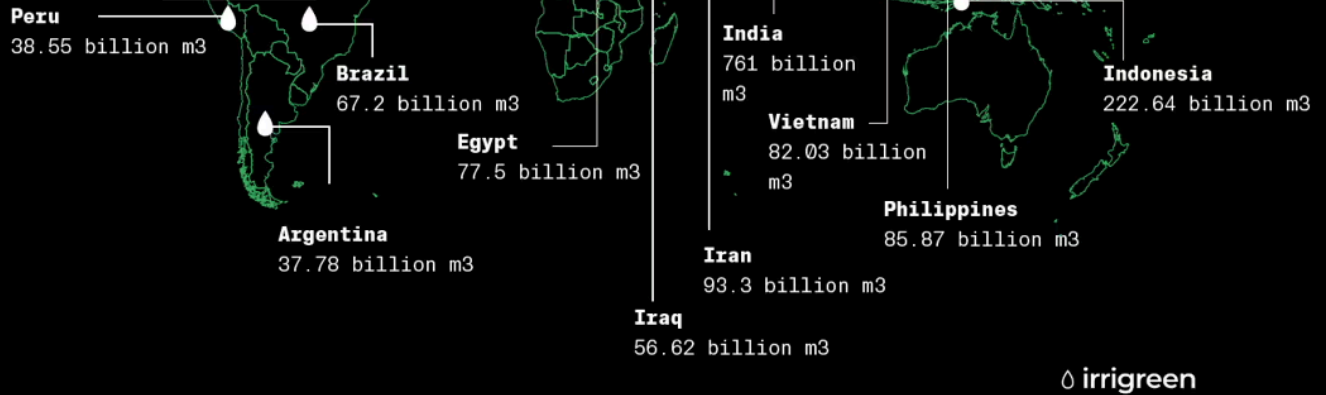
The global distribution of freshwater consumption presents a stark contrast, reflecting both geographical disparities and the impact of population size on water usage. Based on the latest available data, Canada, Argentina, and Peru are the countries with the lowest freshwater consumption among the top twenty.

Each nation uses around 36 to 39 billion cubic meters annually. In contrast, India, China, and the United States emerge as the largest consumers, with water consumption rates of a staggering 761 billion, 581.29 billion, and 444.29 billion cubic meters, respectively.

Water consumption by country



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Groundwater Consumption Statistics

Groundwater constitutes **99%** of Earth's available liquid freshwater and is the source of approximately one-quarter of humanity's water consumption.

Notably, the agricultural sector is the primary user, drawing upon **72%** of all groundwater resources.

Domestic usage follows closely, accounting for **22%** of these abstractions, while industrial purposes claim **9%**. Impressively, almost half of the world's urban population now relies on groundwater sources for their water supply.

Groundwater Consumption Statistics

Agricultural



Domestic



Industrial



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Industrial and Agricultural Water Use

Various industries rely on groundwater, including manufacturing, mining, oil and gas, energy generation, engineering, and construction. This substantial water usage often results from the need for extensive cleaning processes at the end of production. Consequently, these industries' collective groundwater withdrawals can intensify competition among themselves and sectors like agriculture, human settlements, and ecosystems.

Industrial water consumption statistics

Industry and energy sectors account for approximately 19% of global freshwater withdrawals.

Furthermore, a significant portion of the world's freshwater utilization and pollution, around 70%, can be attributed to seven major sectors: food, textile, energy, industry, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and mining.

Interestingly, there are notable disparities in industrial water withdrawal between high-income and low-income countries.

In high-income nations, industrial water withdrawal constitutes 17% of total water consumption, whereas in low-income countries, it accounts for a mere 2%.

Industrial Water Consumption



49%

The European Union



4%

Middle East and
North Africa



47%

South Asia

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The European Union stands out as a region heavily reliant on industrial water consumption, with a staggering 49% of its total water usage directed towards industrial production.

In contrast, the Middle East and North Africa region display a significantly lower industrial water demand, with only 4% of its water consumption allocated for industrial purposes.

On the other hand, South Asia emerges as a significant player in industrial water usage, with a substantial 47% of its total water consumption directed towards industrial production.

Agriculture's role in water consumption

Groundwater plays a pivotal role in global agricultural production, with approximately 72% of all groundwater withdrawals dedicated to sustaining the growth of food crops, fibers, livestock, and industrial crops.

Notably, an estimated 38% of the lands equipped for irrigation rely on this precious resource to fuel their agricultural endeavors.

Groundwater utilization for irrigation



72%

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North America



57%

South Asia



35%

Northern Africa



5%

Sub-Saharan Africa

When examining regional disparities in groundwater utilization for irrigation, North America stands out, with 59% of its irrigated areas drawing from groundwater sources. South Asia follows closely behind, with 57% of its irrigated lands relying on groundwater for sustenance.

In contrast, Northern Africa exhibits a lower dependence on groundwater for irrigation, with only 35% of its equipped areas tapping into this resource. The most striking contrast emerges in Sub-Saharan Africa, where just a meager 5% of the area equipped for irrigation utilizes groundwater.

Urban Water Consumption

One-third of the world's cities, relying on surface water sources, are entangled in the ongoing struggle for freshwater resources.

This competition for vital water resources is poised to intensify in the coming decades, primarily driven by rapid urbanization.

Projections indicate that urban water demand will surge dramatically, with an estimated 80% increase expected by 2050.

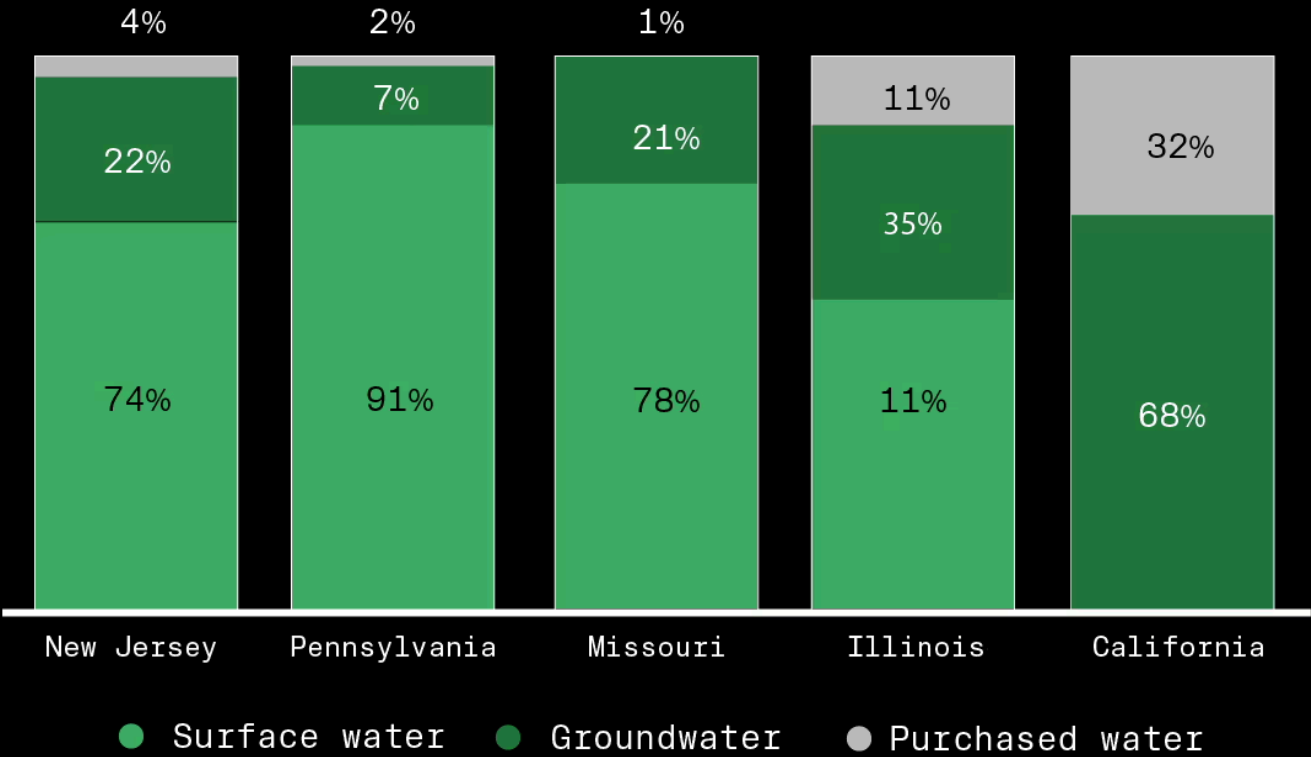


The distribution of water sources by state indicates that surface water is the predominant source in most states. Pennsylvania has the highest reliance on surface water at 91%, followed by Missouri at 78%.

On the other hand, groundwater is a more stable and reliable source of water supply, with states like California and Illinois relying to a greater extent on groundwater, at 68% and 35%, respectively.

Furthermore, the distribution of purchased water is relatively small across all states, ranging from 1% in Missouri to 11% in Illinois, with exceptions like California, which has the highest reliance on purchased water at 32%.

Distribution of the water supply of American Water



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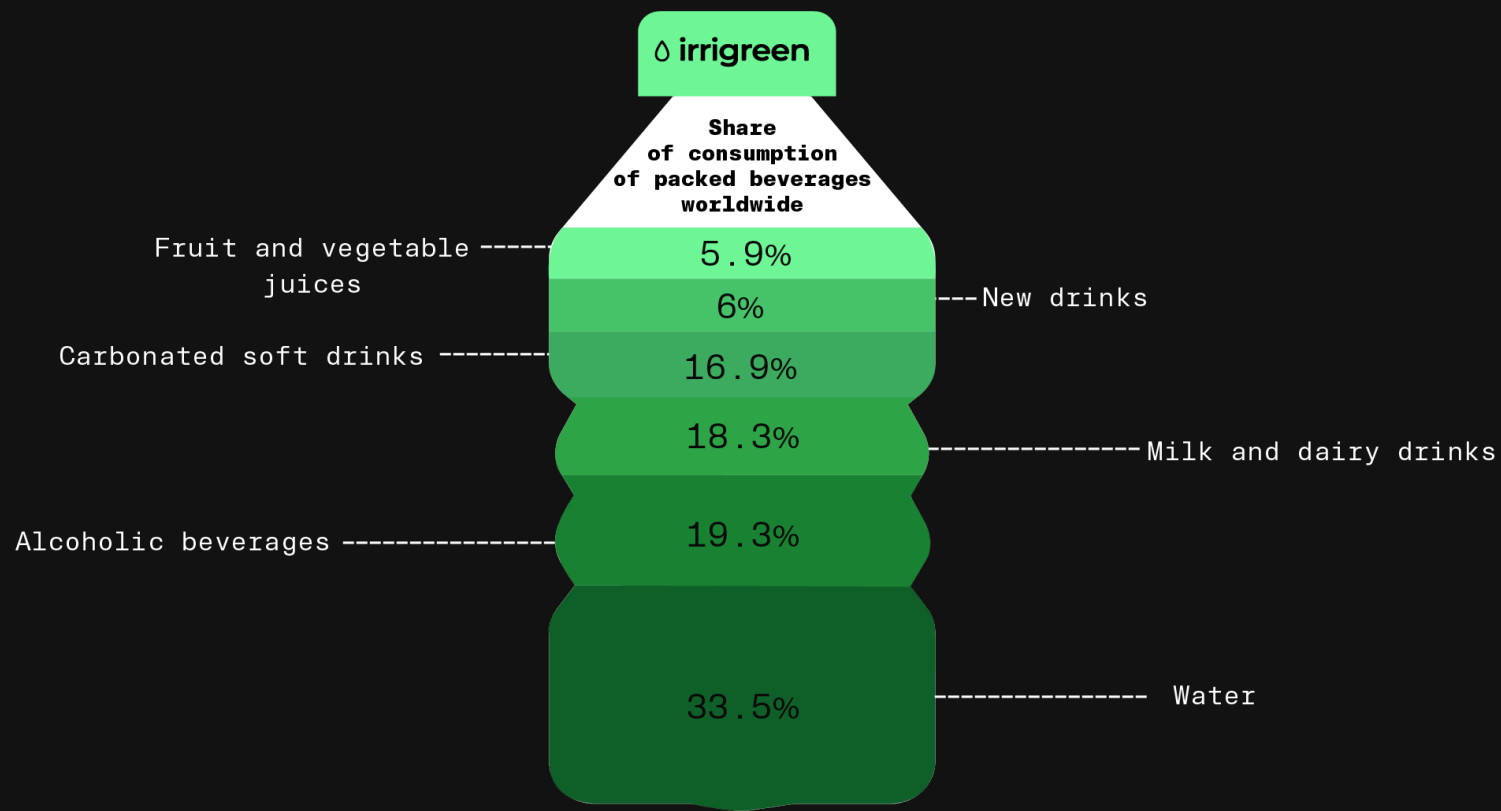
Bottled Water Consumption

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In 2023, the Bottled Water segment boasts an impressive revenue of US\$342.40 billion, with projected annual growth at a robust rate of 5.24% (CAGR 2023-2027).

Notably, the United States leads the global market, generating a substantial US\$94.07 billion in revenue for the same year.

Water dominates the global consumption of packed beverages, accounting for almost 34% worldwide, reflecting its fundamental role in human hydration and health.



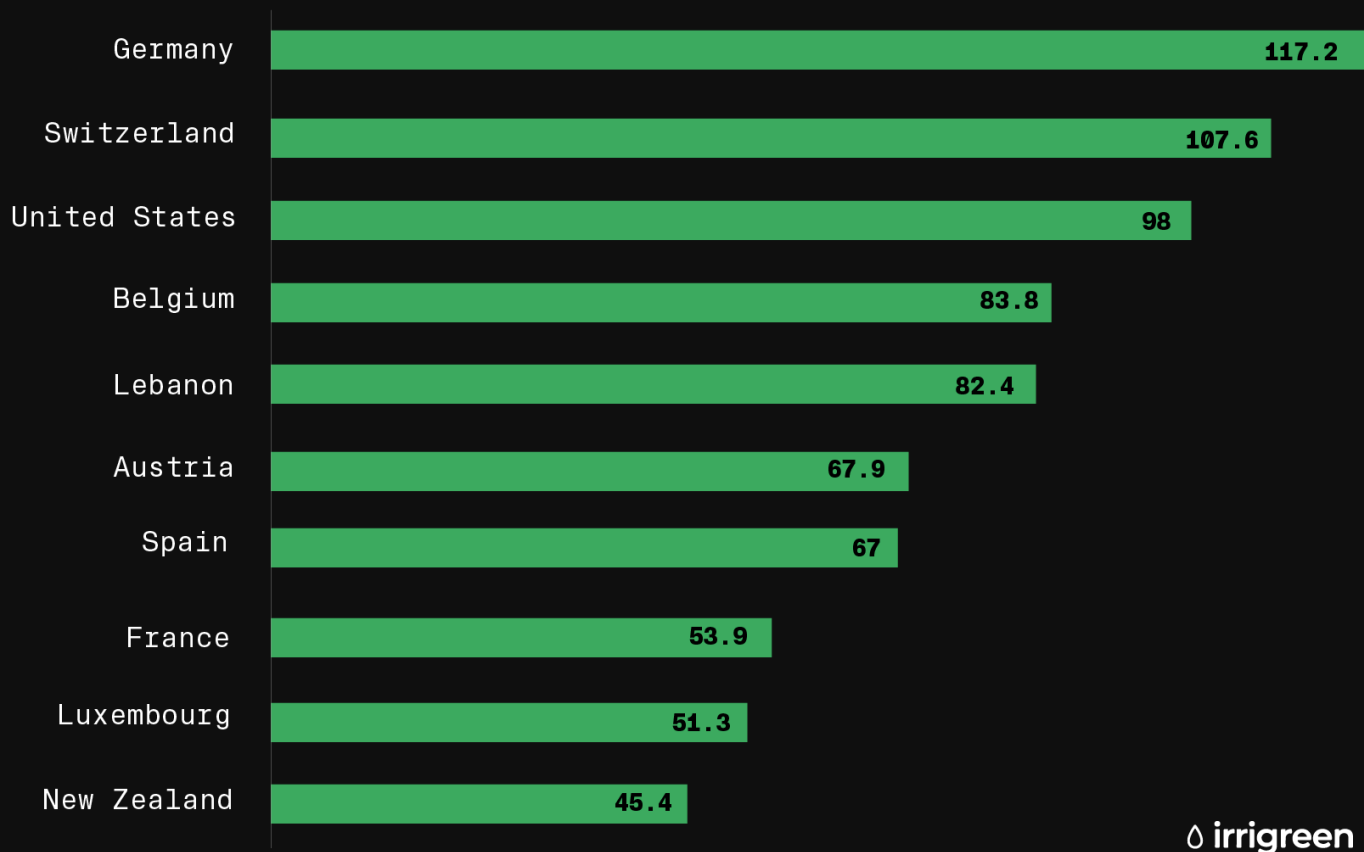
However, other beverage categories, such as alcoholic beverages, milk and dairy drinks, carbonated soft drinks, and innovative new drinks, continue to have significant shares, demonstrating the diversity of consumer preferences and the ongoing evolution of the beverage industry.

Bottled water consumption by country

According to the latest data, Germans and the Swiss spend the most on bottled water, followed by the U.S., Belgium, Lebanon, Austria, and other countries as follows:

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Revenue per capita ranking in US dollar in 2021

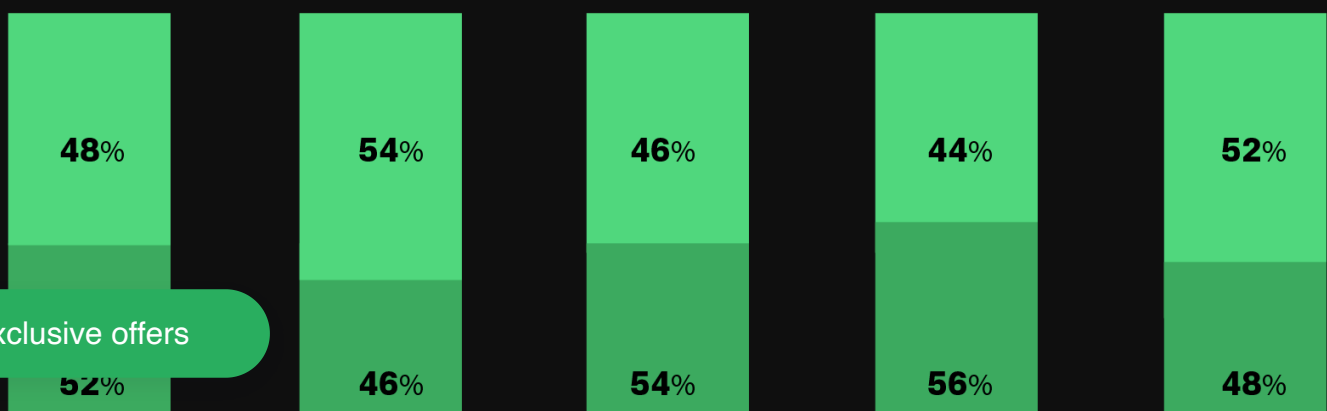


Bottled water consumption by gender and age

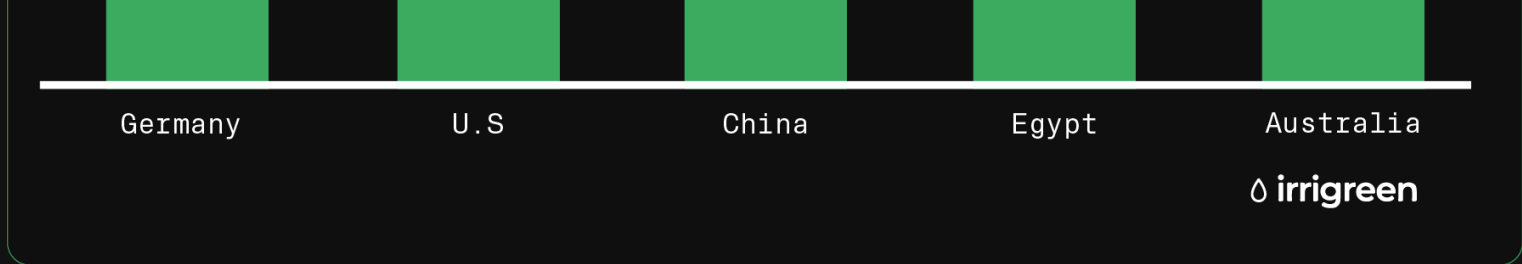
Regarding gender distribution among bottled water consumers, the United States led with 54% of female consumers, followed closely by Australia at 52%, Germany at 48%, China at 46%, and Egypt at 44%.

Bottled water consumption by gender

Female Male

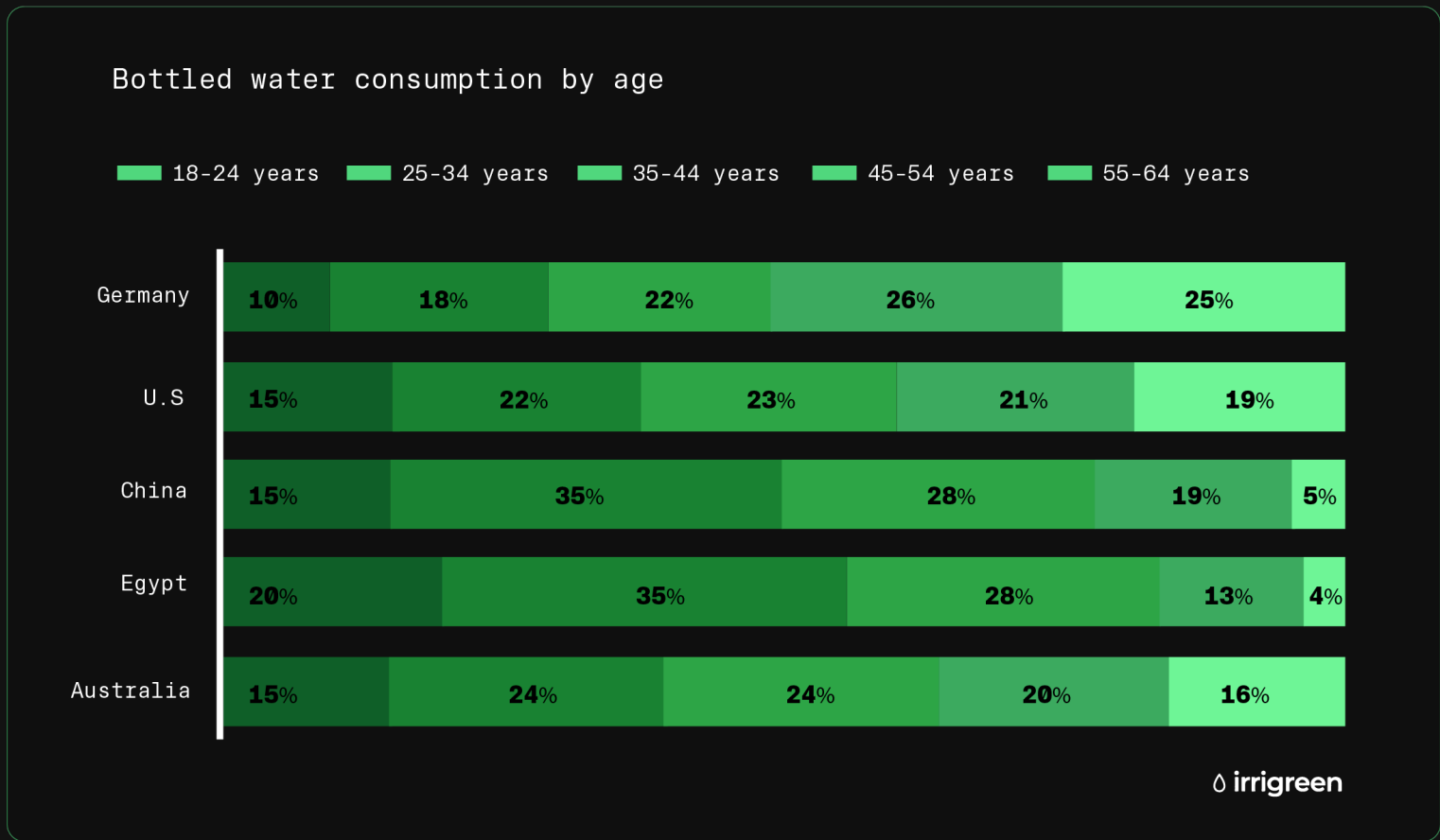


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In the United States, the predominant age group of bottled water consumers falls within the 35–44 years bracket, representing 23% of the total. Following closely behind are individuals aged 25–34, accounting for 22% of the consumer base.

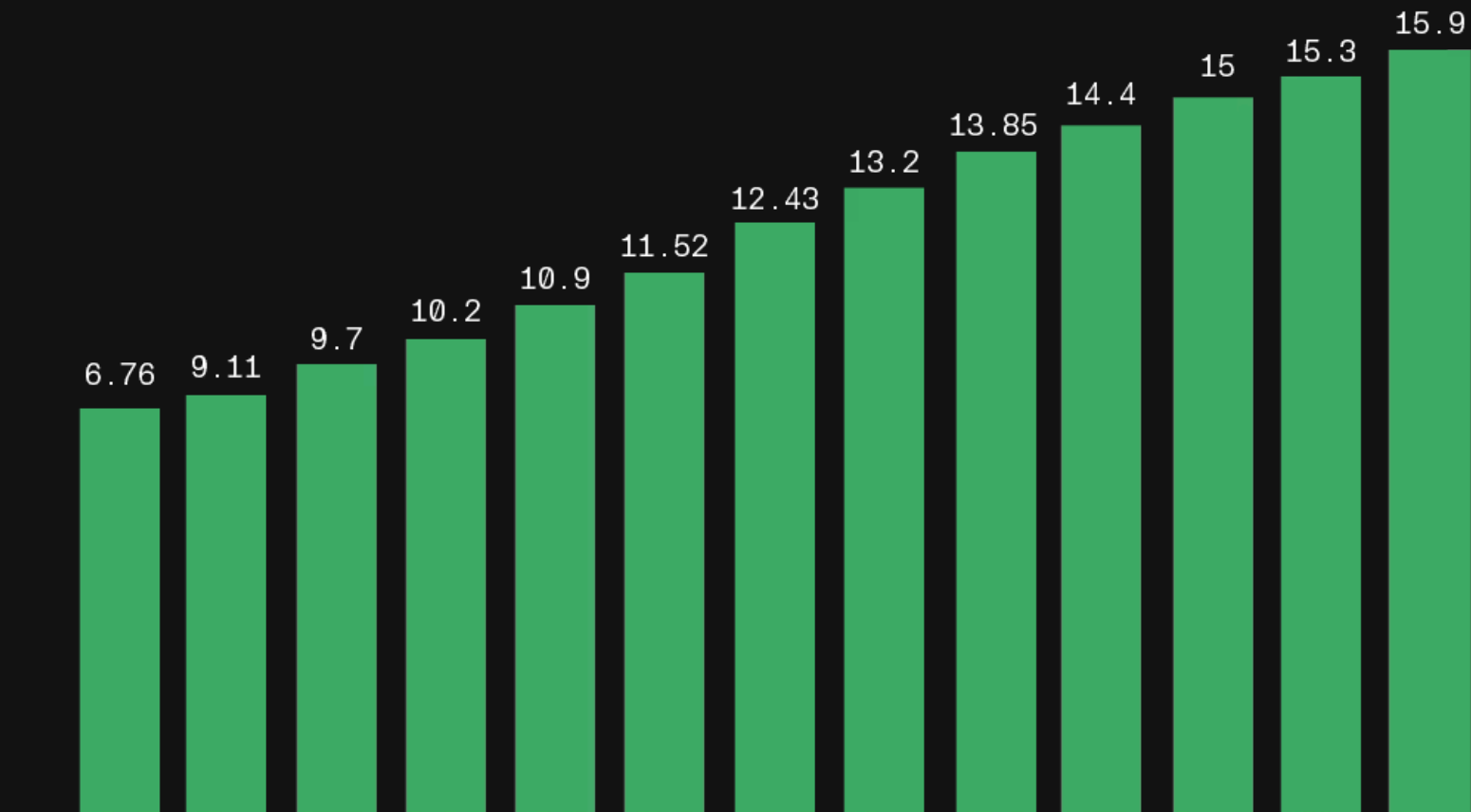
Conversely, the age group with the lowest consumption of bottled water in the U.S. comprises individuals aged 18–24 years, constituting only 15% of the market.



Sales volume of bottled water in the United States

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In 2022, the United States witnessed a significant surge in bottled water sales, reaching a staggering 15.9 billion gallons. This impressive growth marked a decade-long trend of continuous and substantial increases in the volume of bottled water sold year after year.

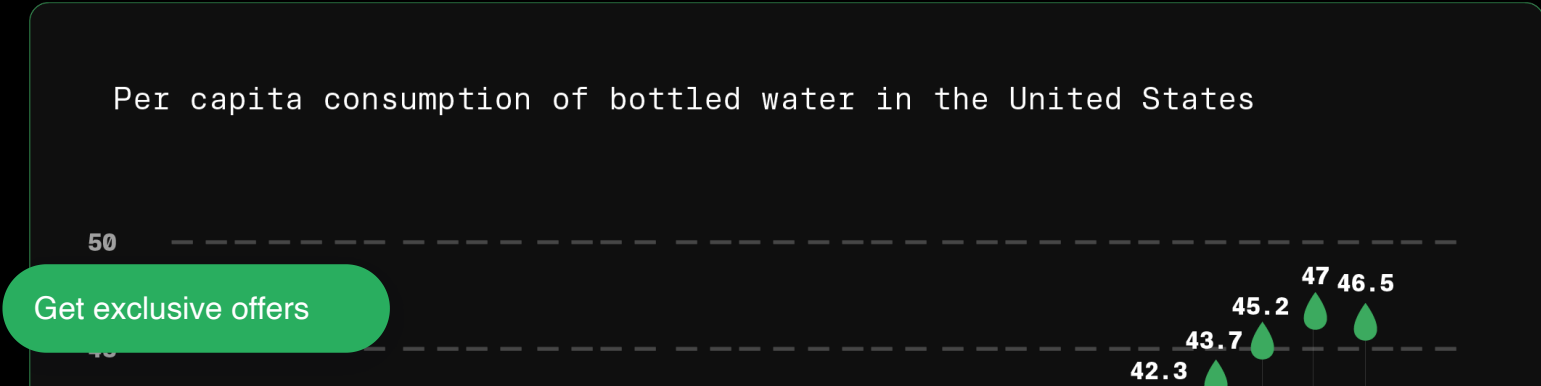


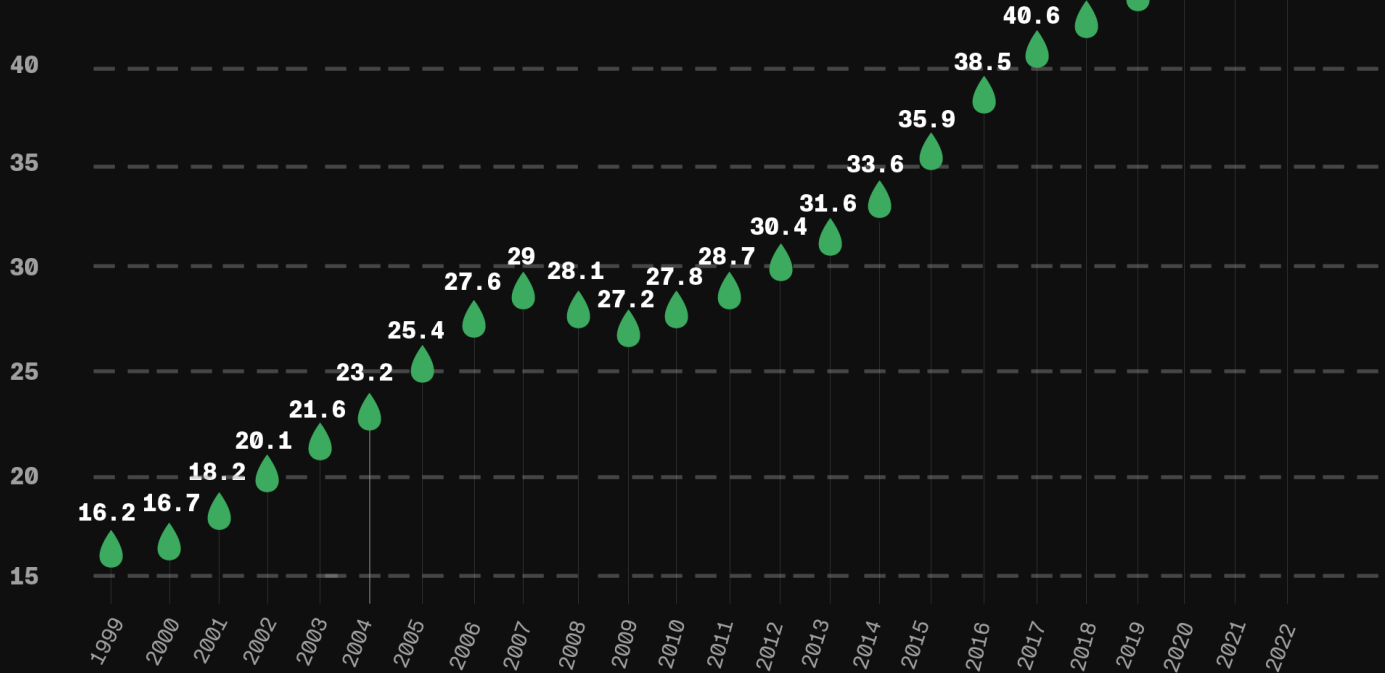
Per capita consumption trends

Water has firmly secured its position as the most consumed beverage, with a notable surge in the sales volume of bottled water in recent years. This surge has also affected per capita consumption trends within the United States.

Over the past decade, the annual consumption of bottled water has experienced a remarkable growth of nearly 40%, culminating in an impressive 47 gallons per person in 2021.

Per capita consumption of bottled water in the United States





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Water Awareness

A significant majority, 91%, know that individual water usage and the substances disposed of through toilets or sinks can impact the environment.

Among these individuals, 53% believe these behaviors have a substantial or moderate impact, while 38% perceive a minor impact. Additionally, 11% either believe there would be no effect or express uncertainty.

Aside from common knowledge, people gather information about these behaviors from various sources. The sources vary for each behavior:

Water Use

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Flushing Behaviors

Social media emerges as the primary channel

Rinsing Down the Sink

A significant portion (30%) relies on information from **water companies**.

This information comes through water-saving campaigns, the installation of water meters, or other resources offered by water companies.

for information on flushing behaviors, with 25% of respondents citing it as their source.

Water companies play a smaller role in this aspect, with only 16%.

Regarding information about rinsing behaviors, television and **social media** are the most mentioned channels, with 19% and 17%, respectively.

Water companies account for 8% of respondents' sources of information in this category.

Water use

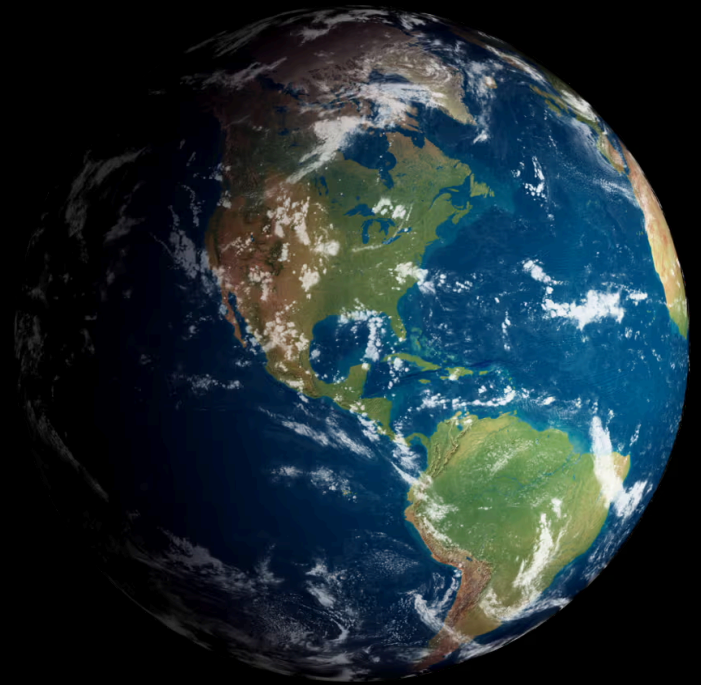
The majority, accounting for 62%, indicated that they have not taken any measures in the past six months to reduce their water consumption, while 30% reported that they have actively tried to do so.

Attitudes toward water conservation and environmental concerns display a nuanced picture. A significant portion of respondents, 85%, understand how their efforts to decrease water usage can positively impact the environment.

However, approximately a quarter, comprising 23%, would consider conserving water primarily if it resulted in financial savings.

Additionally, nearly one-fifth of respondents,

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18%, believe that abundant rainfall makes water conservation unnecessary.

Sources

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[Statista](#)

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[Krones](#)

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