

NIQ Perspective



Buzz Worthy: The High Rise of THC Beverages

Here’s what industry experts are saying:

THC beverages are emerging as a new adjacency to BevAl. Suppliers and retailers need to understand where these products fit within consumer repertoires and occasions. The drinks segment has proliferated despite lack of national distributor adoption and legislative uncertainty. The players that win will be the ones that recognize THC beverages as an incremental beverage category with a distinct role and clear source of consumer demand.



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Top Takeaways

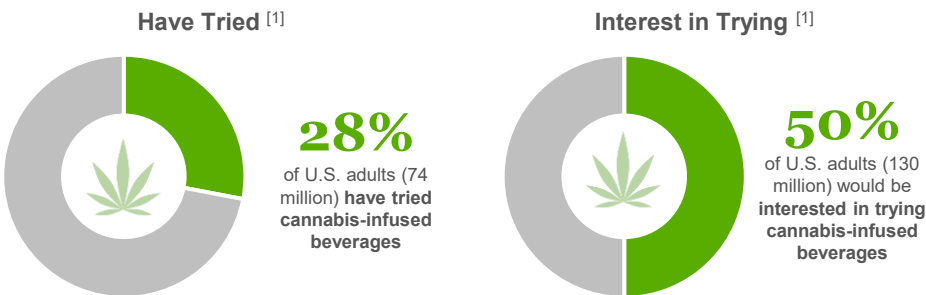
- **THC beverages are moving from buzz to measurable business**, with \$239M in latest 52-week sales and 135% dollar growth versus year ago
- **Consumer interest extends beyond current users:** 28% have tried cannabis-infused beverages, while 50% say they are interested in trying them
- **Growth is concentrated in familiar, easy-to-shop formats**, especially 5 mg and 10 mg products and standard beverage-style pack sizes
- **Liquor and Convenience** are leading retail adoption and driving growth
- **THC beverages are serving different roles by venue**, with off-premise growth building through household purchase and on-premise use tied more closely to occasion and social consumption

From Buzz to Business

Cannabis-Infused Beverage Curiosity

MRI | SIMMONS

More than 1 in 4 U.S. adults have tried cannabis-infused beverages, representing 74 million consumers. Trial skews male, younger, Hispanic, and single. But the bigger opportunity is future demand: 50% of U.S. adults, or 130 million people, say they would be interested in trying these beverages. This broader group looks much closer to the average American, signaling strong mainstream potential and room for category growth.



What does NIQ measure?

THC Beverages Defined

“THC beverages” in this infographic are defined by NIQ as ready-to-drink beverages containing THC, including hemp-derived THC products, sold in mainstream retail channels where alcohol is traditionally sold. Using the Product Insider THC qualified characteristic, NIQ classifies these products within a broader beverages set that includes carbonated soft drinks, seltzer water, mocktails, hop water, functional RTDs, and non-alcoholic spirits.

1,170+ UPCs tracked across 200+ brands

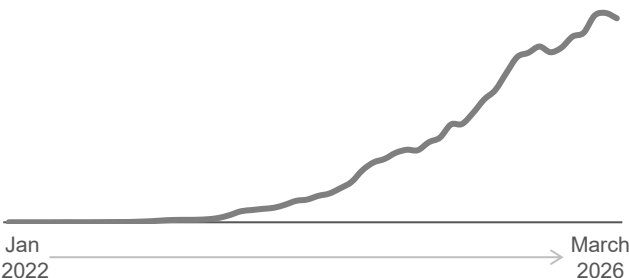
Channel Scope

Coverage includes NIQ-measured mainstream retail only: Total US xAOC + Convenience + Select Liquor Open State Retailers. Excluded channels include DtC, e-commerce, dispensaries, and other non-tracked outlets.

The Buzz Is Building in the Off Premise

The buzz around THC beverages is translating into measurable momentum. The category reached \$239M in the latest 52-weeks, up 135% versus a year ago. That steady climb signals rising consumer interest and accelerating category momentum..

4-Weekly Trended THC Beverages \$ Sales [2]



\$239M

dollar sales in the latest 52 weeks [3]

+135%

dollar sales chg vs year ago [3]

Source: [1] MRI-Simmons 2026 National Cannabis Study (F25 USA); [2] NIQ, Retail Measurement Service; Total US xAOC+Conv+Select Liquor Open State Retailers; Infused Beverages; 4-weekly trend ending 03/21/26; [3] NIQ, Retail Measurement Service; Total US xAOC+Conv+Select Liquor Open State Retailers; Infused Beverages; L52 weeks ending 04/04/2026



Here’s what you should do if you are a THC brand

If you are a brand, make THC beverages simple to understand and easy to trial. Focus on clear potency communication, familiar formats, and messaging that helps both cannabis-curious and mainstream shoppers know what to expect.

Here’s what you should do if you are a retailer

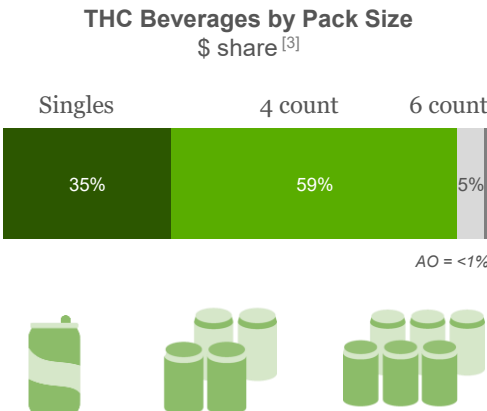
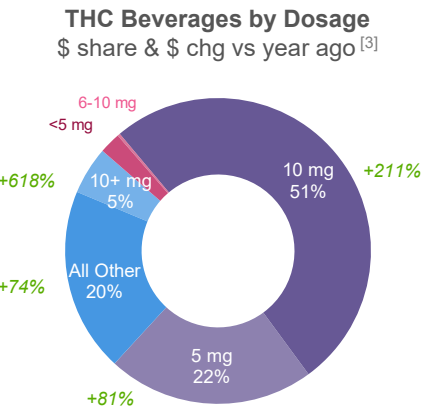
If you are a retailer, treat THC beverages as an emerging beverage set that needs clear placement and easy shopability. Help shoppers navigate the category by organizing products clearly and merchandising them in a way that feels familiar and low-friction.

Your Next Move as a BevAl Supplier

- Better understand the consumer, including who is trying THC beverages, who is curious, and which needs or occasions are driving interest
- Evaluate which occasions, products, and purchase moments in your portfolio may be most exposed to substitution or overlap
- Identify where your brand or assortment has the strongest right to play, then test the clearest opportunities for innovation, placement, and messaging.

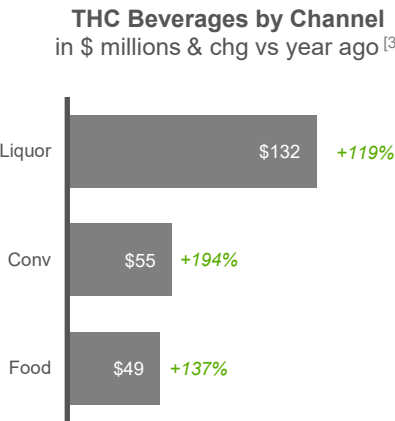
The Potency and the Pack

THC beverage growth is concentrating in formats that are easy for shoppers to understand.. On potency, the category is anchored in familiar low-to-mid dose options. On packaging, it increasingly mirrors Beverage Alcohol. The winning formats are clear, repeatable, and session-friendly, using an RTD-style playbook built around familiar sizes and easier trial.



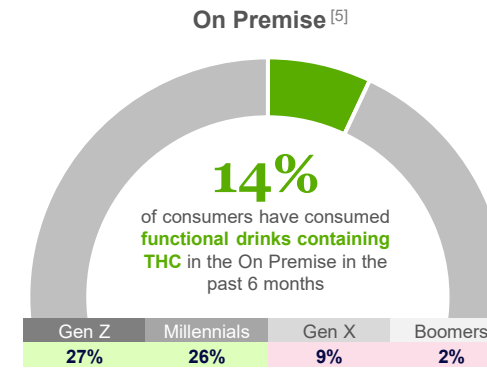
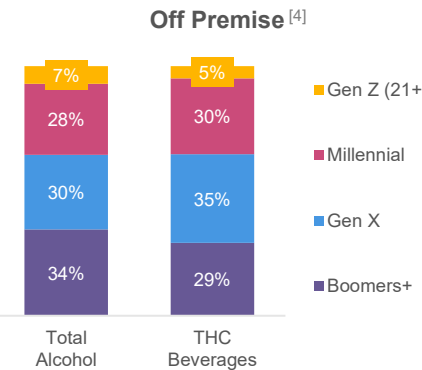
Where Shoppers Are Buying In

THC beverages are scaling in Alcohol-adjacent retail, but shopper behavior remains intentional. Channel data shows the category is building fastest in Liquor and Convenience, where legal, while Food/Grocery is also contributing to growth.



Buzz or Booze? Increasingly, both.

THC beverages are moving from curiosity to routine consideration, but their role varies by venue. In the Off Premise, the category is relatively small but gaining traction with Millennials, Gen X, and higher-income households. In the On Premise, usage is more occasion led, especially among younger adults who are turning to THC drinks to relax and are comfortable consuming them alongside alcohol during the same visit.



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National Cannabis Study

Designed as a roadmap for brands and marketers, the study delivers a clear view of the U.S. cannabis marketplace, including consumer segments, medicinal and recreational usage, attitudes, barriers, purchase behaviors, and media opportunities. [Check it out here!](#)

NIQ Solutions

Contact your NIQ representative to learn about solutions for the THC space, including On Premise insights, retail measurement, dispensary and THC profile data, custom consumer research, and innovation support.