

Economic hard times make Swedes cut back on drinking

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Booze consumption fell by 2.7 percent in Sweden last year.

A slumping economy gave Swedes less to cheer about last year as alcohol consumption fell the most in nearly a decade in the Nordic country, excluding the 2020 pandemic, research showed Friday.

Alcohol consumption among people above the age of 15 fell to 8.6 liters per capita in 2023, according to the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN)

It was down 2.7 percent from 2022, the biggest annual drop since 2014 when excluding 2020.

"This shows that the [economic situation](#) in 2023 has also influenced the buying of alcohol," Bjorn Trolldal, a researcher at CAN, said in a statement.

"The depreciation of the Swedish krona and the increase in fuel prices has affected imports," the researcher told AFP.

As a result, Swedes bought less alcohol from Germany, which accounts for 50 percent of total imports, he added.

The country's economy shrank by 0.3 percent in 2023, one of the weakest performers in the European Union, as the [central bank](#) raised rates to battle soaring inflation.

Sweden has an alcohol distribution monopoly, meaning that apart from bars and restaurants Swedes can only buy beverages with an alcohol-level above 3.5 percent at state-run outlets called Systembolaget, and authorized retailers in rural areas.

Systembolaget accounted for around 71 percent of total consumption in 2023, up from 64.8 percent in 2019, according to the study.

Alcohol consumption is steadily declining in Sweden, having dropped by around 10 percent since 2014.

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