

## Buck-a-beer may be a good bet, but Canadian politicians best not forget wine in pursuit of thirsty voters

*Across the political spectrum, beer, wine and liquor preference distributed nearly equally*

**August 10, 2018** – When it comes to politicians and their quest for high ground with voters, there are arguably few strategies more heady or intoxicating than promoting easier access to alcohol.

But do tactics such as promising [buck-a-beer](#) – as Ontario Premier Doug Ford has done - or [promoting craft breweries](#) – as Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has been known to do - really tip tippy voters to the Ontario Conservatives or Alberta NDP respectively? Or, does it leave politicians in a glass-half-empty place?

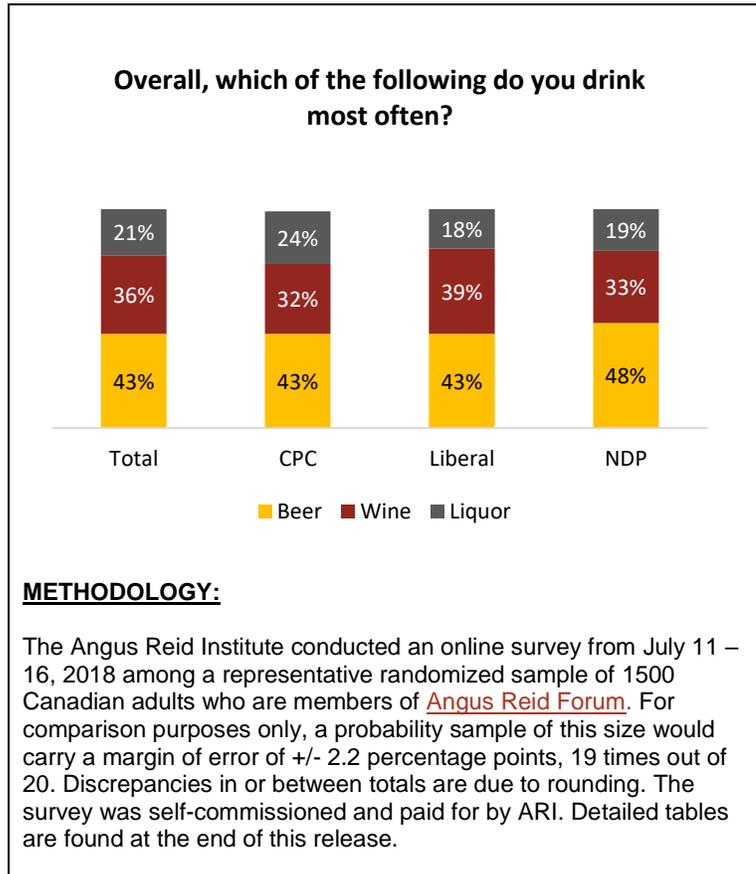
This was the frothy topic of research the Angus Reid Institute undertook in its most recent wave of public opinion polling, finding that while seemingly crowd-pleasing liquor policies may be quaffable for all – they may actually do relatively little to brew targeted support among specific segments of the voting population.

Ask imbibers who are past New Democrat, Liberal and Conservative voters which alcohol they drink most often – and more than four-in-ten in each group say they'll crack a beer, while close to the same number across each voting segment will instead pop a cork. However, each cohort does have its own unique palate.

### More Key Findings:

- Conservatives are more likely to prefer liquor, Liberals more likely to prefer wine, and New Democrats more likely to prefer beer
- New Democrats are almost twice as likely as Conservatives to enjoy craft beer, while preference for domestic beer is nearly identical across each party

There is no shortage of issues that divide Canadians in 2018. From trade, to the environment, to asylum seekers, one of the best indicators of disagreement is the political affiliation crosstab in Angus Reid Institute data tables. Alcohol however, is a rare source of unity – sort of.

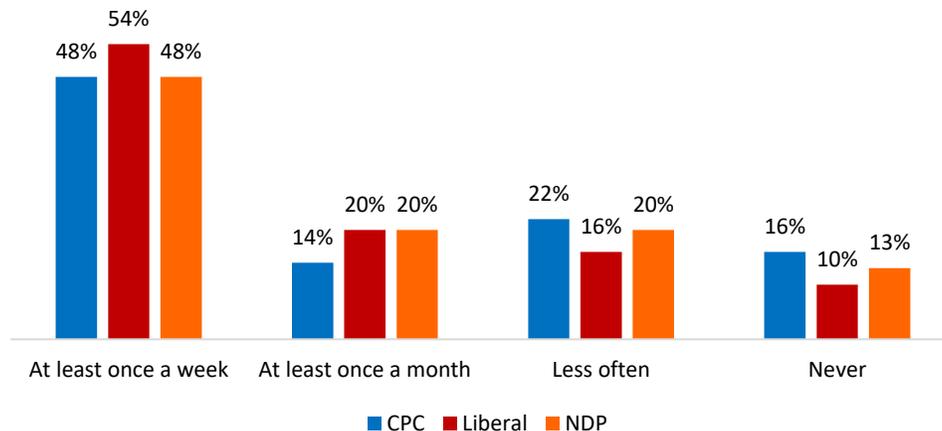


### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

To begin, Canadian drinking habits by political preference are close to identical. Yes, past Conservative voters are slightly less likely to drink regularly, but the numbers are close to indistinguishable. There's a reason North American politicians have been enticing voters with booze since [the days of George Washington](#).

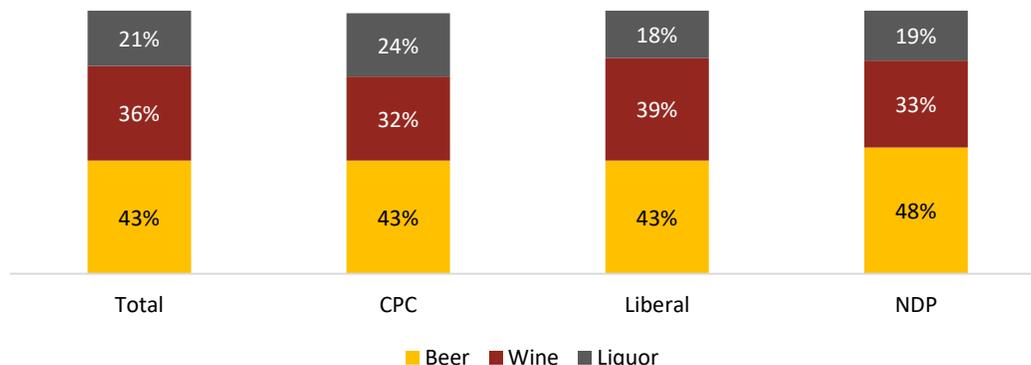
### How often do Canadians drink? By 2015 Vote



While they're united on consumption habits, the issue of preference brings about a fascinating distribution. Canadians are divided on which alcohol they consume most often, but this division is close to identical across each party. Evidently, a person would be hard pressed to decide a Canadian's political preference based simply on their predilection for a pint or a pinot.

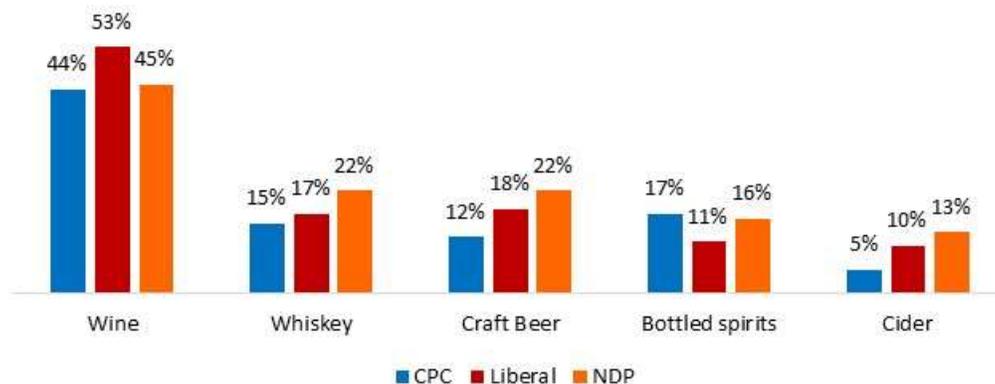
Among the 85 per cent of Canadians who say they drink at least occasionally, four-in-ten (43%) say that if they had to choose one type of alcoholic beverage, they would opt for beer. The number of past Conservative supporters (43%) and Liberals (43%) who say this is identical, while a handful more past New Democrat voters (48%) say the same.

### Alcohol preference by 2015 vote



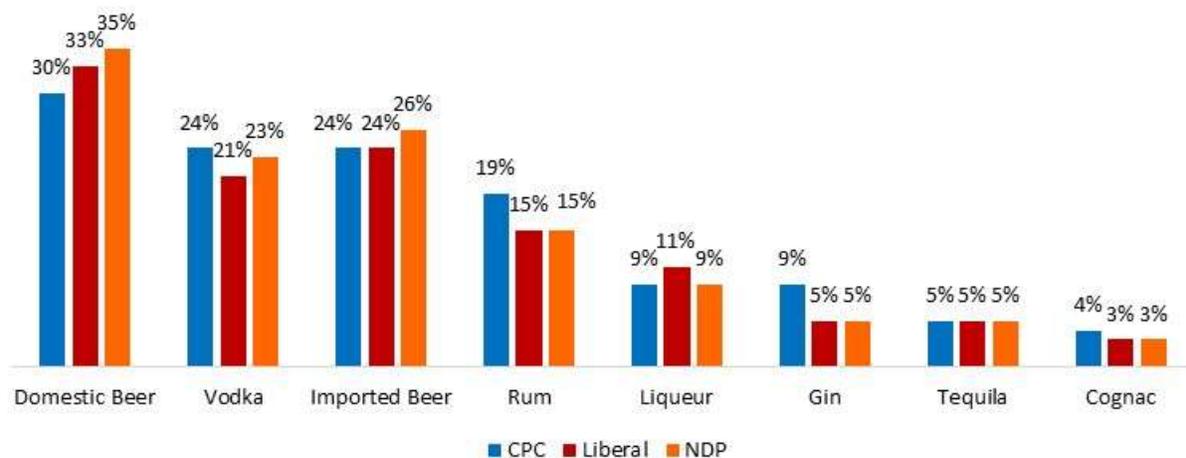
While Canadian favourites are relatively similar overall, there are some notable distinctions by political preference. Liberals are more likely to prefer wine than the average Canadian, while NDP supporters are most likely to enjoy whiskey, cider and craft beer. Perhaps there is a method to the recent trend of NDP politicians appearing at craft breweries. Both [John Horgan](#) and [Rachel Notley](#) have expressed their support for the burgeoning industry. These findings also suggests that Liberal strategists may be slightly better served with “quarters-for-cabernet” than buck-a-beer:

**Most divergent alcohol preferences by political party**  
Respondents allowed up to 3 choices from list



There are also a number of alcohol types that generate significant commonality among voters of the major parties - below are the options that produce less than a five per cent difference across each of the three. Notably, 5 per cent from each group say tequila is among their favourites, the only alcoholic drink for which there is an exact tie among partisans:

**Most similar alcohol preferences by political party**  
Respondents allowed up to 3 choices from list

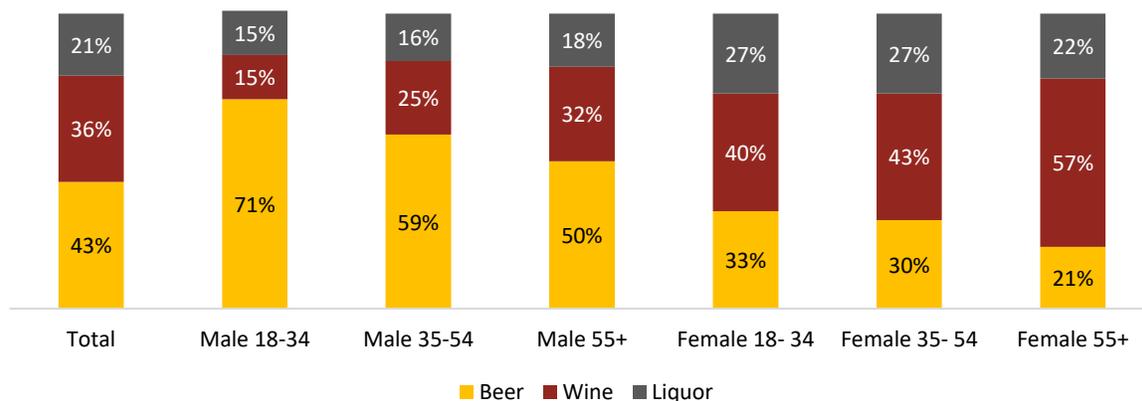


Canada rank 39<sup>th</sup> in the world in per capita beer consumption, well behind heavyweights such as the Czech Republic, Germany and Ireland. Meanwhile, we are now consuming twice the amount of wine as we were in 1990.

The demographic elements that determine preference on this issue are significantly more likely to be age and gender than politics. Young men lean much more exclusively toward beer (71%). That percentage drops with age, to six-in-ten (59%) among men age 35 to 54, and half (50%) among those ages 55 and older. This youngest male group are estimated to consume an 25 per cent of the beer sold in Canada.

Women, by contrast, are more inclined to support Canada's growing \$8.6-billion wine sector. Nearly six-in-ten (57%) ages 55 and older choose the grapes, while four-in-ten among the younger age groups agree. Women of all ages are also more likely than men to prefer a drink made with liquor:

### Alcohol preference by Age and Gender

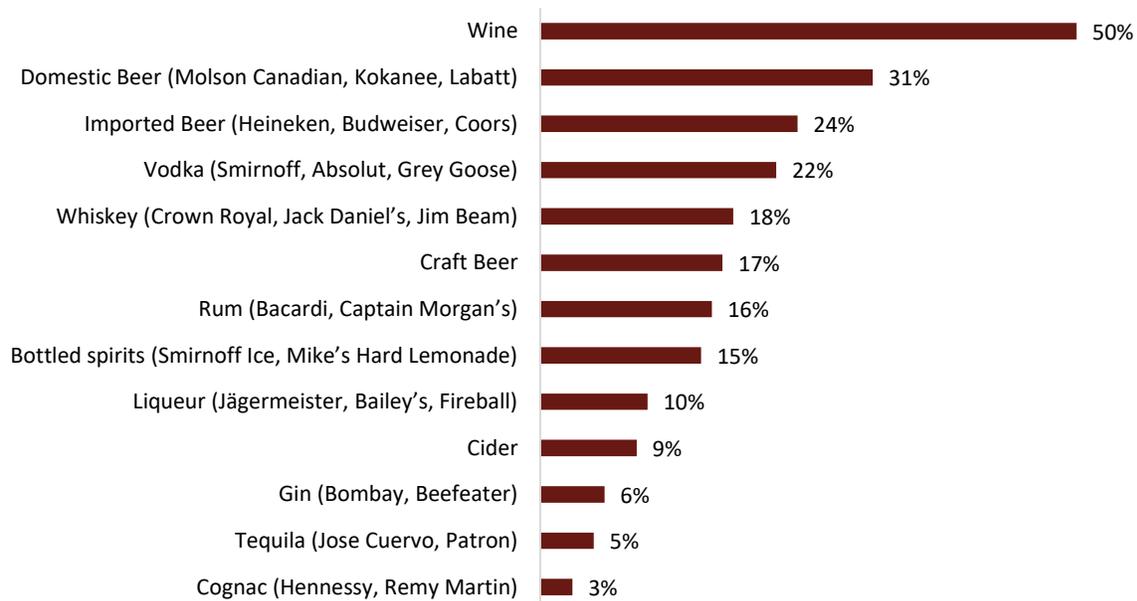


The Angus Reid Institute also asked Canadians to choose up to three types of drinks that they prefer, regardless of how often they consume each one. Wine emerges as the big winner, with domestic beer and imported beer rounding out the top three. Vodka is the top choice of spirit, with whiskey and rum close behind:

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 Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**What types of alcohol would you say you prefer to drink, regardless of how often is it that you drink each one? Choose up to 3**



Regionally, wine dominates. In each area of the country canvassed – other than Saskatchewan – wine is chosen as a top three option by the highest number of residents. This rises to a high of 54 per cent in Quebec. British Columbia is the only province to choose craft beer in their top three, while Manitoba is the only province where whiskey rises to the podium:



The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

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