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## Utah Liquor Laws Visitor Guide — Yes, You Can!

In preparation for your next visit to Utah, here's what you need to know before you belly up to the bar or seek out a bottle of your favorite spirit.

Written by Matcha



At one time, strict laws on alcohol made enjoying an adult beverage in Utah a little more challenging. Since the 2002 Winter Olympics (and especially during the last decade), notable changes to these regulations have made it much easier for visitors to Utah to drink up — even if misconceptions still abound. In preparation for your next visit to Utah, here's what you need to know before you belly up to the bar or seek out a bottle of your favorite spirit.

Before heading out, please note that it is illegal to bring any alcohol into Utah with you. With the more relaxed laws around alcohol, however, there isn't a need. (See [exceptions and other Utah liquor law frequently asked questions](#) for more detail.)

## The Scoop on Liquor

If you enjoy cocktails and spirits, you'll notice Utah pours its shots through a contraption called The Berg, which is required by state law. The Berg helps bartenders pour precise 1.5-ounce shots of "primary liquor" in a mixed drink (of up to 2.5 ounces total), which means your cocktails might not hit as hard as they do in other states. But despite that, you'll find plenty of delicious, expertly crafted cocktails in Utah. You can visit several new and established local distillers, which make just about anything you could want. Just one example is the nationally distributed [High West Whiskeys](#) (located in Park City), which will take you back to the Old West with each sip. (Discover more distilleries in [Utah Spirits Tour](#) or on [visitutah.com's distilleries page](#).)

## What's Up with the Beer?

Yes, you can buy beer in Utah that's over 3.2% alcohol by volume (ABV). In fact, starting in November 2019, a new bill replaced the 86-year-old law stating that 3.2% beer was the alcohol limit for brewing. It allows beers with 4% alcohol by weight or 5% ABV to be sold in grocery stores, convenience stores and on draft at bars and restaurants. You can also get higher ABV brews at state liquor stores.

(Read: [Welcome to the 5%: New Liquor Laws Support Utah's Vibrant Craft Brew Scene](#).)

## Restaurants and Bars

Residents and longtime visitors to Utah will remember the days of the "private club," when Utah bars were required to charge a cover or membership fee. Currently, establishments are classified as either restaurants, bars or clubs, and each has a different set of rules regarding alcohol.

- For bars and clubs, anyone 21 years or older with a valid ID is free to walk in and have a drink, but customers under 21 are not allowed in the bar or lounge areas. Last call for alcohol is generally 1 am, and bars must close by 2 am.
- At restaurants, alcoholic drinks can only be served with food, but at breweries or any beer-only establishments, food is not required to order a beer.



- Restaurants and bars can serve draft beer up to 5% and higher ABV beers from the can or bottle.

- You can only buy beer and spirits one drink at a time, so that means no pitchers of beer or your favorite adult beverage. You can purchase wine by the glass or the bottle.

## What You Can Buy and Where

Whether you are looking for a bottle of vino, a six-pack or a bottle of hard alcohol, there are rules around what you can buy where:

- Grocery stores and convenience stores: You can buy beer that is 5% ABV at most grocery stores and convenience stores every day of the week. In addition to these locations, package stores across the state (there are more than 100 of them) sell a selection of beer, wine and spirits. There are also three specialty wine stores in downtown Salt Lake City that sell limited-production wine, beer and liquor with a diverse and constantly changing selection.
- Utah state liquor stores: Higher ABV beer, wine and liquor are available at Utah's 41 state liquor stores, which are generally open Monday through Saturday from 11 am to anywhere between 5 pm and 10 pm, depending on the location. Please note that these stores are closed on Sundays.
- Breweries, wineries and distilleries: As noted above, these establishments can sell any of their products every day of the week, including Sundays. You can buy to-go bottles as well, but containers must remain closed on the premises.

## Behind the Wheel

Utah has the strictest DUI limit in the country at 0.05%, and this includes not only driving cars but riding bikes as well. It doesn't take much to reach that level of blood concentration so instead, consider walking or taking advantage of public transit or companies like Uber and Lyft where it's available. If you plan on heading out and grabbing a few drinks, just be sure to leave the car (and bike) behind.

## Yes, You Can Get a Drink in Rural Utah, Too

Regardless of whether or not you are in the city, you can find establishments to grab alcohol in the more rural areas of Utah as well. While it may not be as convenient to

find alcohol in the farther reaches, it is available, and the same laws that apply in Utah apply there as well. These laws help regulate price, which means your favorite bottle will cost the same regardless of the liquor store — no additional markup beyond statute at remote retail outposts or resort towns. Restaurants and bars, of course, can set their own price for drinks.

Each of Utah's five national parks has a liquor store nearby, and bars and restaurants are easy to find, especially in [Springdale](#) near [Zion](#) or [Moab](#) near [Arches](#) and [Canyonlands](#). Rules around alcohol consumption vary from park to park, so depending on which park you are visiting, you should familiarize yourself with them.

Whether you're in [Salt Lake City](#) or Zion National Park, finding a place to conveniently grab a drink has become much easier. There's no need to worry about the lack of adult beverages infringing on your ski vacation or relaxation after a long day at the tradeshow. So now that you know much of what you need to know about getting a drink in Utah, forget about those old rules and raise a glass or two on your next visit.

Written by Jed Doane for Matcha in partnership with Utah Office of Tourism.

## Welcome to the 5%: New Liquor Laws Support Utah's Vibrant Craft Brew Scene

Written by Matcha

Utah has come a long way from its quirkiest liquor laws; with new laws in place, the state has a ton to offer with its craft beer, wine and spirits. Between the myriad of breweries and distilleries, you might even have trouble deciding where to enjoy the vibrant local nightlife. So while Utah still has some unconventional liquor laws on the books, they aren't an impediment to enjoying the local creations. So raise a glass to your next trip to Utah — you won't be disappointed.

Culture



## Après-Ski Like a Local

Curious about those local favorites après-ski spots, those tucked away gems to which the locals have flocked for generations? Read on.

## Distilleries

On Utah’s whiskey distillery tours visitors have the option to sniff, sample and buy. Find out what other spirits are distilled (or blended) in Utah!

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### About the Author – Matcha

Matcha (formerly RootsRated) is a media platform that connects users with the best outdoor experiences, hand-picked by local outdoor retailers and their networks of local experts. That’s why we’re the content marketing experts for e-commerce and lifestyle brands.



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