

# What is a Standard Drink?

Many people are surprised to learn what counts as a drink. The amount of liquid in your glass, can, or bottle does not necessarily match up to how much alcohol is actually in your drink. Different types of beer, wine, or malt liquor can have very different amounts of alcohol content. For example, many light beers have almost as much alcohol as regular beer - about 85% as much. Here's another way to put it:

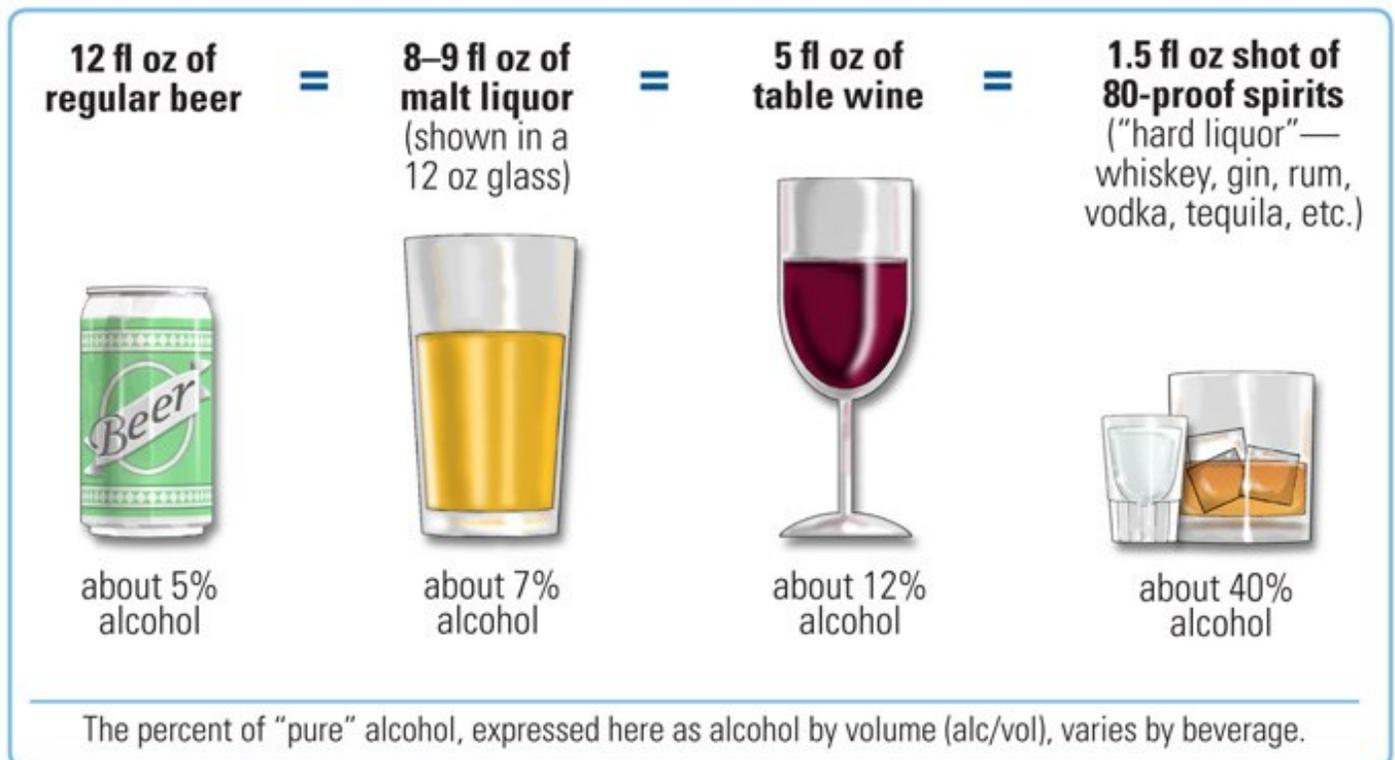
- Regular beer: 5% alcohol content
- Some light beers: 4.2% alcohol content

That's why it's important to know how much alcohol your drink contains. In the United States, one "standard" drink contains roughly 14 grams of pure alcohol, which is found in:

- 12 ounces of regular beer, which is usually about 5% alcohol
- 5 ounces of wine, which is typically about 12% alcohol
- 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, which is about 40% alcohol

**How do you know how much alcohol is in your drink?**

Even though they come in different sizes, the drinks below are each examples of *one standard drink*:



Although the "standard" drink amounts are helpful for following health guidelines, they may not reflect customary serving sizes. For example, a single mixed drink made with hard liquor can contain 1 to 3 or more standard drinks, depending on the type of spirits and the recipe.