

# That's the Spirit!

## Using Data to Understand the Importation of Ireland's Favorite Spirit

### Prompt

Since 1990, the percentage of Americans who consume alcohol has marginally increased, from 57% to 63% [1]. Underlying this slow, but steady, growth in alcohol consumption is a change in taste preferences. As a “preferred alcoholic beverage,” beer has fallen dramatically from 47% to 35%, while wine has grown slightly from 27% to 31% and liquor has shot from 21% to 30% [2]. Liquor’s 9% jump in popularity is even more impressive when one considers that it occurred entirely within a four year window, post-2018. Given that alcohol sales make up a \$73.6 billion dollar industry in the United States - even without including sales at restaurants and bars - these changing preferences represent a potentially profitable opportunity in the market, particularly when it comes to liquor [3].

In the United States itself, whiskey is the second most consumed spirit [4]. A popular form is Irish whiskey, which has a unique history. Near the end of the 19th century, it was the world’s most popular spirit, but it faced steady declines in sales through to the 1960s. The formation of a distillery monopoly in Ireland further suppressed the worldwide export of Irish whiskey, but following the monopoly’s end in 1987, Irish whiskey saw a return of popularity and exportation [5]. Compared to just two distilleries in the early 1990s, Ireland now has 25 whiskey distilleries with 24 more in development, indicating a boom in the production of Irish whiskey [6]. In identifying trends in the sale of Irish whiskey in the United States and beyond, alcohol producers and distributors will be better equipped to meet customer needs and capitalize on changing tastes/preferences.

### Deliverable

Imagine you work for a team of investors who are considering getting into the Irish whiskey production or distribution business, and they need your data science expertise to help them better understand the industry landscape. Your task is to determine how Irish whiskey importations have changed over time and how they might continue to change. In particular, you will look at how Irish whiskey imports in the North American region have changed compared to other regions, and you will explore factors that might impact imports. Additionally, the investors want to know what the business landscape will be in the future, so you will be tasked with forecasting what future imports might look like.

#### References

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- [7] Irish Whiskey Association [IrishWhiskeyAsc]. 2019. “Congratulations to IWA Member @DiageoIreland and Head Distiller Lorna Hemy on the Commencement of Distilling at Roe & Co Distillery. This Marks the 25th Irish Whiskey Distillery to Enter Operations, with a Further 24 in Planning or Development! #growth #Irishwhiskey <https://t.co/FznOkeTUoi>.” Tweet. Twitter. <https://twitter.com/IrishWhiskeyAsc/status/1138445908562104320>.