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For the First Time in U.S. History, Bottled Water Is Now More Popular Than Soda

It's sweet news for the water industry.

BY ALY WALANSKY



For the first time in recorded U.S. history, Americans are choosing bottled water over soda.

That surge, as reported by *Beverage Digest*, accounts for why carbonated soft drinks hit a three-decade low in 2015. Americans will drink 27.4 gallons of bottled water this year, and that's 1.2 gallons more than the soda they'll consume, according to [Euromonitor](#).

But why is water getting the upper hand now, after all these years? Is it that people have come around to the benefits of a no-frills, calorie-free drink? Or is it increasing fears about the health and safety of our water supply? "Concerns in places like Flint [the Michigan city that faced a drinking-water contamination crisis] do bring bottled water to people's attention as a safe and sealed source of drinking water," Jane Lazgin, a spokeswoman for Nestle Waters North America, told [Bloomberg](#).



Of course, opting for bottled water rather than tap isn't without its drawbacks: Bottles are more expensive than tap water, and create more waste that needs to be recycled. "Bottled water might be a Band-Aid solution for situations like Flint," John

Stewart, deputy director of Corporate Accountability International, told [Bloomberg](#), "but it is definitely not a long-term solution for providing daily drinking water needs."

Still, choosing water over a sugary beverage is absolutely a valid step forward, say many medical experts. People are *finally* getting it right. Our bodies are about 65 percent water, so it only makes sense that we need to drink a lot more of it. "The focus should be on plain water, water flavored with real lemon, orange or even pepper slices. Seltzer is a great option as well but do not be fooled by waters infused with vitamins, added sugars or even sugar free alternatives," Laura Cipullo RD of [Laura Cipullo Whole Nutrition Services](#) tells The Feast. "Your body can still have an insulin surge when drinking sugar free products. I do think the public at large has good intentions, plus it helps to have vending machines filled with water not soda."



The rise in demand for water, while a game-changer for the beverage industry, isn't sudden; it's been happening gradually over the past 15 years, as added sugar has

increasingly gotten cast as the villain. "We're simply waking up to fact that there is an obesity crisis and are also realizing the harmful effects of the soda industry. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, soda was and still is the number one source of calories in the modern Western diet," Dr. Rob Silverman, a certified nutrition specialist, clinical nutritionist, and strength and conditioning specialist," tells The Feast.

He also notes that plenty of bottled water these days has a lot in common with... soda. At least when it comes to the flavor. "It's not just plain bottled water anymore," says Silverman. "We have naturally flavored, sparkling and carbonated brands that are drawing consumers further away from soda, since they are lower in calories and actually are similar in taste to real soda."

Don't expect sweet fizzy drinks to go anywhere anytime soon, but in the near future, will anyone even be able to tell the difference between "soda" and "water"?

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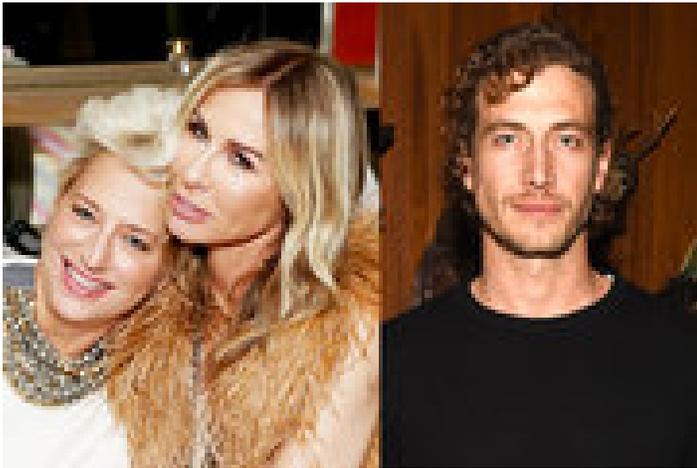
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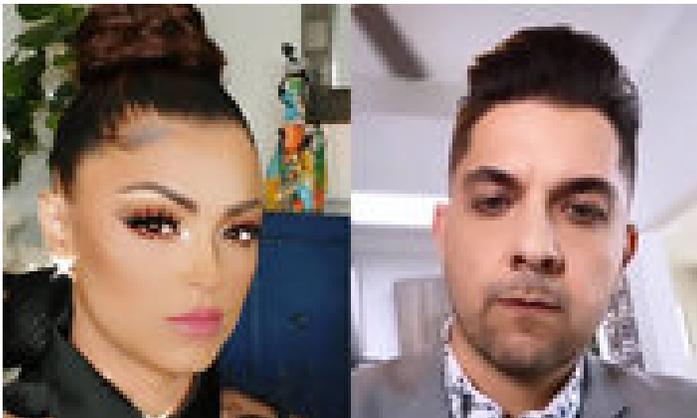
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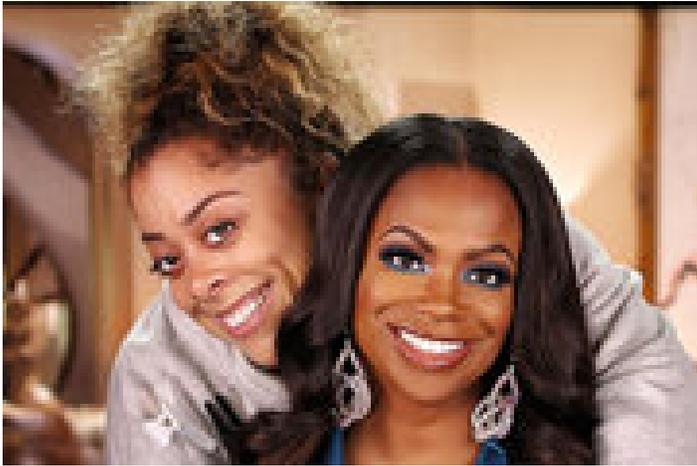
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