

The Swedish Christmas Soda That Outsells Coca-Cola Every December

A fizzy, malty classic that takes over holiday tables—and now has its own holiday

While Coca-Cola's iconic holiday campaigns dominate global markets, Sweden tells a different Christmas story—one that begins not with Santa, but with a fizzy, dark, and oddly nostalgic soda called **Julmust**.

Virtually unknown outside Scandinavia, Julmust is a sweet, malty soft drink brewed with hops, malt extract, and a blend of spices. In Sweden, it outsells every other beverage during the holidays—including **Coca-Cola**, which reportedly **loses up to 50 percent of its December sales** to this local favorite. An estimated **50 million liters** are consumed within just a few weeks. That's over 13 million gallons in just a few weeks—roughly 5 liters per person in a country of 10 million.

This year, the drink received official recognition with the launch of **Julmustens Dag**—Julmust Day—celebrated every **November 24**. (Source: [Julmustens Dag](#))

Born in a Lab, Now a Holiday Staple

Julmust was invented in 1910 by a Swedish chemist and his teetotaler father as a festive, non-alcoholic alternative to beer and snaps. The result was a soda that recalls Sweden's traditional *svagdricka* (a low-alcohol malt beverage). Its recipe—still owned and produced by the same family business, **Roberts AB**—is known to just three people and stored in a locked safe in the town of Örebro, in the middle of Sweden with **98 percent** of all Julmust brands using their closely guarded concentrate. Rumor has it Coca-Cola once tried to buy the rights. The answer? A polite but firm no. (Source: [Företagskällan](#))

The drink is often linked to pharmacies—thanks in part to the name of Sweden's most popular brand, **Apotekarnes** ("the pharmacist's")—though there's no evidence it was actually sold in apothecaries. More likely, the name was a clever marketing nod to the era's health-forward branding trends. (Source: [Svenska Måltider](#))

More Essential Than Ham

According to a recent Kantar-Sifo survey, **61 percent of Swedes** drink Julmust during the holidays, and nearly **1 in 5** say Christmas wouldn't be the same without it. In a nation where tradition is taken seriously—especially in December—that's no small claim. (Source: [nu.se](#) and [MyNewsdesk](#))

"For many of us, celebrating Christmas without Julmust is unthinkable," says **Casper Danielsson** from Carlsberg Sverige. "It's become the unofficial national drink of the holidays." (Source: [nu.se](#))

Nostalgic—but Not Stuck in the Past

Julmust is no longer just a throwback. In response to the trend of growing demand for healthier options without having to compromise on taste, recent figures from the industry association **Sveriges Bryggerier** show a surge in artisanal versions, sugar-free recipes, and bold new flavors like citrus and tonka bean. Sustainability is also a growing priority, with eco-friendly ingredients, recyclable packaging, and local sourcing on the rise.

"Julmust is both heritage and innovation," says **Anna-Karin Fondberg**, Managing Director at Sveriges Bryggerier. "It's evolving just like the people who drink it. Whether it's brewed in a small workshop in Skåne or a large facility in Dalarna, Julmust connects generations. It's a shared tradition that shows how Swedish beverage culture can evolve without losing its soul." (Source: [Julmusttrends 2025](#))

A Second Season in Spring

And for those who can't get enough Julmust quietly reappears in spring—rebranded as **Påskmust** for Easter.

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