# 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.

**More on Sweden's holiday food culture:**

- Swedish Christmas traditions
- Pioneers of Sweden's beverage scene
- Top 10 Swedish specialties

*Visit Sweden is a marketing company owned by the Swedish government. It is a national tourism organization to promote the destination Sweden to increase the country's attractiveness that contributes to tourism consumption, export earnings and employment. Visit Sweden works together with the Swedish tourism industry to effectively reach the most desired target groups for long-term sustainable tourism. Visit Sweden is based in Stockholm with local representation in several foreign markets. This content may be confidential, please address the sender and delete the mail if it turns up where it shouldn't. We act according to GDPR.*

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://press.visitsweden.com/2025-11-05-The-Swedish-Christmas-Soda-That-Outsells-Coca-Cola-Every-December