The U.S. exported 1.24 billion gallons of ethanol in 2021—down 5% from 2020 but still the fifth-highest volume on record. American-made ethanol was exported to 88 countries on all six inhabited continents around the world.

Denatured fuel ethanol accounted for 57% of exports. The share represented by undenatured fuel ethanol slipped to 30%, but exports of undenatured industrial ethanol doubled, largely as a result of China’s return to the market. Denatured industrial ethanol contributed 2% of shipments.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
Approximately 8.3% of the ethanol produced in the U.S. in 2021 was exported, a lower share than in recent years.

The value of U.S. ethanol exports rose to $2.77 billion in 2021, the second-highest ever, as ethanol prices rebounded strongly from pandemic lows.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
2021 Ethanol Exports: Top Markets

Top Markets for U.S. Ethanol Exports in 2021

2021 ethanol export volumes to the Top 10 markets are shown in the table below, along with a comparison to 2020 volumes. All figures are shown in millions of gallons, unless otherwise noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>337.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>370.2</td>
<td>326.3</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>156.4</td>
<td>175.6</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>151.7</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td>+46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>100.2</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>+216%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>185.8</td>
<td>-59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>+19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>-48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>+72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
North America remained the largest regional destination for U.S. exports in 2021, while East Asia rose to second place. The share of exports shipped to South Asia was stable. However, volumes destined for South America fell further.

Canada remained the largest and most consistent destination for U.S. ethanol. Exports to South Korea rose, and shipments nearly matched those to India. A notable development was China’s return as a large-scale buyer. However, for the second-straight year, the main cause of the decline in U.S. exports was a drop in shipments to Brazil.
Net exports of ethanol rose in 2021, as imports declined more than exports. The U.S. remained a net exporter for the 12th straight year.

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. ethanol exports departed via the Gulf of Mexico in 2021. The Great Lakes and Northern Tier were collectively the second-largest region. Significant volumes also were shipped from the Pacific Northwest.

Top Ports/Districts of Exit for 2021 U.S. Ethanol Exports

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Agriculture, and U.S. International Trade Commission
U.S. imports of fuel ethanol receded to 58 million gallons in 2021, after volumes had been elevated during the prior two years.

Virtually all fuel ethanol imports continued to come from Brazil, due in large part to favorable treatment under the California Low Carbon Fuel Standard.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture
2021 U.S. ETHANOL IMPORTS

Imports accounted for less than 1% of the ethanol consumed in the U.S. in 2021, a decline from the prior two years.

Top Ports of Entry for 2021 U.S. Ethanol Imports

California ports received 99% of the fuel ethanol imported into the U.S. in 2021, driven by the state’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce, Dept. of Agriculture, and U.S. International Trade Commission
ABOUT THE DATA IN THIS REPORT

U.S. Ethanol Export Data

- The export data in this report includes exports classified under the following Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes:
  - 2207200010: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: For fuel use
  - 2207106010: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: For fuel use
  - 2207200090: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: Other
  - 2207106090: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: Other
  - 2207200090 and 2207106090 are included in this report because there is anecdotal evidence that exports of ethanol intended for fuel use are sometimes classified under these codes. In any case, ethanol classified under these codes represented 13% of the 2021 U.S. exports discussed in this report.

U.S. Ethanol Import Data

- The import data in this report includes imports classified under the following Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes:
  - 2207200010: Ethyl alcohol and other spirits, denatured, of any strength: For fuel use
  - 2207106010: Undenatured ethyl alcohol of an alcoholic strength by volume of 80 percent vol. or higher: For non-beverage purposes: For fuel use

Sources


The Renewable Fuels Association publishes monthly summaries of export and import data for ethanol and distillers dried grains in its Trade Monitor.

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