India's Craft Spirits Boom Crosses Over to the UK

India is producing some of the world's most distinctive spirits, says Maharaja Drinks, yet many remain largely undiscovered by UK shoppers.



Maharaja Drinks logo

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 22, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Korean soju and Mexican mezcal have already shown UK drinkers what a regional drinks trend can do. Now, according to Maharaja Drinks, the UK's specialist importer of Indian craft spirits, we are seeing a huge turn this year toward India, where a fast growing craft distilling scene is built on native botanicals and heritage distilling techniques.

Speciality Food Magazine's 2026 Drinks Buyer trends report points to a growing appetite among UK consumers for distinctive flavours and authentic drinks from around the world. Its research notes that shoppers are increasingly interested in learning more about spirits, beyond simply purchasing the category — reflecting a wider appetite for drinks with a strong sense of place.

According to IWSR research reported in July 2026, India's beverage alcohol market grew by 4% in 2025 — standing out as the strongest growth market in the world even as global volumes fell for a third straight year. Described by IWSR as a "growth engine" for the category, India is expected to rise from the world's eighth-largest alcohol market today to fifth by 2035. Driven by growing demand for premium and artisanal spirits, indigenous and distinctive ingredients, India's spirits industry has evolved rapidly. With 468 distilleries now operating across the country, the market has moved well beyond the handful of Indian brands traditionally recognised on your supermarket shelves.

Maharaja Drinks is helping with this shift, bringing more than 25 distinctive Indian spirits to the UK. The portfolio showcases India's distinctive ingredients and craftsmanship: JinJiji Darjeeling, for example, is infused with handpicked Darjeeling tea and copper-pot distilled in Uttarakhand, while Terai Gin uses spices sourced from Khari Baoli, Delhi's historic spice market. Smoke Lab Vodka is made from Basmati rice, with its Saffron expression combining Kashmiri saffron and Indian spices. Ayam agave is made at India's only agave distillery in Uttar Pradesh. Maharaja Drinks also showcases Nao Spirits with four drinks, produced at India's first zero-carbon distillery in Goa.


Cashew Apples in Goa

The range also extends into some of India's most distinctive traditional and contemporary spirits. Goenchi Cashew Feni is a traditional Goan spirit distilled from cashew apples native to the region. Quro is a modern Indian aperitif built around 36 indigenous botanicals, including ashwagandha, tulsi and moringa.

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>
> *Annabel Jamieson, CEO of Maharaja Drinks*

"There's a perception that Indian spirits mean one or two mass market whisky brands, and that couldn't be further from the truth," said Annabel Jamieson, CEO of Maharaja Drinks. "What's happening in India's distilleries right now is some of the most exciting innovation anywhere in the world — and people are just starting to see this."

About Maharaja Drinks

Maharaja Drinks offers over 20 high-quality wines, a range of fruity or malty Indian brews and over 25 Indian crafted spirits and non-alcoholic drinks. The specialist retailer encourages organic certification, sustainable production methods and environmentally aware manufacturing, packaging and transport from its suppliers. All drinks are shipped throughout the UK mainland.

Maharaja Drinks was founded in 2023 by a group of friends led by Ipe and Adam Jacob united in a mission to pick the best of the best Indian drinks and make them famous in the UK and

beyond. The Jacobs travelled across India to dive into each supplier’s story and go back to the source, securing personal meetings with the makers, tours of the facilities and plantations, and in-person tasting sessions.

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The Exotica Range at Maharaja Drinks

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