



The FDA menu labelling and alcohol – what you need to know

If you live in America and visit chain restaurants on a regular basis, you may soon be surprised to find out how many liquid calories you are consuming with your meal.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have stated that chain restaurants in the US will have to provide nutritional information for the items they serve from 1 December 2016, and this also applies to alcoholic beverages. Restaurants were originally expected to be ready by the end of 2015, but this was pushed back so companies had more time to have their questions answered.

The ruling was made law in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act and affects 'chains' with more than 20 locations. It only applies to alcohol which is on the menu for more than 60 consecutive days a year/90 total days a year, so seasonal beers are unlikely to be affected. It also only affects beverages which feature on menus and menu boards.

Smaller breweries and distilleries have raised concerns about this, namely the costs involved to analyse the nutritional content of the beverages they provide to restaurants, although the FDA have said that standard nutritional databases will be adequate. There is also the worry that chains will prefer to work with companies which can easily provide nutritional information for the drinks they supply.

The FDA say that Americans eat and drink about one-third of their calories away from home, so making the information available means that people can make informed choices. Food labelling is wholly or partially law in some states already, for example, California, Oregon and Massachusetts require chain restaurants to list nutritional values whilst New York restaurants must label items which contain more than the recommended daily amount of salt. Some national chains including McDonald's, Starbucks and Chick-fil-A already list nutritional information voluntarily.

In the UK, it is not law for restaurants to list calories, although some chains such as JD Wetherspoon's do, and this does not usually extend to alcohol.

So... when the law comes in at the end of 2016 will it have an adverse effect on smaller breweries? Bear in mind that the laws only apply to restaurants and pubs with over 20 branches so many breweries will be unaffected. Plus, with people choosing healthier food options both inside and outside the home ([courgetti anyone?](#)), lower calorie beverages may become more in demand.

Remember that although Analox Sensor Technology can't help you with working out the calories in the beers, wines and spirits you create, we can help you with your [carbon dioxide detection needs](#).

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FDA menu labelling FAQ:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm248731.htm>

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