

D - Diet drinks

The non-alcoholic industry offers a large variety of sugar-free soft drinks with a reduced calorie count. They are generally made with sugar substitutes (totally or partially) to provide sweetness without the associated energy. From a scientific point of view, the common use of the term “diet” for foods, including drinks, determines the foods with specific nutritional use: e.g. dietetic foods for special medical purposes or foods - substitutes of whole-day dietary intake for body weight regulation.

Although the prefix diet suggests that they are designed for people who wish to lose weight or are particularly sensitive to sugar (such as diabetics) they are in fact very popular in their own right as refreshments. In many countries the ‘diet’ prefix is not used; instead they are known as ‘light’ or ‘lite’ drinks.

The first low-calorie drink was marketed in the United States in the early 1950s by the Kirsch Bottling in Brooklyn, New York, who launched a sugar-free Ginger Ale in 1952 called No-Cal. Nowadays, the majority of carbonated soft drinks are available in sugar-free, low-calorie or ‘light’ versions.

More than 74% of soft drinks sold in Bulgaria are no-sugar/calories; low-calories (max 20 kcal/100 ml) or with low sugar content (max 2.5 g sugar/100 ml).