

South Korea's rice consumption hits record low in 2024

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South Korea's per capita rice consumption hit a record low in 2024, continuing a decades-long decline, according to government data. Statistics Korea reported that the average South Korean consumed 55.8 kilograms of rice last year, a decrease of 0.6 kilograms (1.1 per cent) from 2023.

This represents a significant drop from 1994 when per capita rice consumption stood at 120.5 kilograms—more than double the 2024 figure. The downward trend in rice consumption has been ongoing since Statistics Korea began tracking it in 1962.

While households are eating less rice, its usage in food and beverage production is on the rise, particularly in South Korea's alcohol market. The food and beverage industry consumed 873,363 metric tons of rice in 2024, marking a 6.9 per cent increase from the previous year. Alcohol production accounted for 26.2 per cent of the sector's rice usage, with rice consumption for alcoholic beverages soaring by 16 per cent. The industry used 228,595 tonnes of rice in 2024, compared to 197,102 tonnes in 2023.