

Tap Water vs. Bottled Water



For some of us, a bottle of water cools us down and quenches our thirst, and for others, a refreshing glass of water that comes straight from our very own taps does the job. But which is better? Some might say it is not arguable as it would be more of an opinion-based debate than a factual one.

Which is better?

In all truth, much of our bottled water comes from a tap, and bottled water is actually treated less than tap water.



A large percentage of bottled water is actually tap water.

Tap water that is unsafe or not completely safe (**non-potable**) would not leave the intake facility and flow to your home. It would not be fit for consumption or all the other things that we use it for, including washing, cooking, and cleaning.

Bottled water, which is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is allowed to contain some bacteria.

Essential nutrients for the body, such as calcium and iron, which contribute to building strong bones, healthy teeth, and aid in the formation of hemoglobin (the part of your red blood cells that carries oxygen), are contained in tap water. These nutrients, however, are removed from bottled water via filtration.

Drinking tap water only costs pennies a day, while bottled water can cost as much as \$.80 to \$4.00 per gallon.

Where do tap and bottled water come from?

Water utilities that provide tap water to the public either use **groundwater** or **surface water**.



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Environmental consequences of bottled water



Each time a bottle is filled, not only does it cost you, but it also costs the environment. The transportation and cooling of it burns large amounts of **fossil fuels** (energy sources that have developed within the earth over millions of years). In addition, creating the plastic used to make the bottles requires petroleum, another fossil fuel. Fossil fuels take so long to form that they are considered non-renewable. The burning of fossil fuels emits **greenhouse gases**.

Greenhouse gases are atmospheric gases that trap heat close to the Earth and contribute to **global warming**, a gradual increase in the Earth's overall temperature.

Global warming causes extreme weather events, including heat waves, drought, and powerful hurricanes. Global warming has also contributed to the melting of the polar ice caps, which poses a threat to animals who live in Arctic zones and leads to sea level rise.

It can take up to three liters of water to package a single liter of bottled water. In addition, most water bottles, despite being recyclable, are not recycled. Instead, they end up in landfills or openly discarded as litter.



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The future of bottled water

Some companies, including Azure Water, claim to make their bottles environmentally friendly. On their website, they state that:

“Our process of producing pure water completely eliminates bottle contamination or wasted water.”

This is one of the few bottled water companies to try more eco-friendly means, but tap water is still more eco-friendly and often better for you.

Bottled water is gradually climbing the beverage list, and will eventually surpass bottled soda, as it has with milk and beer.

Most people purchase bottled water because they feel that it is cleaner and purer than tap, however it usually also boils down to flavor. Many people don't like the taste of tap water.



Tap water is cheaper, more environmentally friendly, and can be healthier than bottled water.

However, that problem can be solved by just buying a simple home filter, which can bring the flavor up to or above that of bottled water.

Hopefully, more people will realize the effect that plastic bottles have on the environment. As consumers, we should return to drinking tap water, which can be 1,000 times cheaper, better for the environment, and just as healthy or healthier than bottled.

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What does non-potable mean?
2. Name two
3. What is an aquifer?
4. How
5. What percentage
6. How is bottled water bad for the environment?
7. How
8. Name three dangerous chemicals found in plastic bottles that can leach into your water.

Extension Question:

9. Design an

Reading Comprehension Questions:

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