

Are You Water Wise?

Going With The Bottled Water Flow



Purified Water or Natural Spring Water? Are you drinking what you think you are drinking? What do you need to know before you buy your next bottle of water?

by Arthur von Wiesenberger
(NAPSA)—When Americans tap into their thirst for water, they often buy it in a bottle. Americans are drinking bottled water in record numbers—a whopping five billion gallons in 2001, according to the International Bottled Water Association, an industry trade group. People are not only drinking more bottled water in record numbers, they are also spending significant amounts of their hard-earned money for it.

That's why it pays to be sure you're getting what you think you're buying. The best thing to do is read the label. Many bottled water brands on the market today are sourced from either natural spring water or tap water that has been purified. There is a difference in the unique taste of natural spring water and purified tap water.

A recent survey showed that when making a decision to purchase bottled water, consumers said this distinction was not made clear to them. In fact, 61 percent of bottled water drinkers say that if they knew a particular brand of bottled water was bottled from purified tap water, they would be less inclined to buy it.

Consumers need to arm themselves with knowledge about what they're buying before they grab the next bottle of water off of the shelf. The FDA classifies bottled water according to its origin. For example:

- Artesian well water is bottled water from a well that taps a confined aquifer in which the water level stands at some height above the top of the aquifer.

- Mineral water is water from an underground source that contains at least 250 parts per million total dissolved solids.

- Natural spring water is water that is derived from an

underground formation from which water flows naturally to the earth's surface.

- Purified drinking water is water, typically from a municipal supply, that has been produced by distillation, deionization, reverse osmosis or other suitable processes.

Among natural spring waters, the Poland Spring brand distinguishes itself by its naturally pure and crisp taste—the result of natural sources that lie deep beneath the protected pine forests in Maine. While Poland Spring is distributed only in the Northeast, its long history and high quality have made it one of the most recognizable brands in America and number one in sales among natural spring water brands. Consumers can look for other regional brands, such as Arrowhead® Mountain Spring Water in the west, Ozarka® Natural Spring Water in Texas and Zephyrhills® Natural Spring Water in Florida, just to name a few.

Finally, a word about taste. People don't usually attribute a taste to water, but like grapes grown in different regions, water from one area does taste different from water from another. Most natural spring water is bottled close to the region in which it is sold—it may say so right on the label. The unique taste profile of natural spring water is dependent upon the geology of the earth through which it travels. This is what makes natural spring water very different from purified water. A person's palate may become accustomed to the unique regional properties and taste of his or her favorite brands of spring water and distinguish the difference.

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