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Russians Turn to Moonshine Over Store-Bought Liquor Amid Economic Crisis

February 24, 2015



Russians have bought 300 percent more moonshine-making stills from a Chelyabinsk producer in the last few months as homemade liquor becomes more popular amid the economic crisis, the Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday.

Russian moonshine, called "samogon" from the words for "self" and "distill," can be made cheaply compared with buying liquor in stores, but there are health risks including blindness if it's not done correctly.

"Demand has been on the rise last year. It's growing every day," a representative of Chelyabinsk Household Goods Factory was cited as saying. "Our company's output in recent months has increased 200-300 percent year-on-year."

Cheap samogon stills can be bought for 2,000 rubles ($30), and while more sophisticated ones can cost five times that, the prices still pale in comparison with store-bought liquor, the report said.

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