

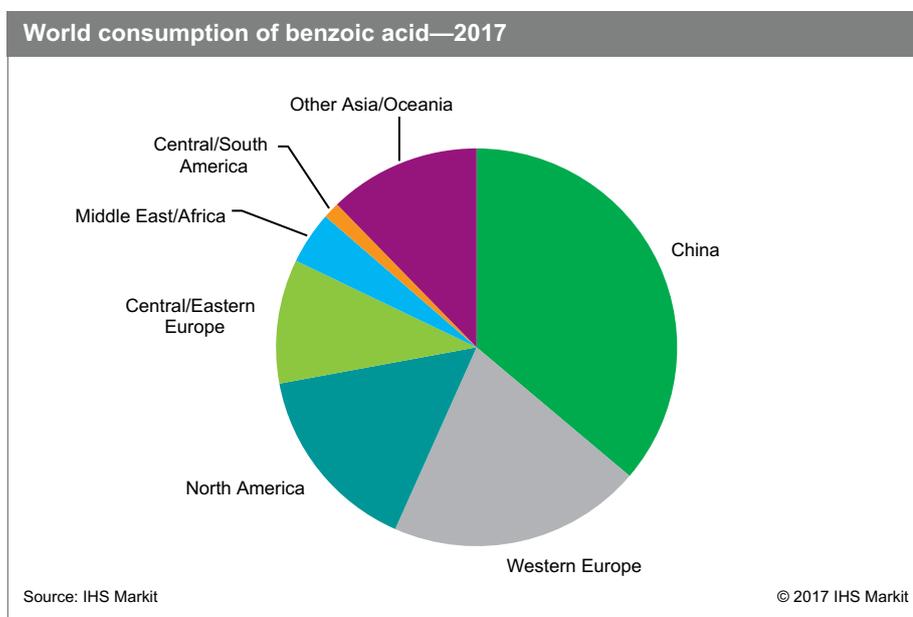
# Benzoic Acid

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## Abstract

In 2017, about one-third of benzoic acid consumption went into the production of sodium benzoate, which is used primarily as a preservative in beverages, packaged food and, increasingly, in cosmetics and personal care products, driving the growth in demand in the past few years. Improving living standards, particularly in Asia, have led to increased spending in personal care products, processed foods, and ready-to-drink beverages. World consumption of benzoic acid in sodium and potassium benzoate is forecast to grow at an average annual rate of 5.5% during 2017–22. World consumption of benzoic acid in benzoate plasticizers continues to grow strongly, and is forecast to increase at an average annual rate of 3.6% between 2017 and 2022; this growth is driven largely by replacement of phthalate plasticizers in an increasing variety of applications. Other major applications include alkyd resins, benzoyl chloride, and animal feed.

The following pie chart shows world consumption of benzoic acid:



China, Western Europe, and North America combined account for nearly three-fourths of world consumption of benzoic acid in 2017. Sodium and potassium benzoate accounted for most consumption in Asia (where China is the largest world producer and consumer), Europe, and Central and South America.

World growth prospects for benzoic acid in food and beverages are significant. The main factors behind this growth are the following:

- Increasing urbanization and improving living standards, particularly in Asia

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- Food safety (preservation): longer shelf lives are anticipated as more food and ready-to-drink beverages are consumed days or weeks after production
- Desire for convenience (increased popularity of processed foods and ready-to-drink beverages)

Demand for benzoate plasticizers has also shown sustained growth, especially in Europe and North America, where regulatory issues and environmental legislation have driven the need to replace low-molecular-weight phthalate plasticizers in PVC resins. In particular, benzoate plasticizers have replaced low-molecular-weight phthalates, such as DEP and DBP. World consumption of benzoic acid for benzoate plasticizers is forecast to increase at 3.6% per year from 2017 to 2022.

The third major use of benzoic acid is in the production of alkyd resins, where it can be used both as a building block and as a chain stopper during polymerization. This application, however, is gradually losing its importance in Europe and North America because of environmental regulations concerning VOC emissions. Since the early 2000s, alkyd surface coatings have been replaced by acrylic latexes and, to a lesser degree, by epoxies, urethanes, polyesters, and vinyls in many coating applications. Nonetheless, alkyd resin is still the second-most-important application in China, and is also the most important end market for benzoic acid in Russia, the Middle East (particularly in Turkey), and South America (mainly in Brazil). Consumption of benzoyl chloride occurs mainly in China, whereas its use as animal feed is concentrated in Europe.

# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Regulatory status</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Manufacturing process</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Supply and demand by region</b>	<b>13</b>
United States	13
– Producing companies	13
– Production	13
– Consumption	14
– Benzoate plasticizers	15
– Dibenzoates	16
– Other	16
– Sodium and potassium benzoate	17
– Alkyd resins	17
– Other	18
– Price	18
– Trade	19
– Imports	19
– Exports	21
Canada	22
– Salient statistics	22
– Trade	22
Mexico	24
– Salient statistics	24
– Trade	25
Central and South America	26
– Producing companies	26
– Salient statistics	27
– Consumption	27
Western Europe	28
– Producing companies	28
– Salient statistics	29
– Consumption	29
– Benzoate plasticizers	30
– Sodium and potassium benzoate	30
– Animal feed additives	31
– Benzoyl chloride	32
– Other esters	32
– Alkyd resins	32
– Silage and feed preservation	33
– Other	33
– Bakery products	33
– Fish products	33
– Cosmetics	33

– Industrial applications	33
– Price	33
– Trade	34
Central and Eastern Europe	35
– Producing companies	35
– Salient statistics	36
– Consumption	36
– Benzoate plasticizers	37
– Sodium and potassium benzoate	37
– Animal feed additives	37
Middle East	37
Africa	39
China	40
– Producing companies	40
– Salient statistics	43
– Production	43
– Consumption	44
– Sodium and potassium benzoate	44
– Alkyd resins	45
– Benzoyl chloride	45
– Benzoate plasticizers	47
– Other	47
– Price	48
– Trade	48
Japan	49
– Salient statistics	49
– Consumption	49
– Toiletries, cosmetics, and fragrances	50
– Benzoyl chloride	50
– Alkyd resins	50
– Food preservation	50
– Other	50
– Trade	51
Other Asia and Oceania	51
– Producing companies	51
– Salient statistics	52
– Consumption	54
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>56</b>

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