

Alcoholic Energy Drinks

Caffeinated alcoholic beverages have been in the [news](#) lately. Four Loko is one example of these beverages, sold in the U.S. as a 23.5 oz caffeinated, alcoholic, malt beverage packaged in a can similar to other energy drinks. It also contains carbonation, sugar, and natural and artificial flavoring. Its name is derived from its four main ingredients: caffeine, [taurine](#), [guarana](#), and wormwood, an active ingredient in absinthe.

Depending on the U.S. state, Four Loko contains up to 12% alcohol by volume. According to the NIAAA Rethinking Drinking Cocktail Content Calculator, this is equivalent to 4.7 standard drinks in a single can (excluding the caffeine and other ingredients). A single can of Four Loko is estimated to contain 660 calories and costs approximately \$2.50. (source: [NASPA](#)) Colleges and Universities like Ramapo and Central Washington have [banned Four Loko](#) from their campuses, and several other colleges have sent urgent e-mail messages advising students not to drink it.

Whether Four Loko is really "blackout in a can" or just the highest-profile social lubricant of the moment is unclear. What is clear is that alcohol energy drinks affect the body differently than alcohol alone. [Outside the Classroom](#), provider of Greek.Edu and Alcohol. Edu, shares the following tips:

Top five reasons why mixing caffeine or energy drinks with alcohol is a really bad idea.

1. Mixing caffeine and alcohol can increase the risk of alcohol poisoning. Since caffeine makes people feel "less drunk" than they really are, they tend to drink more than they should.
2. Mixing alcohol and caffeine can make your heart rate and blood pressure rise.
3. Caffeine can make you feel energetic even if you're drunk. Why is this dangerous? Because people can be "tricked" into thinking they are alert enough to do things like drive a car, when they really aren't.
4. Caffeine and alcohol are both diuretics, leading to dehydration (and really bad hangovers).
5. Adding caffeine to alcohol can make drinking alcohol all the more addictive.

Before you drink: Read the label

Remember, a standard drink typically equals a 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor, whether people have it as a mixed drink or a shot. Each contains about 0.06 ounces of alcohol. Some beverages, especially malt beverages and beverages marketed with caffeine, can contain much more than one standard drink. To always know what and how much you're drinking, be sure to read the label.

(used with permission from Outside The Classroom)

