



A £10 pint could be closer than you think – here’s why

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Pint glasses on a bar

Despite rising pint prices, pubs may be making just pennies in profit from every pound spent. And so, [like everywhere else](#) prices at the pub are rising. Here’s a breakdown of the numbers.

Pint profits plunge

New research suggests that for every £1 spent on a pint in 2026, the typical drinks-focussed pub could make just 3p in profit. This is down almost half from last year.

To understand where money spent at the pub actually goes, experts from [money.co.uk](#) analysed cost data from the British Beer and Pub Association. They modelled how operating expenses have shifted year-on-year, using growth trends, changes in policy, inflation, and the wider economic climate.

Into 2026, wholesale food and drink costs could swallow around 41p in every pound before a single pint is pulled. Wages may account for another 31p, reflecting this year’s increases to the National Living Wage and employer National Insurance contributions.

Utilities and further operational costs, from waste disposal and insurance to live music licences and bank charges, typically claim the majority of what remains. This leaves pubs with around 6p gross profit from every £1, before taking rent into account.

After rent, which industry guidance on pub budgets from the BBPA states can cost around 50% of gross profit, the typical drinks-focussed pub could have just 3p in profit from every £1 of pint sales.

So for pubs charging an average of £5.17 for a pint of lager, that would equate to around 16p profit per pint.

In Britain's most expensive cities, the £10 pint, once dismissed as an exaggeration, could become a reality if these cost pressures continue and customers remain willing to pay higher prices.

Jake Pemberton, landlord of The Gladstone in Nottingham, says:

Increases in beer prices often don't cover the rise in everything else that pubs have to deal with. Many small, independent pubs simply can not survive with business rates, energy bills, minimum wage, VAT, taxes etc. It all adds up and I don't think all customers take that into account when we change our prices.

Higher beer prices keep people at home and we're losing the culture of going to the pub for a couple of pints after work. Communities are suffering, as pubs and pub goers often come hand in hand with community spirit.

At the same time, we're losing traditional pubs as drink-based pubs are dying, with more becoming food-focused and family-orientated.

This year, our prices can't rise at the same rate. Three of my real ale products needed a 15p rise to keep the same gross profit. However I'm aware pubs have a ceiling to what they can charge and I feel like I'm hitting that ceiling, so could only add 10p. This means on those products I'm losing gross profit this year.

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Joe Phelan, [business current accounts expert](#) at money.co.uk, says:

These findings show why rising pint prices don't necessarily mean pubs are making more money. Far from profiting from higher prices, many landlords are simply trying to stay afloat.

Rising costs across the board are putting further pressure on already thin margins. Beer duty has increased by 3.66% in 2026, adding roughly £35 a week to costs, while wages are expected to cost around £229 more.

Facing ever-rising costs, pubs are working hard to keep their doors open while balancing trade, expenses, and the need to remain competitive and keep customers happy.

Careful planning, such as reviewing costs, using a business current account with reporting tools for better visibility, and setting aside funds for unexpected pressures, can help them remain resilient.

However, it remains the case that many pressures remain outside their immediate control. And, with so many pubs at the heart of local communities, support is essential to help them survive and continue serving the millions of people who rely on them.

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By [The Canary](#)

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