The Good, The Bad And The Thirsty Consumers Turning To

The Good, The Bad And The Thirsty Consumers Turning To Bottled And Filtered Water For Taste, Quality And ConvenienceWater consumption is up nationwide, according to the Beverage Marketing Association. However, consumers seem to prefer bottled water to their local tap water due to taste and quality concerns. The latest Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ranking shows Chicago at the top of the list when it comes to cities with excellent water quality and taste, while cities like San Francisco, Boston and Phoenix ranked at the bottom. But no matter where you live, more and more consumers are turning to filtered or bottled drinking water. In fact, a new study conducted by Mintel found that nearly 40 percent of consumers own a water filtration device, and nearly 55 percent purchase bottled water to drink at home.Of the people who own water filters, 64 percent purchased them to improve taste and 62 percent did so because of health concerns."While the majority of water supplies are safe, consumers are increasingly aware of potential contaminants in their drinking water," said Tom Bruursema, general manager of NSF International's Drinking Water Treatment Units Certification Program. "As a result, many consumers are looking for home water filtration devices depending on their individual needs."Growing attention to healthy weight loss is also causing people to drink more water."Today, more than ever, consumers are drinking up to slim down," said Rosemary Kimani, owner *Go here* of fitness club Curves Logan Square in Chicago. "Almost all health and weight-loss programs recommend people drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day." According to the Beverage Marketing Association, U.S. consumers now drink more bottled water annually than any other beverage, other than carbonated soft drinks. Last year, Americans drank 7.5 billion gallons of bottled water, which translates into more than 26 gallons per person. Another growing trend-more consumers are finding filtered water from their refrigerator to be an inexpensive and convenient alternative to purchasing bottled water. "We're seeing quite an increase in water filter sales as related to our side-by-side refrigerator owners. Of those who own water filters nationally, 51 percent have a dispenser built into their refrigerator, up from 35 percent in 2003," said Bryan Aown, Whirlpool brand director of water filtration. "In addition to convenience, the growth may be attributed to cost savings. Over its six-month life, a refrigerator water filter processes as much as 200 gallons, which is approximately $0.20 per gallon, when bottled water can cost $6 to $9 a gallon."Whirlpool brand states most filters are located in the refrigerator's base grill to provide maximum storage space. Additionally, filters cost roughly $40 and only need to be replaced twice a year, resulting in just an $80 annual expense. Other common filters include systems installed in plumbing or faucet attachments.