

Current cannabis legalisation around the globe



Laws governing the use and production of cannabis vary widely across the world, but the overall picture is that more and more jurisdictions are allowing what was until quite recently outlawed. **Thomas Walker** reports.

This article takes a brief glimpse at the present state of cannabis legalisation in a number of key countries. Some states allow the possession and consumption of cannabis with few or no limits, while others impose a heavy fine or even imprisonment for possession.

- **United States**

Cannabis laws in the US are more confusing than anywhere else. Federal regulations allow cannabis products where the main psychoactive component (tetrahydrocannabinol or THC) comprises less than 0,3%, but states can form cannabis legislation independently.

Colorado, California, Oregon and Washington, for example, allow the consumption of medical and recreational cannabis.

In contrast, recreational cannabis is illegal in some states, such as Florida, Arkansas, Georgia and Oklahoma.

- **Canada**

Canada is a cannabis-friendly country, and recreational consumption is allowed, provided the user is at least 18 years old. Cannabis may even be sent by post.

- **Italy**

Although Italy allows possession and smoking of cannabis in small quantities, growing or selling it may result in a fine.

Paradoxically, the country is a significant producer of cannabis, and pressure to get it legalised is increasing.

- **The Netherlands**

The Netherlands legalised cannabis consumption before most of the world even considered doing so. Despite its legality, cannabis may not be grown here.

However, the country is reconsidering its cannabis laws and deliberating the opportunities offered by 'cannabis tourism'.

- **Russia**

Although cannabis is not legal here, the country has decriminalised possession of up to 6g.

- **Australia**

Possession and consumption of a legal quantity of medical cannabis is permitted. Despite this, cannabis cannot be consumed for recreational purposes.

Having said this, you are not liable for any serious offence if found with recreational cannabis, as it has been decriminalised.

- **South Africa**

South Africa has not legalised the consumption of recreational cannabis, but this looks as if it will be changing soon, with government pushing for a change in legislation. Cannabis enthusiasts may, however, consume cannabis in their 'private spaces'.

- **Switzerland**

Growing hemp is allowed in Switzerland. Possession of small amounts of cannabis has been decriminalised.

- **Spain**

Spain has a particularly open attitude towards cannabis consumption; there are hundreds of cannabis-smoking clubs. Individuals can possess and smoke any quantity of cannabis without legal penalties.

- **Argentina**

Argentina legalised cannabis for medicinal purposes in 2020, but cultivating and possessing large amounts are illegal. It is a person's constitutional right to consume cannabis.

- **Jamaica**

Jamaica adopts an entirely friendly attitude towards cannabis: there is no limitation or legal penalty.

- **Asian countries**

Cannabis is still illegal in most Asian countries, and the penalties for possession can be very severe.

As seen from this list, the consumption, possession and production of cannabis is allowed in many countries under certain conditions, or steps are being taken in this direction.

*Thomas Walker is the founder of Walker Cultivation, a consulting firm specialising in commercial cannabis production. Email him at thomas@walkercultivation.com. Subject line: Cannabis post. **FW***

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