

## Cocaine, Heroin, Cannabis, Ecstasy: How Big is the Global Drug Trade?

By [Global Research News](#)

Asia-Pacific Research, September 06, 2017

[top-criminal-justice-schools.net](http://top-criminal-justice-schools.net) 8 May 2014

Region: [Asia](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#),  
[USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Law and Justice](#)

*Of relevance to the current debate on Heroin addiction in the USA.*

*Narcotics is big business.*

*90 percent of the heroin consumed in the US comes from Afghanistan*

This Graphic was first published by GR in May 2014

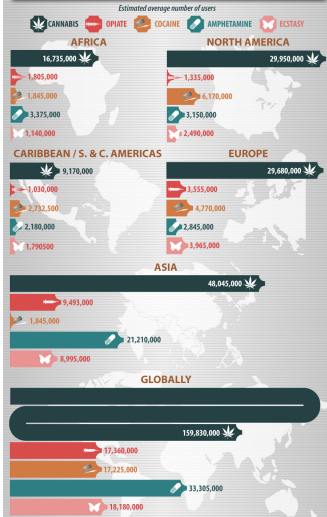
# HOW BIG IS THE DRUG TRADE?

With the recent capture of "El Chapo," the richest drug cartel leader in the world, let's take a look at what he was known for: a global drug trade.

## THERE'S A WORLD OF DRUGS OUT THERE...



## AND A WORLD OF DRUG USERS



## WHICH EQUALS A LOT OF DOUGH



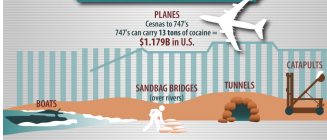
## BY VALUE, MOST DRUGS ORIGINATE IN 3 NATIONS



## COCAINE

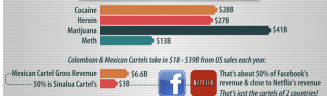


## DRUG TRAFFICKERS USE



The U.S. is the single largest customer base of drugs worldwide.

## U.S. DRUG EXPENDITURES



## KINGPINS

Several drug kingpins landed on Forbes richest in the world list in recent years.

**EL CHAPO GUZMAN**  
Forbes Billionaire list: 2009 - 2012  
Chicago's Public Enemy No. 1

**NOTABLE**

- 1st to traffic drugs through tunnel
- Used ratpail to throw drugs over the border
- Had a large pig farm in Wisconsin
- Escaped from a high security Mexican prison in a laundry basket
- Gave away Meth for free to establish a customer base

**ZHENLI YE GON**  
A chinese-mexican businessman believed to have sold precursors of meth to cartels. A LOT OF METH...

**METH INGREDIENT SEIZURES AT PORTS**

2009	2 TONS
2010	88 TONS
2012	252 TONS

**ZHENLI IS A NOTORIOUS GAMBLER**  
Lost \$72 MILLION at a casino, they gifted him a Bully Boyo

**PABLO ESCOBAR**  
AT HIS HEIGHT HAD A FLEET OF:  
16 planes  
1 Lear jet  
6 helicopters  
Boats  
Remote control submarines

**LARGEST LOAD:** sent 25 TONS OF COCAINE on a boat  
Spent \$2,500 a month on rubber bands to stack money  
Wrote off 10% of income from "spillage" by rats nibbling at stacks of money

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Source: [Top-Criminal-Justice-Schools.net](http://Top-Criminal-Justice-Schools.net)

## How Big Is the Drug Trade?

With the recent capture of “El Chapo,” the richest drug cartel leader in the world, let’s take a look at what he was known for — a global drug trade.

### It’s a big question.

There’s a world of drugs out there:

Methamphetamine

Amphetamines

Cannabis

Heroin

Opium

Cocaine

Ecstasy

Hallucinogens

And a world of drug users...

Drug Users by Region:

### Africa:

Cannabis Users-

Lower estimate-27,680,000

Upper estimate-52,790,000

Average-16,735,000

Opiate Users-

Lower estimate-680,000

Upper estimate-2,930,000

Average-1,805,000

Cocaine Users-

Lower estimate-1,020,000

Upper estimate-2,670,000

Average-1,845,000

Amphetamine Users-

Lower estimate-1,550,000

Upper estimate-5,200,000

Average-3,375,000

Ecstasy users-

Lower estimate-350,000

Upper estimate-1,930,000

Average-1,140,000

The Americas:

### North America:

Cannabis Users-

Lower estimate-29,950,000  
Upper estimate-29,950,000  
Average-29,950,000

Opiate Users-  
Lower estimate-1,290,000  
Upper estimate-1,380,000  
Average-1,335,000

Cocaine Users-  
Lower estimate-6,170,000  
Upper estimate-6,170,000  
Average-6,170,000

Amphetamine Users-  
Lower estimate-3,090,000  
Upper estimate-3,200,000  
Average-3,150,000

Ecstasy Users-  
Lower estimate-2,490,000  
Upper estimate-2,490,000  
Average-2,490,000

**Caribbean and South/Central America:**

Cannabis Users-  
Lower estimate-8,260,000  
Upper estimate-10,080,000  
Average-9,170,000

Opiate Users-  
Lower estimate-1,000,000  
Upper estimate-1,060,000  
Average-1,030,000

Cocaine Users-  
Lower estimate-2,550,000  
Upper estimate-2,910,000  
Average-2,732,500

Amphetamine Users-  
Lower estimate-1,670,000  
Upper estimate-2,690,000  
Average-2,180,000

Ecstasy Users-  
Lower estimate-550,000  
Upper estimate-3,031,000  
Average-1,790500

**Asia:**

Cannabis Users-  
Lower estimate-31,510,000  
Upper estimate-64,580,000  
Average-48,045,000

Opiate Users-  
Lower estimate-6,446,000  
Upper estimate-12,540,000  
Average-9,493,000

Cocaine Users-  
Lower estimate-430,000  
Upper estimate-2,270,000  
Average-1,350,000

Amphetamine Users-  
Lower estimate-4,430,000  
Upper estimate-37,990,000  
Average-21,210,000

Ecstasy Users-  
Lower estimate-2,370,000  
Upper estimate-15,620,000  
Average-8,995,000

**Europe:**

Cannabis Users-  
Lower estimate-29,370,000  
Upper estimate-29,990,000  
Average-29,680,000

Opiate Users-  
Lower estimate-3,290,000  
Upper estimate-3,820,000  
Average-3,555,000

Cocaine Users-  
Lower estimate-4,570,000  
Upper estimate-4,970,000  
Average-4,770,000

Amphetamine Users-  
Lower estimate-2,500,000  
Upper estimate-3,190,000  
Average-2,845,000

Ecstasy Users-  
Lower estimate-3,850,000  
Upper estimate-4,080,000  
Average-3,965,000

## **Global Numbers:**

Cannabis Users-

Lower estimate-128,910,000

Upper estimate-190,750,000

Average-159,830,000

Opiate Users-

Lower estimate-12,840,000

Upper estimate-21,880,000

Average-17,360,000

Cocaine Users-

Lower estimate-15,070,000

Upper estimate-19,380,000

Average-17,225,000

Amphetamine Users-

Lower estimate-13,710,000

Upper estimate-52,900,000

Average-33,305,000

Ecstasy Users-

Lower estimate-10,540,000

Upper estimate-25,820,000

Average-18,180,000

## **Which equals A LOT of dough**

Estimated annual value of global criminal markets in the 2000's

**Cocaine: \$88 billion USD**

**Opiates: \$65 billion USD**

By comparison, only \$1 billion in criminal firearms markets.

That's 153 times bigger than the criminal firearms trade.

- (And that's only counting Cocaine and Opiates)

## **By Value, most drugs originate in 3 nations.**

Afghanistan, Colombia, and Peru manufacture a majority of cocaine and heroine.

## **Top destinations for Afghani Heroin:**

1. Europe
2. Russian Federation
3. China
4. The Americas
5. Africa

## **Top destinations for Afghani Opium**

1. Iran
2. Europe

3. Afghanistan
4. Pakistan
5. Africa

### **Top destinations for Peruvian and Colombian Cocaine:**

1. North America (40% of global annual users)
2. EU
3. South America/Central America/Caribbean
4. Africa
5. Asia

### **Once the money gets rolling...**

Cocaine:

Pan-American Route:

With drugs, you pay for risk, as much as the product itself.

1 kilo = \$2,000 in Colombia or Peru

1 kilo = \$10,000 in Mexico

1 kilo = \$30,000 in the U.S.

Or broken up into grams = \$100,000 in U.S.

### **There's no stopping it.**

Even with a wall at the border drug traffickers use:

Catapults (to throw packages over the wall)

Planes (over the wall)

-Cesnas to 747's.[2]

(747's can carry 13 tons of cocaine)

(that's \$1.179 billion in cocaine once it's in America and parceled out)

Boats (around the wall)

Tunnels (below the wall)

Sandbag Bridges (over rivers)

When your trafficking a 100 kilos, a wrecked Cessna, a sunk boat, or a broken tunnel is a cost you can deal with.

### **The U.S. is the single largest customer base of drugs worldwide.**

Estimates for US drug expenditures:[in billions USD]

Cocaine: 28

Heroin: 27

Marijuana: 41

Meth: 13

Former Mexican President Porfirio Diaz—"Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States." [2]

Colombian and Mexican Cartels take in \$18-\$39 billion from US sales each year.

\$6.6 billion = Mexican Cartel gross revenue.

50% of this is made by the Sinaloa Cartel

Equals \$3 billion in revenue.  
About 1/2 of Facebook's revenue  
Close to Netflix's revenue  
And that's just the cartels of two countries.

**These are some massive players.**

With several drug kingpins landing on Forbes richest in the world list in recent years.

**Drug Kingpins:**

**El Chapo Guzman:[2]**

Forbes billionaire list: 2009-2012

Chicago's Public Enemy No. 1

Notable Achievements:

1st to traffic drugs through tunnel underneath border.

Known for using a catapult to throw drugs over the border.

Had a large pot farm guarded by armed guards in northern Wisconsin.

Escaped from a high security Mexican prison in a laundry basket.

Saw the future with methamphetamine, gave it away for free to establish a customer base.

**Zhenli Ye Gon[2]**

A Chinese-Mexican businessman believed to have sold precursors of meth to cartels.

And this is a lot of meth.

Meth ingredient seizures at ports:

22 tons in October 2009; 88 tons in May 2010; 252 tons December 2012

Zhenli is a notorious gambler. [2]

Losing so much at a casino that they gifted him a Rolls-Royce.

How much do you have to lose to be given a Rolls-Royce?

\$72 million was how much Zhenli lost at one casino that year.

**Pablo Escobar:[4]**

At his height had a fleet of:

16 planes

1 Learjet

6 helicopters

Boats

Remote control submarines.

Largest load: sent 25 tons of cocaine on a boat.

Spent \$2,500 a month on rubber bands to stack money.

Wrote off 10% of income from "spoilage" by rats nibbling at stacks of money.

**This is too much money to ignore. In the drug trade, if you can make it, users will always come.**





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