Ironic consumption refers to using a product while trying to dissociate from the meaning or identity that the product normally signals. Although there is an established literature on how consumers use products to signal who they are or avoid products to signal who they are not, far less is known about ironic consumption. Four experiments investigate how people consume ironically, when an audience detects that a consumer is being ironic, and how ironic consumption influences the extent to which the consumer enjoys the consumption experience and the impressions that the consumer makes on others. We find that people select products that they consider less desirable when being ironic, and that consuming a desirable product ironically can make the consumption experience less enjoyable. Observers are most likely to detect ironic consumption when the consumer imitates a behavior associated with a less desirable or dissociative out-group. Moreover, detecting irony tends to soften the audience’s impression of a consumer. Specifically, being seen as ironic mitigates the good impression that consumers typically receive from consuming a product with favorable in-group associations, but also alleviates the bad impression that consumers typically receive from consuming a product with unfavorable out-group associations.

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