

Want to know more about the various spirits? Here's the place to add to your knowledge about aperitifs, cordials, liqueurs and liquor

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Last modified on 2010/8/17 by [Phil](#)



Â What is Bourbon?

Bourbon is Americaâ€™s contribution to the world of Whiskey. In 1964, about 200 years after the first bourbon went to barrel, congress declared bourbon as Americas Native Spirit. Like all whiskies the main ingredients are distilled grain and water. Bourbon, by law, must have at least 51% corn in the grain mix. The result is a sweeter truly American whiskey. Â

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By law Bourbon must meet the following government standards:

- Produced in the United States
- Consist of a grain mix of at least 51% corn
- No additives, except water to reduce proof where necessary
- Must be aged in new, charred white oak barrels
- To be called â€œstraightâ€• bourbon the whiskey must be aged a minimum of two years

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Six Fun Facts About Bourbon

1. All Bourbon is Whiskey but not all whiskey is bourbon
2. In 1964 Under Bourbon lover Lyndon Johnson's administration, Congress declared bourbon, "America's Native Spirit"
3. In 2014 Congress passed [house resolution 579](#) recognizing the 50th anniversary of the congressional declaration of bourbon as a distinctive product of the united states
4. Where other whiskey producers can and may add colors and flavors to their products, the only thing that can be added to Bourbon is water (and only to lower the proof)
5. Other whiskeys (like scotch) can be aged in "re-used" Barrels. By Law Bourbon must use NEW charred American white oak barrels.
6. It can't say "bourbon" on the label if it's not distilled in the United States. And it can't be "Kentucky Bourbon" unless it's distilled in Kentucky

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Tequila [Tequila]

Tequila is a Blue Agave-based spirit made primarily in the area surrounding the city of Tequila, 65 kilometres (40 mi) northwest of Guadalajara, and in the highlands (*Los Altos*) of the western Mexican state of Jalisco.

Tequila is usually bottled in one of five categories:

Blanco ("white") or *plata* ("silver"): white spirit, un-aged and bottled or stored immediately after distillation, or aged less than two months in stainless steel or neutral oak barrels;

oro ("gold"): is silver tequila with caramel or food coloring added. Examples are Jose Cuervo Gold or Sauza Gold

Reposado ("rested"): aged a minimum of two months, but less than a year in oak barrels;

Añejo ("aged" or "vintage"): aged a minimum of one year, but less than three years in oak barrels;

Extra Añejo ("extra aged" or "ultra aged"): aged a minimum of three years in oak barrels. This category was established in March 2006.

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Rum [Rum]

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Rum is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from sugarcane by-products such as molasses and sugarcane juice by a process of fermentation and distillation. The distillate, a clear liquid, is then usually aged in oak and other barrels.

The majority of the world's rum production occurs in and around the Caribbean and in several Central American and South American countries, such as Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, Jamaica, Guyana, Puerto Rico, Brazil, and Cuba. There are also rum producers in places such as Australia, Fiji, the Philippines, India, Reunion Island, Mauritius, and elsewhere around the world.

Light rums are commonly used in cocktails, whereas golden and dark rums are also appropriate for drinking straight, or for cooking. Premium rums are also available that are made to be consumed straight or with ice.

Rum plays a part in the culture of most islands of the West Indies, and has famous associations with the Royal Navy where it was mixed with water or beer to make "grog" and piracy, where it was consumed as "Bumbo".

The first distillation of rum took place on the sugarcane plantations of the Caribbean in the 17th century. Plantation slaves first discovered that molasses, a by-product of the sugar refining process, can be fermented into alcohol. Later, distillation of these alcoholic by-products concentrated the alcohol and removed impurities, producing the first true rums. Tradition suggests that rum first originated on the island of Barbados.

A 1651 document from Barbados stated, "The chief fuddling they make in the island is Rumbullion, alias Kill-Divil, and this is made of sugar canes distilled, a hot, hellish, and terrible liquor".

The grades and variations used to describe rum depend on the location that a rum was produced. Despite these variations the following terms are frequently used to describe various types of rum:

Light Rums, also referred to as *silver rums* and *white rums*. In general, light rum has very little flavor aside from a general sweetness, and serves accordingly as a base for cocktails. Light rums are sometimes filtered after aging to remove any color. The Brazilian Cachaça is generally this type, but some varieties are more akin to "gold rums". The majority of Light Rum comes out of Puerto Rico. Their milder flavor makes them popular for use in mixed-drinks, as opposed to drinking it straight.

Gold Rums, also called *amber rums*, are medium-bodied rums which are generally aged. These gain their dark color from aging in wooden barrels (usually the charred white oak barrels that are the byproduct of Bourbon Whiskey). They have more flavor, and are stronger tasting than Silver Rum, and can be considered a midway-point between Silver/Light Rum and the darker varieties.

Spiced Rum: These rums obtain their flavor through addition of spices and, sometimes, caramel. Most are darker in color, and based on gold rums. Some are significantly darker, while many cheaper brands are made from inexpensive white rums and darkened with artificial caramel color.

Dark Rum, also known as black rum, classes as a grade darker than gold rum. It is generally aged longer, in heavily charred barrels. Dark rum has a much stronger flavor than either light or gold rum, and hints

Flavored Rum: Some manufacturers have begun to sell rums which they have infused with flavors of fruits such as mango, orange, citrus, coconut or lime. These serve to flavor similarly themed tropical drinks which generally comprise less than 40% alcohol, and are also often drunk neat or on the rocks.

Overproof Rum is rum which is much higher than the standard 40% alcohol. Most of these rums bear greater than 60%, in fact, and preparations of 75% to 80% [abv](#) occur commonly.

Premium Rum: As with other sipping spirits, such as Cognac and Scotch, a market exists for premium and super-premium rums. These are generally boutique brands which sell very aged and carefully produced rums. They have more character and flavor than their "mixing" counterparts, and are generally consumed without the addition of other ingredients.

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Vodka [Vodka]

Vodka

Vodka is a [distilled spirit](#) traditionally made in Russia and Poland. Vodka has become a popular spirit worldwide over the last 50 years. Although it used to be made exclusively by fermenting potatoes, vodka is now primarily made from grains such as wheat, corn, and rye.

After the grain has been fermented and the alcohol distilled, the vodka is filtered through charcoal as a way to remove the impurities, which results in a primarily colorless and odorless beverage. Sometimes additional flavors, usually fruit, can be added to vodka to give it a distinct essence. Cheers carries a wide selection of Vodka from as far away as Iceland to as close to home as Minneapolis

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