



WHISKY BIBLE

aqua vitae uisge beatha – ‘water of life’



A brief history of Whisky

The Gaelic 'usquebaugh', meaning 'Water of Life', phonetically became 'usky' and then 'whisky' in English. Scotland has internationally protected the term 'Scotch'. For a whisky to be labelled Scotch it has to be produced in Scotland.

'Eight bolls of malt to Friar John Cor wherewith to make aqua vitae'. The entry above appeared in the Exchequer Rolls as long ago as 1494 and appears to be the earliest documented record of distilling in Scotland. This was sufficient to produce almost 1500 bottles.

Legend would have it that St Patrick introduced distilling to Ireland in the fifth century AD and that the secrets travelled with the Dalriadic Scots when they arrived in Kintyre around AD500.

The spirit was universally termed aqua vitae ('water of life') and was commonly made in monasteries, and chiefly used for medicinal purposes, being prescribed for the preservation of health, the prolongation of life, and for the relief of colic, palsy and even smallpox.

Scotland's great Renaissance king, James IV (1488-1513) was fond of 'ardent spirits'. When the king visited Dundee in 1506, the treasury accounts record a payment to the local barber for a supply of aqua vitae for the king's pleasure. The reference to the barber is not surprising. In 1505, the Guild of Surgeon Barbers in Edinburgh was granted a monopoly over the manufacture of aqua vitae – a fact that reflects the spirits perceived medicinal properties as well as the medicinal talents of the barbers.

The Scottish parliament introduced the first taxes on malt in the latter part of the 17th century and consequently smuggling became standard practice for some 150 years. There was no moral stigma attached to it: Ministers of the Kirk often made storage space available under the pulpit, and the illicit spirit was, on occasion, transported by coffin – any effective means was used to escape the watchful eyes of the Excise men.

We have been talking about what we now know as Malt Whisky. But, in 1831 Aeneas Coffey invented the Coffey or Patent Still, which enabled a continuous process of distillation to take place. This led to the production of Grain Whisky, a different, less intense spirit than the Malt Whisky produced in the distinctive copper pot stills. The lighter flavoured Grain Whisky, when blended with the more fiery malts, extended the appeal of Scotch whisky to a considerably wider market.

Whisky regions

Map of Scotland showing the main whisky producing regions.



There may be some whiskies behind the bar that are not included in this book and we may not have everyone in at any one time.

Campbeltown

The largest of the whisky producing regions, and therefore the one that varies most in style. Northern highland malts tend to be medium to light bodied with heather and some peatiness. Southern highland malts can be sweeter with more floral flavours.

Dalmore 12 years *Northern 40%*
Rum butter nose with malt loaf on a light peat heath.

Fettercairn (Old) 10 years *Eastern 40%*
Smooth, light, freshly cut wood with clean bitter toffee notes.

Glen Ord 12 years *Northern 43%*
Soaked dry fruits meet warm cinnamon and toffee.

Glengoyne 10 years *Western 40%*
Freshly picked, soft, warm Cox's apples with cream sherry.

Glengoyne 21 years *Western 43%*
Sweet sherry and hay on the nose, toffee and butterscotch on the palate.

Glenmorangie 10 years *Northern 40%*
Sandalwood with a whiff of the sea. Spicy, buttery long and rounded.

Glenmorangie 18 years *Northern 43%*
Perfumed with nutty, caramel and vanilla overtones. Great intensity.

Glenmorangie Burgundy Wood *Northern 43%*
10 years in bourbon casks and finished in Madeira drums. Black pepper, toffee and mint.

Glenmorangie Sherry Wood *Northern 43%*
Sherry wine and traces of honey yet sweet with a light dry finish.

Glenmorangie Port Wood *Northern 43%*
12 years in bourbon casks then 2 in port casks this has a very soft soothing butterscotch and fruit finish.

Glenturret 10 years *Eastern 40%*
Pale greeny gold malt. Light and minty with toffee flavoured cough sweets.

Oban 14 year old *Western 43%*
Oranges, lemons and pears on the nose, dried figs and honey on the palate.

Springbank 10 years *Campbeltown 46%*
An elegant malt that has both sweetness and dryness with oil and citrus fruit and a suggestion of smoke.

Springbank 15 years *Campbeltown 46%*
A deep golden malt yet smooth with some oil and citrus with a salty finish.

Tullibadine 10 year old *Southern 40%*
A light and refreshing malt with vanilla on the nose and chocolate on the finish.

Speyside

This area has the highest concentration of distilleries in Scotland with much of the water coming from the mighty river Spey. The whiskies have a greater similarity than in other regions; generally being complex and elegant with honey and heather tones.

Ardmore *Bogie 40%*

Spicy, creamy nose with peat and vanilla on the palate.

Aberlour 10 years *Strathspey 43%*

Sweet nutmeg spice with a peppery dryness. A flavoursome oxymoron.

Balvenie 'Double Wood'

12 years *Dufftown 40%*

Honey, spice and subtle oak.

Balvenie 'Signature'

12 years *Dufftown 40%*

Amber coloured, with nuts, heather and mellow spices.

Balvenie 15 years *Dufftown 47.8%*

Honeyish malt with orange notes.

Firm body with a dry finish.

Balvenie 21 years *Dufftown 40%*

Matured in oak then transferred to a port cask.

Sweet, complex with toffee and marzipan.

Dalwhinnie *Speyside 43%*

Crisp, aromatic nose with honey and vanilla on the palate.

Glenfiddich 12 years

Dufftown 40%

Full gold, lean and smooth with malt and toasted hazelnuts.

Glenfiddich 15 years

Dufftown 40%

Honey with hints of wood and vanilla.

Complex spice and fresh fruit.

Glenfiddich 18 years

Dufftown 40%

Blood oranges and apples with oaky smoothness. Sultanas and spices in the mouth.

Glenfiddich 21 years

Dufftown 40%

4 months in Carribean rum barrels gives rich toffee, vanilla and a new leather smell.

Glenlivet 12 years *Livet 40%*

Pale gold with a clean flowery nose.

Long gently warming vanilla.

Glenlivet 18 years *Livet 40%*

Honey rich and toffeed on the palate with nutty, spicy overtones.

Glenrothes *Rothies 43%*

Medium sweet with vanilla and

orange zesty overtones.

Inchgower 14 year old

Central 43%

Spicy and sweet on the nose, the palate starts sweet and malty, becoming dry and salty.

Knockando 12 years

Central 43%

Golden shortbread nose with soft honey on nuts and raspberries.

Macallan 10 years *Central 40%*

Pale bronze. Fragrant crisp and smooth.

Lightly buttery and malty.

Macallan 12 years *Central 40%*

Vanilla, ginger and wood smoke with sweet toffee and spice flavours.

Macallan Gran Reserva

Central 43%

Rich in colour with hints of dried fruit, spice and chocolate orange.

Old Ballantruan *Livet 50%*
Youthful, malty and chocolatey aromas lead to sweet, soft and creamy palate.

Strathisla 12 years *Strathisla 43%*
Medium ripe apricots, teasingly sweet and dry with a rich sherry coating.

Islands

These malts have a tendency towards peaty, smokey characteristics. Many people say that the Island whiskies are influenced by their seaside location, giving them saltyflavours and marine aromas.

Highland Park 12 years
Orkney 40%
Succulent, with smoky dryness, heather honey sweetness and malt.

Highland Park 18 years
Orkney 43%
Pale gold with a flowery nose spices and smoke - best with a cigar.

Ledaig *Mull 42%*
Peat nose mixed with seaweed from Tobermory. Milk chocolate and ginger.

Poit Dhubh 8 years *Skye 43%*
Talk of an illicit still, and an “unchilled & filtered” process make this unusual.

Tomatin 10 years *Findhorn 40%*
Shortbread nose. Mellow toffee spices with toasted pine nuts.

Tobermory 10 year old
Mull 40%
Gentle, medium bodied unpeated scotch whisky.

Scapa 14 year old *Orkney 40%*
Sweet and silky smooth with a heather honey taste.

Talisker 10 years *Skye 45.8%*
Bright amber red; pungent smoky and malty with a huge peppery finish.

Jura (Isle of) 10 years *Jura 40%*
Bright gold. Light and sweetish, slowly developing a soft dry saltiness.

Lowlands

The lowland area has fewer distilleries than any other region, producing softer, mellower whiskies that tend to be light and dry.

Auchentoshan *Western 40%*
Warm vanilla nose with lemon zest and marshmallows.

Glenkinchie 10 years
Eastern 43%
Aromatic sweet lemon nose sits on spiced Demerara and dry ginger.

Rosebank 12 year old *Central 43%*
Floral and fresh with an attractive zing, delightful springtime drop.

Auchentoshan Three Wood
Western 43%
Rich with dark fruits, thick butterscotch and roasted hazelnut. Finished on Oloroso and Pedro Ximenez casks.

Islay

One of the larger islands off the west coast, Islay is a mecca for whisky lovers. The influence of the sea is usually obvious in aroma and taste, with the use of peat fuel also giving smokey, medicinal qualities.

Ardbeg 10 years *South Shore 40%*

Smoke and brine nose, medium body, sweetness going to salt.

Lord of the Isles *South Shore 46%*

Soft, fragrant and leathery with a light, medicinal finish.

Bowmore 12 years *Lochindaal 40%*

Pears soaked in honey, smoked over peat with dark chocolate.

Bowmore 17 years *Lochindaal 43%*

Balance of peat smoke, dark chocolate and exotic fruits. Sea salt and coffee palate.

Bruichladdich 10 years

Lochindaal 46%

Soft breezes over a green sea lapping against passion fruits.

Bruichladdich 15 years

Lochindaal 46%

‘The brae on the shore’, biscuity with sea and smoke. Flowers, fudge and caramel.

Bunnahabhain *East Shore 43%*

Refreshing, clean sea air, gentle nutty and malty.

Caol Ila *East Shore 43%*

Vinho verde mixed with vanilla and nutmeg.

Laphroaig 10 years *South Shore 40%*

Famously medicinal and sea-weedy with a hint of oily sweetness.

Laphroaig cask 10 years

South Shore 57.3%

Rich aroma of peat smoke, sweetness and strong hints of the sea.

Laphroaig 15 years *South Shore 43%*

Mild, smokey with sweet warm undertones.

Lagavullin 16 year old

South Shore 43%

Massive peat smoke aromas and flavours with a dry finesse.

Lagavullin Distillers Edition

South Shore 43%

Intense smoke and sherry to taste with a long dry finish and chocolate nose.

Blended Scotch

Ballantines 40%

Ballantine's finest, contains 57 odd malts from Milnorduff and Glenburgie.

Bells 40%

Finely balanced malty, fruity and rich blend matured for eight years in oak.

Chivas Regal 12 years 40%

Round and creamy, heather honey and apples layered on hot buttered toast.

Dimple (Haig) 40%

300 year old internationally acclaimed blend. Known as 'Pinch' in the USA.

Famous Grouse 40%

Smooth, medium peated and with a touch of dryness.

J&B Rare 40%

A high proportion of Speyside malts produces a smooth, round, fruity blend.

Johnny Walker Red 40%

Smooth and light, but still retaining many of the characteristics of traditional scotch.

Johnny Walker Black 43%

40 whiskies, aged 12 years or more, make up this complex international blend.

Johnny Walker Blue 43%

The most acclaimed and exclusive blended scotch whisky in the world.

Sheep Dip 8 year old 40%

Fresh young grassy whisky with a touch of spice and complex fruity aromas.

Teachers 40%

Rich and full bodied with a malty, creamy palate and oaky, dry finish.



Whisky versus Whiskey!?

Within the broad category of Whisky or Whiskey there are many sub categories including obviously Scotch (as you have seen from the 100 we have selected here in the 'bible') there is also Bourbon, Rye, Tennessee, Irish and Canadian styles. The manufacture of these types of whisky/ey is guided and regulated by the government of the spirits country of origin. As a result, Canadian Whisky, for example, is a whole different animal from Scotch whisky, Irish whiskey and American whiskeys such as Tennessee, Bourbon and straight Rye. American and Irish producers tend to favour (or favor) the spelling WHISKEY while Scottish, Canadian even the Japanese favour the spelling WHISKY.

So we have two things going on here. . .are the drinks different styles hence the different spellings or is just the spelling different to be different? How does a Scotsman write about Irish Whiskey or an American write about Canadian Whisky?

Well rumour has it that countries with 'E's in their name IrEland and UnitEd StatEs spell it WHISKEY or plural WHISKEYS and those without an E in their name Canada, Scotland and Japan spell it WHISKY or plural WHISKIES.

So there you have it, a sensible solution . . .

We know what you are going to ask, "how come Wales which produces Penderyn can call it Whisky?" We don't know, ask them yourselves while we are enjoying our Whisky or Whiskey or Bourbon or Rye or whatever!

"Time waits for no man" so order 'a wee dram' while you argue over the names!

Irish

Bushmills Blend 40%

Sweet honeyed taste and distinctive smooth flavour.

Black Bush Blend 40%

Matured in sherry casks giving a rich taste reminiscent of Christmas cake.

Bushmills 10 year Single 40%

Thrice distilled and matured in two woods, this is a rich, smooth, single malt.

Bushmills 16 year old Single 40%

Rich fruit and nut flavours leading to vanilla notes.

Connemara Single 40%

Smooth and complex this clean, peaty, single malt is from the western shores.

Connemara Cask Strength Single 60.7%

Strong peat aromas precede an explosion of pepper, chocolate and fruit flavours.

Jamesons Blend 40%

World famous triple distilled Irish whiskey.

Jamesons Gold Blend 40%

Delicate smooth and complex whiskey with a hint of honey toasted sweetness.

Kilbeggan Blend 40%

Medium, smooth, sweetish and very toasty, with malt character.

Locke's 8 year old Single 40%

Initial big barley hit on the nose and palate ending in dry fruitiness and vanilla.

Midleton's Very Rare 40%
Ireland's most exclusive whiskey from master blender Barry Crockett.

Paddy Blend 40%
A very linseedy, flowery nose is followed by a light toffee-based flavour.

Powers Gold Label Single 40%
Spice honeyed, full-bodied flavour.
Oak matured.

Redbreast 12 years Single 40%
Smooth and mellow with a full flavoured assertive taste.

Tullamore Dew Blend 40%
Slow maturation makes for a rich mellow flavour.

Whiskeys, Bourbons or Whatever

Basil Hayden's 8 year old
Kentucky 40%
Yeasty and warm with a crisp clean finish.

Canadian Club Canada 40%
Light and versatile blend aged in white oak barrels.

Eagle Reserve 10 year Old
Kentucky 40%
Some sherry notes with a trace of almond and leather on the nose.

Fighting Cock 6 year old
Kentucky 51.5%
Aromas of baked apple, butterscotch and corn mash with a medium spicy finish.

Jack Daniels Tennessee 40%
The world's number one selling whiskey.

Jim Beam White Label
Kentucky 40%
Vanilla and caramel notes moving into a slightly woody char.

Jim Beam Black Label
Kentucky 43%
Toffee and tobacco moving into subtle toasted grains.

Knob Creek 9 year old
Kentucky 50%
Aged in charred American oak lending extra sweetness in aroma and palate.

Makers Mark Kentucky 45%
Intense vanilla creaminess with moderate corn aromas and a touch of oak.

Noah's Mill Kentucky 57.5%
Hints of coffee, mandarin orange and maybe a little chocolate.

Pappy Van Winkles 15yr old
Kentucky 53.5%
Loaded with caramel and toffee ending in brown spice and wood notes.

Penderyn Wales 46%
Sweet herbal nose and palate with a spicy, almost ginger finish.

Suntory Yamazaki Japan 43%
Dried fruit and honey aromas with a mellow taste and lingering dry finish.

Wild Turkey Kentucky 50.5%
Caramel and vanilla with hints of honey and oranges.

Woodford Reserve
Kentucky 45.2%
Honeycomb and charcoal on the nose, almonds and marzipan on the palate.

Bulleit Bourbon Frontier Whiskey Kentucky 40%
Worth a 'shot' or two!!

Georgia Moon Corn Whiskey

Kentucky 40%

You can taste the sweet corn in this 'Jar' of Kentucky Corn whiskey.

Jack Daniels Silver Select

Tennessee 40%

Pretty much the 'top of the range' JD.

Gentleman Jack from

Jack Daniels *Tennessee 40%*

A premium 'JD' bourbon for 'gentlemen'

Mellow Corn Kentucky

Corn Whisky *Kentucky 40%*

The best corn whisky to come out of Kentucky.

Papa Van Winkles 20 year old

Kentucky 53.5%

Loaded with caramel and toffee ending in brown spice and wood notes.

Voted 'World's Best Bourbon Whiskey 2010'.

THE TRUTH Whisky versus Whiskey

At one time, all whisky was spelled without the 'e', as 'whisky'. In around 1870, the reputation of Scottish whisky was very poor as Scottish distilleries flooded the market with cheaper spirits produced using the Coffey still. The Irish and American distilleries adopted the spelling 'whiskey', with the extra 'e', to distinguish their higher quality product. Today, the spelling whisky (plural whiskies) is generally used for whiskies distilled in Scotland, Wales, Canada and Japan, while whiskey is used for the spirits distilled in Ireland and America. Even though a 1968 directive of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms specifies 'whisky' as the official U.S. spelling, it allows labeling as 'whiskey' in deference to tradition and most U.S. producers still use the historical spelling. Exceptions such as Early Times, Maker's Mark and George Dickel are usually indicative of a Scottish heritage.

In the late Victorian era, Irish whiskey was the world's most popular whisky. Of the Irish whiskeys, Dublin whiskeys were regarded as the grands crus of whiskeys. In order to differentiate Dublin whiskey from other whiskies, the Dublin distilleries adopted the spelling 'whiskey'. The other Irish distilleries eventually followed suit. The last Irish 'whisky' was Paddy, which adopted the 'e' in 1966.

'Scotch' is the internationally recognized term for 'Scotch whisky' however it is rarely used in Scotland, where blended whisky is generally referred to as 'whisky' and single or vatted malt whisky as 'malt'.

In many Latin-American countries, whisky (wee-skee) is used as a photographer's cue to smile, supplanting English 'cheese'. The Uruguayan film Whisky got its name because of this.

So there you go . . . with a bit of trivia thrown in!

