

# What is Whisky?

Scottish Gaelic “*usquebae*”, *water of life*.....



## What is Whisky?

- Whisky is a distilled **alcoholic** beverage made from fermented grain mash.
- It is typically aged in wooden casks, which gives it distinct flavours and characteristics.
- Whisky is produced in various countries, including Scotland, Ireland, the United States, Canada, and Japan.

# Alcohol and °Proof

What?

## Alcohol

- ▶ Alcohol, scientifically known as ethanol,
  - ▶ (or historical ethyl alcohol)
  - ▶ is the main psychoactive component in alcoholic beverages.
- ▶ It is produced through the fermentation of sugars by yeast or other microorganisms.
- ▶ Ethanol has a distinctive taste,
  - ▶ its concentration determines the strength of the beverage.

## Alcohol by Volume (ABV)

- ▶ Alcohol content is typically expressed as **Alcohol by Volume (ABV)**,
  - ▶ represents the volume of **pure alcohol** in a given volume of the beverage.
- ▶ ABV is expressed as a percentage.
  - ▶ For example, if a beverage has an ABV of 40%, it means that 40% of the total volume is pure alcohol.

## Degrees Proof

- ▶ Degrees proof is an alternative way to express the alcohol content of a beverage.
- ▶ Historically, it originated from a test that involved soaking gunpowder with the spirit to determine its strength.
  - ▶ If the gunpowder ignited, the spirit was deemed "proof."
- ▶ In the United States, °proof is defined as twice the ABV.
  - ▶ For example, a spirit with an ABV of 50% would be 100 ° proof.

## Conversion between ABV and Degrees Proof

- ▶ To convert ABV to °proof, multiply the ABV by two.
  - ▶ For example, an ABV of 45% is equivalent to 90 ° proof.
- ▶ To convert ° proof to ABV, divide the ° proof by two.
  - ▶ For example, 120 ° proof is equivalent to an ABV of 60%.

## Why is Degrees Proof Relevant?

- ▶ ° proof provides a quick reference for the alcohol strength of a beverage.
- ▶ It helps consumers understand the potency of a spirit
  - ▶ and make informed choices.
- ▶ Higher ° proof generally indicates a higher alcohol content
  - ▶ and a stronger flavor profile (?)

## Whisky Production Process

- ▶ **Malting:** Germination of barley to activate enzymes that convert starches into fermentable sugars.
- ▶ **Mashing:** malted barley is ground and mixed with hot water to extract sugars.
- ▶ **Fermentation:** Yeast is added to the sugary liquid to convert it into alcohol, producing a liquid known as "**wash.**"
- ▶ **Distillation:** wash is distilled in copper stills to separate alcohol from impurities.
- ▶ **Maturation:** distilled spirit is aged in wooden casks, allowing it to develop complex flavours and aromas.

## Types of Whisky

- ▶ **Scotch Whisky:** Produced in Scotland,
  - ▶ typically made from malted barley and aged for at least **three** years.
  - ▶ It can be **single malt** (from one distillery) or **blended** (a combination of whiskies from multiple distilleries).
- ▶ **Irish Whiskey:** Produced in **Ireland**, usually made from a mix of malted and unmalted barley.
  - ▶ It is triple-distilled for a smoother taste.
- ▶ **American Whiskey:** Produced in the **United States**,
  - ▶ it includes Bourbon and Rye Whiskey

## Bourbon Whiskey

**Bourbon** is a type of American whiskey that has specific legal requirements:

- ▶ Must be made in the [United States](#).
- ▶ Must be produced from a grain mixture that is at least 51% corn.
- ▶ Must be aged in new charred oak barrels.
- ▶ Must be distilled to no more than 160° proof and entered into the barrel for aging at no more than 125° proof.
- ▶ Must be bottled at a minimum of 80° proof.
- ▶ *Bourbon tends to have a sweeter and fuller-bodied flavour profile compared to other whiskies.*

## Rye Whiskey

**Rye whiskey** is another type of American whiskey with its own distinctive features:

- ▶ Must be made from a grain mixture that is at least 51% rye.
- ▶ Must be aged in new charred oak barrels.
- ▶ Must be distilled to no more than 160° proof and entered into the barrel for aging at no more than 125° proof.
- ▶ Must be bottled at a minimum of 80° proof.
- ▶ *Rye whiskey is known for its spicier and drier taste profile, making it a favorite among whiskey enthusiasts.*

## Comparing Bourbon and Rye Whiskey

- ▶ **Mash Bill:** Bourbon has a higher corn content, resulting in a sweeter flavour,
  - ▶ while rye whiskey has a **higher rye** content, offering a **spicier** taste.
- ▶ **Aging:** Both bourbon and rye whiskey must be aged in new charred oak barrels, contributing to their flavours and colours.
- ▶ **Flavour Profile:** Bourbon is known for its rich caramel and vanilla notes,
  - ▶ while rye whiskey offers a **bolder, peppery flavour** with hints of fruit and spice.

## So what do I like?

- ▶ **“Cooking” Whisky:**
  - ▶ Famous Grouse, Bells, Ballantine's, (Johnny Wanker Red)
- ▶ **Deluxe Whisky:**
  - ▶ Chivas Regal 12 yr, 18yr, Ballentines 12yr (Johnny Wanker Black) JW Double Black
- ▶ **Single Malt**
  - ▶ Laphroaig, Bushmills, Glenmorangie, Glenfiddich
- ▶ **Whiskey:**
  - ▶ Jamesons, Jack Daniels, Jim Bean

