

MIXOLOGY

Whiskey in the Jar

**“The light music of
whiskey falling into a
glass – an agreeable
interlude.”**

— James Joyce

Written by Bill Burke

Ireland's Export is the World's Gain

There are a number of things that Ireland is best known for, including its renowned storytellers, passionate singers, its robust tea and its welcoming hospitality. But in recent years, its reputation for producing great whiskey has begun to rival even those cultural offerings.

On one hand, it should be a given – the Emerald Isle is often thought of as the spiritual home of “uisce beatha,” the “water of life.” But less than two decades ago there were just a handful of whiskey distilleries throughout Ireland. A resurgence in popularity has changed all that. Both newly-constructed and recently-reopened distilleries around the country have gifted the spirits world with a variety of classic and new offerings that exhibit the characteristics that make Irish whiskey unique.



**My friends are
the best friends.**

Loyal, willing and able.

Now let's get to drinking!

**All glasses off
the table!**

— Irish drinking toast



To say the Emerald Isle is best at producing Irish whiskey may be a bit of a technicality, since in order to be called such, it must be distilled on the island – including the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Aside from that, there's more than the conspicuous 'e' that sets it apart from its nearby neighbor, Scotch whisky, and its cousins bourbon and Canadian whisky. Irish whiskey is traditionally distilled three times and uses a blend of malted and unmalted barley in the pot still phase of production. One of the biggest differences between Scotch and its Irish sibling is that Irish whiskey is malted without peat or any smoke infused into the barley. It's made from kiln-dried barley, which produces tastes that closely reflect the

grain itself. As a result, Irish whiskey often imparts a lighter, toasted honey flavor. The triple distillation also creates a smoother character with a slightly higher alcohol content.

Irish whiskey sales are on the upswing thanks to several factors – not the least among them the fact that enthusiasts are being offered more high-quality options, along with a wide range of interesting takes on this classic spirit. The Irish food association Bord Bia reported that whiskey exports jumped 8

percent in 2016 – a figure that's expected to double by 2020. So add whiskey, once again, to Ireland's most popular exports, and when the day comes this month when it seems most appropriate to celebrate, choose from a diverse range of Irish whiskeys from which to toast one's Hibernian heritage – whether real or perhaps just claimed for the occasion.

On the next page is a roundup of some of the more well-known Irish whiskeys.

New Flavors, Old Favorites

There are several ways to enjoy Irish whiskey, but according to aficionados, it's best to drink it whatever way you like it. Try it:

- With ginger ale
- With a bit of water
- Straight
- With a bit of club soda
- On the rocks
- In a cocktail

Starting with ginger ale as a mixer will introduce anyone new to the spirit in an approachable way. Adding a bit of water can help release otherwise hidden aromas and flavors, as will adding a little ice – which will also cut down on the heat. Eventually, sipping it neat will reveal all of the intense character and flavor created during its unique distillation process.

Of course, Irish whiskey can be used in any number of cocktails. Perhaps one of the most celebrated drink recipes to include Irish whiskey is the tried-and-true Irish Coffee. This cocktail was said to have been invented by Irish chef Joe Sheridan at a wind-whipped airport near Limerick in the 1940s. A group of stranded passengers needed a little comfort, so the mix of Irish whiskey and coffee seemed a natural. It's now one of the most favored drinks in its home country, and a popular way to sip this warming spirit.

ON OUR COVER

Irish Coffee

courtesy cocktails.about.com

- 4 ounces strong, rich hot coffee
- 1 ounce Irish whiskey
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 ounce lightly whipped double cream

Pour the sugar then coffee into a warm Irish coffee glass, mug or other heat-proof stemmed glass. Stir until dissolved, and then add the Irish whiskey and stir again. Float the cream on top by pouring it over the back of a spoon. Do not stir again – instead, drink the coffee through the cream.



The Emerald

courtesy seriouseats.com

- 2 ounces Irish whiskey
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth
- 2 dashes orange bitters
- Orange or lemon peel for garnish
- Cracked ice

Pour all ingredients into a mixing glass and fill with cracked ice. Stir well for 30 seconds and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a piece of orange or lemon peel (or nothing at all.)



Luck of the Irish

courtesy liquor.com

- 1 ounce Irish whiskey
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth
- 1 ounce green chartreuse

Pour all the ingredients into a mixing glass with ice and stir until chilled. Strain into a rocks glass over ice.

Jameson

Produced from a blend of grain whiskey, single malt whiskey and single pot still whiskey, it uses a mixture of malted and unmalted Irish barley, which is sourced from a 50-mile radius around its Cork distillery. The original Jameson is known for a light floral fragrance, peppered with spicy wood and sweet notes on the nose, with spicy, nutty flavors and hints of vanilla and sweet sherry. Jameson has also produced a series of Irish whiskeys known as Caskmates, where its whiskey is finished in stout and IPA casks, and a number of aged and specialty expressions.



Tullamore D.E.W.

Triple distilled and then aged in a combination of ex-bourbon and sherry casks, the original Tullamore D.E.W. is known for its smooth character and gentle complexity. Light, sweet citrus and green apple on the nose gives way to fresh fruit and a definite light spike, followed by toasted wood and a vanilla sweetness before a buttery, mellow finish. Tullamore D.E.W. is also available in 10-year single malt, 12-year Special Reserve, 15-year Trilogy, the Tullamore D.E.W. Phoenix – at 110 proof – and even a Cider Cask Finished.



Bushmills



Billing itself as Ireland's oldest whiskey distillery, Bushmills is a blend of triple distilled malt whiskey and a lighter grain whiskey, creating a smooth, warming taste of honey sweetness and citrus notes with a long, lingering finish. Bushmills also produces additional offerings, including Red Bush, which is aged in bourbon casks, Black Bush, aged in sherry casks, and a number of single malt 10-year, 16-year and 21-year aged whiskeys.

Redbreast

The signature Redbreast bottling, a 12-year aged whiskey, is matured in Oloroso sherry casks, giving it a trademark Christmas cake character. It is rich and spicy, with notes of dried sultanas and figs, and toasted wood with hints of vanilla. Redbreast is also available in a range of expressions, including Lustau, Cask Strength, bottled currently at 57.2 percent alcohol by volume, 15-year-old and 21-year-old.



Clontarf 1014

Named for the Battle of Clontarf, which turned back Viking invaders advances through Ireland, this is a blended, triple-distilled whiskey sourced from the Midleton Distillery in County Cork. Filtered through oak charcoal and aged four years in bourbon barrels, it is velvety smooth yet complex, offering subtle hints of vanilla and notes of toffee.



Kilbeggan Irish Whiskey



A double-distilled blended whiskey, Kilbeggan manages to be both complex and approachable at the same time. It's the ideal introduction for those exploring the world of Irish whiskey, since it's double distillation gives it a robust profile with more character than triple-distilled blends. Aged in 200-year-old granite warehouses, it offers sweet caramel, vanilla and wood aromas, with a soft almond nougat, peach caramel and vanilla flavors.

Connemara Peated Single Malt Whiskey

A single-peated malt whiskey, Connemara is a blend of aged whiskeys: 4 year, 6 year and 8 year. Double distilled in copper pot stills, it's

There's More to Ireland's Spirit than Whiskey

While the Emerald Isle has carefully built and curated a reputation for its outstanding whiskey, the country also produces a number of spirits that don't necessarily come from a pot still and spend years maturing in casks. From vodka to gin to its renowned cream liqueurs, Ireland's distillers create a wide variety of memorable spirits.



Mór Irish Gin

A rich combination of earthy root botanicals and wild berry, Mór Irish Gin was established in Tullamore, in the heart of Ireland, in 2015. It features the sharp sweetness of juniper and Angelica Root, and the citrus sharpness of coriander. Floral notes of rosemary and Slieve Bloom mountain water help to create a pure gin that's also bold in its simple flavors. Perfect for mixing, it also pairs well with cured meats, fruit, strong cheeses and cucumber sandwiches.

Boru Vodka

Named for Ireland's King Brian Boru, who united Ireland in 1014, Boru Vodka is a premium vodka made from grain and pristine Irish spring water. Distilled five times, Boru's crisp, even taste makes it a fresh alternative to enjoy neat, as part of a martini or as the foundation of a cocktail. Boru Vodka has a fresh, slightly bready aroma with a pleasant grassiness. The body is mouth-coatingly syrupy and the palate is sharp, clean and slightly peppery. The balanced flavor has a pleasantly lingering warmth.



Drumshanbo Gunpowder Irish Gin

Created in Connacht's first distillery in more than 100 years, located in Drumshanbo, County Leitrim, this gin has a fresh, citrus taste and spicy notes. Made with a variety of botanicals, including juniper, angelica, caraway, coriander and star anise, as well as vapor infused oriental lemon and lime and fresh grapefruit, this unique gin is distilled with Gunpowder. The delicate leaves impart a slightly spicy freshness.

Coole Swan Irish Cream

Named for Irish Poet W.B. Yeats' "The Wild Swans at Coole," Coole Swan Irish Cream combines fresh Irish cream with single malt Irish whiskey, Belgian chocolate, Madagascan bourbon vanilla and bittersweet cocoa. Coole Swan is 100 percent natural, with no synthetic flavors or caramel coloring. It's smooth, rich tasting and sweet – perfect for serving chilled or, thanks to its spicy, sweet and nutty notes, as part of a cocktail.



In order to be labeled Irish whiskey, the spirit must adhere to several requirements.

- It must be distilled on the island of Ireland – including the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland
- It must be aged for at least three years in oak barrels
- It must not contain additives other than water and caramel coloring
- It must be mashed, fermented, distilled to no more than 94.8 percent alcohol by volume
- It must be bottled at no less than 40 percent (80 proof) alcohol by volume
- It must have an aroma and taste derivative of the materials used
- The maturation must only take place on the island of Ireland

matured in bourbon oak casks. The barley used to make the whiskey is dried over peat fires, giving it a distinct, smoky flavor and aroma. Connemara combines the traditional smoothness and sweetness associated with Irish whiskey with the complexity of peat flavors. The nose is smoky and balanced, and the taste is smooth with a honeyed, sweet start. Enjoy it neat or with a little water to draw out even more aromas and flavors.

The Pogues Irish Whiskey

Named after the influential Irish folk/punk band who helped define a new genre of



music in the 1980s and 90s, this is a blend of 50 percent 10-year single malt Irish whiskey aged in sherry oak casks and seven-year-old single malt Irish whiskey aged in bourbon oak casks, and 50 percent four-

year Irish grain whiskey aged in bourbon oak casks. An aroma of malts and cracked nuts leads to a sweet, intense flavor. It's notable in part thanks to being distilled using only ingredients indigenous to Ireland, including locally-grown grain and spring water from the River Ilen. It's crafted in small batches in copper stills at West Cork Distillery's facility in Skibbereen – thought to be the cultural home of Irish whiskey. While that may be legend enough, the Pogues themselves provide an appropriate ode in one of its many melodies dedicated to the water of life: "I am going where streams of whiskey are flowing." 🍷

Always drink in moderation.

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