



WHISKY BIBLE

FIFTH EDITION

aqua vitae usque beatha – ‘water of life’

Celebrating 100 whiskies at the Bull’s Head



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 of Scotland

Map of Scotland showing the main whisky producing regions.



Please see the centre pages of this bible for
“Barry’s selection of Whisky Sampling boards”
which should be enjoyed with our Cheese Board

Highlands Including Campletown

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.

Glenmorangie 18 years

Northern 43% - Perfumed with nutty, caramel and vanilla overtones. Great intensity.

Glenmorangie 'The Original' 10 years old

Northern 40% - vanilla notes followed by a burst of flowery fruitiness. The real back bone to the Glenmorangie range.

Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban

Northern 46% - Mint chocolate and walnuts envelop the palate like velvet leading to notes of port.

Oban 14 year old

Western 43% - Oranges, lemons and pears on the nose, dried figs and honey on the palate.

Springbank 10 years

Campletown 46% - An elegant malt that has both sweetness and dryness with oil and citrus fruit and a suggestion of smoke.

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 salty flavours 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.

Isle of Jura, Superstition

Jura 43% - Peaty, with creamy notes and light smokey finish.

Poit Dhubh 8 years

Skye 43% - Talk of an illicit still, and an "unchilled & filtered" process make this unusual.

Scapa 16 year old

Orkney 40% - The nose is thick and rich with hints of honeycomb and toffee. The palate is full bodied with winter spices, cinnamon and cloves.

Talisker

Skye 45.8% - Long and fresh with a peppery, smokey finish.

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.

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.

Aberlour 10 years

Strathspey 43% - Sweet nutmeg spice with a peppery dryness. A flavoursome oxymoron.

The Balvenie 'Double Wood' 12 years

Dufftown 40% - Honey, spice and subtle oak.

The 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

Keith 40% - Golden and full bodied with rich dark fruit flavours.

Glenfiddich IPA

Keith 43% - Smooth and Fruity with a light citrus finish.

Glenrothes Vintage Reserve

Speyside 40% - A soft and creamy with a honeyed vanilla finish.

Glenrothes Bourbon Cask

Speyside 40% - Smooth and sweet with floral undertones.

Glenrothes Sherry Cask

Speyside 40% - Delicate and smooth with hints of ginger to finish.

Haig Club Clubman

Leven 40% - Light in colour with sweet tones.

Knockando 12 years

Central 43% - Golden shortbread nose with soft honey on nuts and raspberries.

The Macallan 10 years

Central 40% - Pale bronze. Fragrant crisp and smooth. Lightly buttery and malty.

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 12 years

Eastern 43% - Very fruity with notes of Madeira and sweet stewed fruits. Accompanies smoked fish perfectly.

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 smoky, medicinal qualities.

Ardbeg 10 years

South Shore 40% - Smoke and brine nose, medium body, sweetness going to salt.

Bowmore 12 years

Lochindaal 40% - Pears soaked in honey, smoked over peat with dark chocolate.

Why not try this with our homemade chocolate brownie??

Bruichladdich 10 years

Lochindaal 46% - Soft breezes over a green sea lapping against passion fruits.

Bunnahabhain

East Shore 43% - Refreshing, clean sea air, gentle nutty and malty.

Caol Ila

East Shore 43% - Vinho verde mixed with vanilla and nutmeg.

Accompanies the blue cheese on our cheese board perfectly.

Laphroaig 10 years

South Shore 40% - Famously medicinal and sea-weedy with a hint of oily sweetness.

Lagavullin 16 year old

South Shore 43% - Massive peat smoke aromas and flavours with a dry finesse.

Blended Scotch

Ballantines

40% - Ballantine's finest, contains 57 odd malts from Milntonduff 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.

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.

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!



BARRY'S WHISKY BOARDS

Barry is from the Emerald Isle and favours the Irish Whiskey! He takes over from Ben 'Nevis' Redwood as the Bulls Head whiskey champion but cannot sing "ain't no mountain high enough", but does a mean 'whiskey in the jar'.

Barry has put together his whiskey taster boards for our customers who have a great passion for sampling whiskey from different regions and countries.

Why not order a cheese board between you and a whiskey board or two!!!
A whiskey board is perfect for two or three enthusiasts to share and cheese is the perfect accompaniment!!

THE 'HIGHLANDER' BOARD **£11.00**

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 YO (North), Springbank 10 YO (Cambletown), Oban 14 YO (West)

THE 'SPEYSIDER' BOARD **£11.00**

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.

Arberlour 10YO, Knockando 12YO and the Macallan 10YO

THE ISLANDER BOARD **£11.00**

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

Poit Dhubh 8YO, Talisker 10YO and Jura 10YO

THE ISLAYER BOARD **£11.00**

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

Ardbeg 10YO, Bowmore 12YO and Caol Ila

THE YANKEE BOARD

£11.00

American whiskey is a distilled beverage produced in the United States from a fermented mash of cereal grain. Some key types are Rye whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 51% rye. Rye malt whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 51% malted rye. Malt whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 51% malted barley. Wheat whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 51% wheat. Bourbon whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 51% corn (maize). Corn whiskey, made from mash that consists of at least 80% corn (maize).

*Mellow Corn (Corn Whiskey),
Knob Creek 9 YO (Kentucky Bourbon),
Bulleit (Rye Whiskey)*

THE EMERALD ISLE BOARD

£11.00

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

*Red Breast 12 YO, Bushmills 10YO,
Lockes 8 YO*

THE GREAT BRITISH BOARD

£14.00

*(A celebration of the great range of
whiskies throughout Great Britain,
we take you across the countries
to taste the different flavours)*

*Bushmills 10yr (Northern Ireland),
Penderyn (Wales),
The Lakes (England),
Glenmorangie (Scotland)*



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.

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.

The Dubliner Whiskey Liqueur

Dublin 30% - Smooth with soft notes of honey and a sweet finish.

Dunvilles-3 Crowns

Belfast 43.5% - Smooth with a sweet, caramel finish.

Greenore

40% - Sweet, smooth vanilla before spicy oak comes in. Touches of menthol and coconut ice.

Hyde 10 year

Cork 46% - Lean and smooth with Vanilla on the nose.

Inishowen

40% - Spicy peat with deep note of malty sweetness.

The Irishman

Carlow 40% - Light and fruity with a subtle oak finish.

Jameson Black Barrel

Cork 40% - A creamy finish with subtle hints of spice.

Jameson Crested

Cork 40% - Rich and fruity with notes of tropical fruits.

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

Jamesons Select Reserve

40% - Good peach and coconut notes, and a little cinnamon.

Kilbeggan Blend

40% - Medium, smooth, sweetish and very toasty, with malt character.

Kilbeggan 'Distillery Reserve'

40% - Produced from 100% malted barley, exceptionally smooth and flavoursome with a distinctive character.

Kinahan's

Dublin 46% - Light with a fruity, sweet finish.

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.

Powers John's Lane Reserve

Dublin 46% - Fragrant and aromatic with a sweet finish.

Redbreast 12 years Single

40% - Smooth and mellow with a full flavoured assertive taste.

Redbreast 15 year

Dublin 46% - Rich, deep flavours with a sweet fruity finish.

Roe & Co

Dublin 45% - Gentle and well balanced with oaky flavours.

Slane

Slane 40% - Sweet oaky flavours with a toasty caramel finish.

Teeling Single Grain

Dublin 46% - Sweet and Light with a floral and fragrant finish.

Teeling Small Batch

Dublin 46% - Floral tones with a subtle spice finish.

Tullamore Dew Blend

Kilbeggan 40% - Slow maturation makes for a rich mellow flavour.

Tyrconnell

40% - Robust with a buttery Vanilla finish.

West Cork

Cork 40% - Smooth with Vanilla notes and a fruity finish.

Yellow Spot 12 year

40% - Peach and apricot notes with substantial body and a velvety finish.

Whiskeys, Bourbons or Whatever

Bulleit Bourbon Frontier Whiskey

Kentucky 40% - Worth a 'shot' or two!!

Canadian Club

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

Eagle Rare

Kentucky 45% - Rich, bold flavours with hints of toffee and a dry finish.

Elijah Wood Whiskey

40% - Bramley apples, malmsey, a touch of aniseed and a hint of spice.

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 Black Label

Kentucky 43% - Toffee and tobacco moving into subtle toasted grains.

Hibiki, Harmony

Japan 43% - Sweet wood tones, with a warm spice finish.

Knob Creek 9 year old

Kentucky 50% - Aged in charred American oak lending extra sweetness in aroma and palate.

Old Grand-Dad Bourbon

43% - This bourbon has some hair on its chest. Fruity but very firm.

Old Rip Van Winkle 12 year

45.2% - Rich, soft and sweet oak with custard.

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.

The Lakes

Cumbria 40% - Malty, with a peppery 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.

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.

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!

