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INTRODUCTION



The verdict is in: now is an exciting time to be a spirit drinker. Not so long ago, being a fan of liquor meant your go-to drink was a G&T, a rum and coke or a whisky on the rocks, rather than a beer or glass of wine. But times they are a-changing. The explosion of craft distilleries in the past five years has transformed the global spirits (and cocktails) landscape.

This is in no small part thanks to a gin revival, kick-started by a change to UK spirits licensing laws in 2009. But craft distilling has caught on all over the world, and with it drinkers' desire to see the places where the spirits are made and learn about the craft-masters who make them. Renewed interest in spirits has also led us to rediscover drinks that a few years ago had all but disappeared from our cocktail cabinets. Touring a centuries-old monastic distillery in rural France, for example, is just as fascinating as that hip little tasting bar in a disused warehouse in New York.

WHAT ARE CRAFT SPIRITS?

The American Craft Spirits Association stresses that what we think of as 'craft' is ultimately 'in the eye of the beholder', but broadly defines craft spirits as those made in distilleries that are independently owned and operated, produce fewer than 750,000 gallons a year, and are transparent about their ingredients, distillery location and ageing process.

Not every distillery featured in this book is a craft producer, and not all craft spirit-makers offer tours and tastings at their distilleries, but it is the (predominantly small) distilleries that are open to the public that Lonely Planet has chosen to focus on in this book: the tasting rooms where gin botanicals grow outside the front door, whisky grain is tracted in from a neighbouring farm, or ingredients such as wildflower honey are gathered from local bee hives to make rum.

In fact, the entries in this book show that one of the greatest defining characteristics of craft distilleries around

INTRODUCTION



the world is this desire to make use of what grows on their doorstep: be that apples in Canada, indigenous fynbos plants in South Africa, or green ants (!) in Australia.

The global gin craze, in particular, has been boosted by a heightened interest in fresh, local ingredients: many gin makers are focusing on the botanical element of the distilling process to create genuinely local products with flavour profiles that reflect the place where the spirit was made. In the UK – gin’s historic heartland – the number of distilleries more than doubled to 315 between 2013 and 2018, largely down to the so-called ‘ginaissance’. Yet the entries in this book show the craft gin trend is truly global.

And it’s not just gin that is benefiting from an artisan touch. Distillers – particularly in the USA and Australia – are

concocting all manner of boozy victuals, from coffee rums to sheep whey vodka, and interesting liqueurs flavoured with spiced honey, maple or chocolate. The indulgences of a new school of mad scientists? Perhaps, but that’s all part of the fun.

WHY GO DISTILLERY TOURING?

There can be no greater transparency for drinkers than touring the distilleries themselves, handling the ingredients and tasting the spirits before labels have even been slapped on the bottles. For many craft producers, distillery tours and tastings have become a key way of raising their profile and creating a community following. Tour a distillery and you could well get unparalleled access to the master distillers, who take no greater pleasure than bending your

From left: courtesy Castle & Key, Manly Spirits

ear to tell you how the spirits are made, what to mix them with and when to drink them – information that could never be gleaned from the back of a bottle in a shop. Stories, too, are part of the charm of touring distilleries: why a Ukrainian nuclear engineer ended up making vodka and whisky in New Zealand, or how a film and TV producer got the chance to grow his gin botanicals in an English castle.

It’s also likely that tasting at the source will get you a few shot-glasses worth of tipples that will never make it into the stores, as many craft distillers are dabbling with limited-edition spirits. Gin, for example, takes just a matter of hours to produce, meaning the possibilities for unique small batches are endless. You can be the distillery guinea pigs: all you have to do is book a tour.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Within each of the 33 countries in this book, we’ve organised the distilleries alphabetically by region. In the entry for each distillery, we’ve suggested the must-try drink or tasting experience and also recommended local sights, so distillery tourers can explore the local area in between tasting sessions.

Among the distillery entries, we’ve also included a small number of bars that are best-in-class for their selection of one particular drink, such as arak in Lebanon or tuak in Malaysia, and for which distilleries are hard to find. And at the back of the book, you’ll find a section dedicated to cocktails: our take on the best mixology magic in the world, and the bars that serve them. Bottoms up!

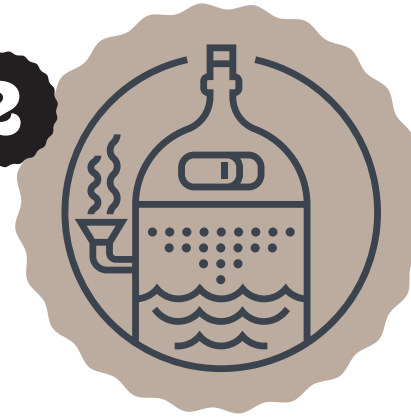
1. FERMENTATION

All spirits begin as a liquid with a lower alcoholic volume (ABV). These are made by milling, pressing and mashing fruits, plants or grains. Yeast is added, which consumes naturally occurring sugars and creates CO₂ and alcohol as by-products.

Distillation is what takes alcohol to the next boozy level. Here's the alchemy that goes into making your favourite spirits, from brandy to baijiu.



2



2. EVAPORATION

A copper pot still or a column still is filled with the fermented alcoholic liquid and slowly heated. When it reaches a temperature of 78.37°C, the liquid boils and the alcohol evaporates. It moves up the still as vapour, separating it from water.

THE DISTILLATION PROCESS

5



5. BOTTLING

Spirits are cut with water to bring them to strength (typically around 40% ABV) before bottling. Many craft distilleries bottle, label and seal by hand, with a batch number added to each.

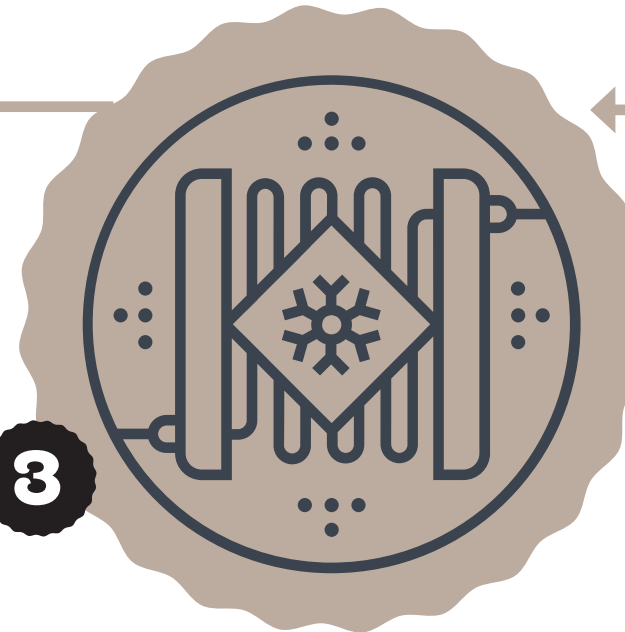
4. FLAVOURING AND AGEING

Flavours can be added after distillation, or spirits can be blended together (as with whisky). Botanical flavours can also be added through re-distillation (as with gin). Meanwhile, some spirits are rested to soften and mature their flavour, which is also how they gain a darker colour.

4

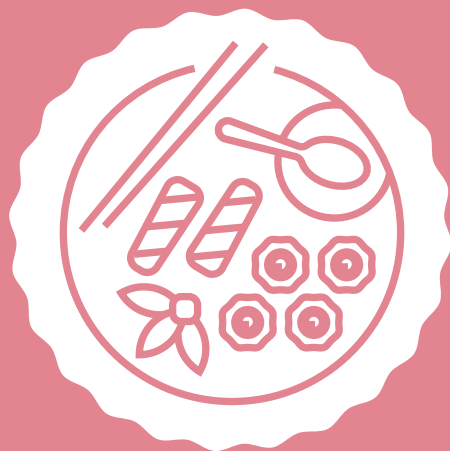
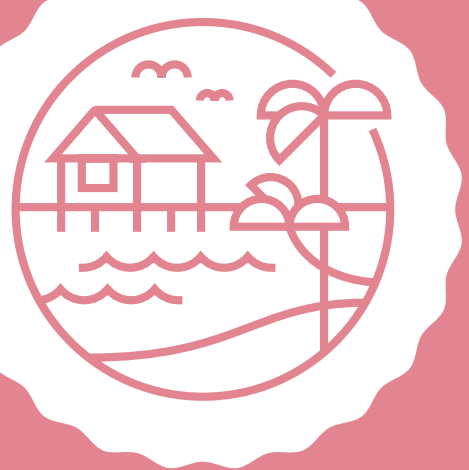


3



3. CONDENSATION

This steam hits a condenser, where it cools and turns to a liquid – a more concentrated alcohol with an altered flavour profile. The early run-off known as the 'heads' is volatile and intense; the 'heart' comes next and is smooth and balanced; the 'tails' at the end contains funkier notes. Typically, only the 'heart' from each batch is captured.



ASIA



KYŪSHŪ

Fancy sampling *shōchū* in a vinyl-spinning distillery bar, or sipping whisky over lunch with a traditional Japanese garden in the background? Kyūshū is the place to come for some of Japan's most enthralling distillery experiences, parcelled into a mainland coastal region of lush volcanic peaks.

BANGKOK

The craft spirits movement is still in its infancy in Southeast Asia, but Bangkok's pre-eminence on the cocktail bar scene has paved the way for one notable pioneer: Iron Balls gin. It was founded by an Australian bar designer making waves in Asia; his distillery serves a unique tropical G&T.

UBUD

Between thrashing surf beaches and new-age hangouts, Bali's culture capital is building on its new-found reputation as a foodie haven with a backyard distillery attached to one of the town's most progressive cocktail dens. Night Rooster is house-infusing gins, and making vermouths and arak.

©calvingoh@mphotoo.com/Courtesy of PS150



SOUTHEAST ASIA

How to ask for a spirit without mixers? Neat (in English)
Signature spirit? Arak straight up in Indonesia; an ice-cold beer and Mekhong chaser in Thailand; gin & tonic in Malaysia
What to order with your spirits? East Imperial Tonic, inspired by Asian tastes and ingredients, pairs perfectly with a craft gin
Don't: Be surprised if prices seem very cheap; some bars put local spirits in branded bottles like Gordon's or Johnnie Walker

Southeast Asia is an emerging region in terms of homegrown artisan distilleries, but a long-standing culture exists here of drinking imported spirits. Today, that culture is mushrooming into one of the world's most exciting bar scenes for experimental cocktails and cutting-edge speakeasy watering holes.

For years, Thai farmers have distilled their own moonshine spirits, primarily from rice, while any backpacker will have tried the iconic Mekhong, a rough industrially produced whisky. Recently though, small-batch producers are popping up all over the country. Local sugar cane is being artisan-

distilled in Phuket, Koh Samui and Issan to produce Thai rums, while in Chiang Mai you will find rice vodka and distilled coconut flowers. Bangkok's top cocktail bar, A R Sutton Engineers Siam, has its own copper still making Iron Balls Gin – a blend of lemongrass and passion fruit with traditional juniper berries.

Both Malaysia and Singapore are renowned as key markets for top-end premium spirits, with huge sales of the world's most expensive cognac, XO (Extra Old). XO is the ultimate wealth status symbol, ritually drunk at Chinese wedding banquets and business dinners after a shout of *yam sing* (bottoms up), or even with ice and Coca-Cola – total heresy back in France where it was produced. Here too, times have changed, with the emergence of hip speakeasies where the emphasis is on craft spirits mixed with exotic ingredients, including locally distilled tuak from Borneo in cocktails.

In Indonesia the local speciality is arak, a local firewater made from fermented coconut and palm nectar, but it can be tricky to sample: beware the plastic bottles produced by bootleg village distillers, because they often add methanol to up the alcohol content, which can lead to serious health risks. Stick to ordering arak from the menus of restaurants and bars, especially in Bali, and you will discover a unique local spirit.

Courtesy of Night Rooster (3)

BAR NIGHT ROOSTER

10 Jalan Dewi Sita, Ubud, Bali; www.locavore.co.id/nightrooster; +62 3619 777 33

- ◆ Food ◆ Bar
- ◆ Distillery ◆ Transport

Created by the owners of Locavore, Ubud's top-rated restaurant, Night Rooster has branched out from being Bali's coolest cocktail bar into a garage distillery using a homemade alembic to experiment with naturally fermented tropical fruits, traditional Brem rice wine, and arak, the local firewater.

The bar showcases the talents of Balinese mixologist Raka Ambarawan, an alchemist bartender who makes his own vermouth and bitters, gin and rum infused with jackfruit and

fragrant kemangi leaves from Locavore's herb garden.

Going one step further, in 2018 he asked a local artisan to make a handcrafted copper still, and today a beautiful five-litre alembic sits on Night Rooster's bar.

Beginning with fermented fruits, Raka then learnt a family recipe from his mother to make cloudy Brem rice wine, usually used in religious ceremonies, and these distillations add a new dimension to his already creative cocktails. The challenge now is to make his own arak, a potent alcohol from fermented coconut and palm nectar. To taste the influence of arak in a cocktail, just order Raka's Northern Bramble: a concoction of pickled grape brine, mace jam, arak infused with wood and spices, sour candy and kampung chicken egg white.



THINGS TO DO NEARBY

Goa Gajah
Known as the Elephant Cave, Goa Gajah is a 9th-century religious sanctuary of pools, fountains and a meditational cave whose entrance is covered in intricate stone carvings.

Campuhan Ridge Walk
To escape Ubud's crowds, head to Gunung Lebah Temple where a 9km hill track begins. It's the perfect spot for walking or jogging through lush jungle landscapes.

Ali Antiques
This Ubud shop is a dusty emporium of hidden treasure, including ceremonial sarongs, graphic Balinese scenes painted on mirrors and jewellery. www.facebook.com/ali.artshop.3

The Yoga Barn
The perfect detox to recover from Night Rooster's cocktails is a class at Ubud's oldest yoga centre, whose spa also offers Ayurveda and wellness treatments. www.theyogabarn.com

GIN



There are a whole heap of misconceptions when it comes to gin. But in the past few years, gin education has come on in leaps and bounds and most avid drinkers will be able to tell you at least this one fact about mother's ruin: it must contain juniper in order to be called gin. Juniper is an evergreen shrub producing the piney-scented berries that go into this clear spirit, and although its plants are found in all parts of the world, many modern craft producers champion Macedonian crops.

But sticking to this fact alone would be to underplay the complexity of a spirit that has risen up through the ages. The first

record of gin – like many a good drink – lies with the Benedictine monks. In 12th century Salerno, this religious crowd were using distillation for medicinal purposes. Juniper was known as a diuretic, and wine-based juniper infusions were used to treat kidney, stomach and liver (yes, really) troubles.

By the mid 1500s, this juniper-based spirit had taken on new meaning in the Low Countries, where records show recipes for a medicinal tonic known as jenever. It was popularised among the English during years of support for the Dutch during the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648) against Spanish rule, where they'd have a tot before battle to

steady their nerves – hence the term 'Dutch courage'. Over time – and through lazy pronunciation – jenever became known as gin in London, where its popularity reached fever pitch during London's gin craze (see page 172). Regulations for distilling had been thrown out the window by William of Orange in the 1600s, and people took to creating their own versions of the jenever they'd embraced on the battlefields. Gin was finally born.



Clockwise from top: Courtesy of Bombay Sapphire Distillery (2); Courtesy of Bath Gin



Nowadays, you're likely to see a broad spectrum of botanicals blended with juniper. You can usually expect to find coriander seed, adding a citrus-like spice and aroma to the drink. More subtle but often present are angelica root – grown in Scandinavia and Europe – and orris root, taken from the iris plant. Both are commonly used as fixatives, helping bind and preserve fellow botanical aromas (fun fact: orris root is also often used in perfume for this very purpose).

From there, it's anyone's guess what else is in your gin of choice, but common flavours include citrus (lemon peel, grapefruit), earth (wormwood, mace), flowers (rosehip, elderflower), and spice (cinnamon, peppercorn). Many distillers choose to include between six and 10 botanicals but, in recent years, that rule has definitely not been hard and fast. Young distillery upstarts all over the world are choosing to push this boundary in order to find

their gin a USP – often using locally grown botanicals that are an ode to the place where the gin is being made. Many distilleries share the botanicals they've chosen to include, although they'll stay guarded about the specific measures used in their secret formula.

The end product is the combination of these botanicals with a neutral spirit base, hence why gin is sometimes considered to be essentially a flavoured vodka – albeit a very fancy one.

BY LAURA RICHARDS



What is London Dry gin?

First things first, London Dry gin can be made anywhere in the world – there's no geographical designation to the category at all. In fact, it's more of a quality designation. Any gin labelled as London Dry must be above 37.5% abv, botanicals must be added through re-distillation and no flavourings can be added after the distillation process takes place.

THE 5 BEST WHISKY COCKTAILS



1. OLD FASHIONED

Make like Don Draper and order an Old Fashioned (pictured), a drink that's sophisticated as hell. Made using either bourbon or rye, muddled with sugar and stirred with ice, it's served in a tumbler with a twist of orange. Its origins date back to the 1800s, making it one of the stone-cold classics.

2. MANHATTAN

Whisky, sweet vermouth and bitters collide in one of five cocktails named after the boroughs of New York City – this one is without a doubt the most famous of the quintet. It's served in a cocktail or coupe glass and dressed with a boozy maraschino cherry bobbing in its depths.

3. WHISKY SOUR

Sours – like many drinks – were invented on the high seas, with citrus and sugar used to make spirits more palatable. And boy, were the Americans on to a winner when they

made a whisky version. These days, find it with egg white for texture and a cherry and a wedge of orange for a decorative whiff of frivolous garnish.

4. SAZERAC

The naughty cousin to the Old Fashioned, the Sazerac is based on cognac, rye or bourbon, blended with sugar, a dash of absinthe and Peychaud's Bitters – the creator of Peychaud's came up with this cocktail as well as a formula for bitters. It's one of the oldest cocktails on record and the official drink of New Orleans.

5. MINT JULEP

Almost 120,000 Mint Juleps are served each year at the Kentucky Derby since the tradition began in 1938, although this herbaceous drink was first made in Virginia for medicinal purposes. It's a refreshing mix of bourbon, mint leaves and sugar, best served in a pewter cup.

THE 5 BEST VODKA COCKTAILS



1. ESPRESSO MARTINI

A cocktail adored all over the world, the Espresso Martini is a modern tippie and the ultimate party drink thanks to a winning combination of booze and caffeine. Vodka and coffee liqueur are shaken over ice with fresh espresso. Some present-day interpretations use cold brew coffee instead of a hot shot.

2. BLOODY MARY

The Bloody Mary can be enjoyed any time of day, but is best known as the ultimate hair of the dog and breakfast of champions. Debate rages over whether it belongs to Paris or New York, but it has evolved to include the likes of tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, lemon, black pepper and celery salt.

3. MOSCOW MULE

You'll recognise a Moscow Mule (pictured) from the copper vessel in which it's commonly served. The vodka, ginger beer

and lime concoction was created at Hollywood's Cock 'n' Bull restaurant in 1948 – apparently, the team were trying to shift 'a lot of dead stock' from the cellar. No complaints here; it worked like magic.

4. COSMOPOLITAN

Carrie Bradshaw and co didn't just boost sales of the Rampant Rabbit. Bar orders for Cosmopolitans rocketed on the back of *Sex And The City's* TV success. It's a suitably pink drink made from vodka, triple sec, cranberry juice and lime, which suited Carrie and her fashionista New York crowd to a tee.

5. WHITE RUSSIAN

More pop culture, with the White Russian popularised in the Coen Brothers' movie *The Big Lebowski*, being the drink of choice of 'The Dude'. But you don't have to wear a dressing gown to enjoy this mix of vodka and coffee liqueur poured over ice and given a calorific cream float.

From Left: ©Michael Ventura/Alamy Stock Photo, ©BlueOrangeSoda/Alamy Stock Photo

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