

## WINE & SPIRITS - **Whiskey**

**W**hisky is from Scotland but whiskey comes from Ireland. The Irish claim to have distilled whisky before distilleries were set up in Scotland. The Scots dispute this claim. However, there is no doubt that the oldest distillery still in existence is Bushmills founded in 1608.

The main difference between Scotch and Irish whisky is in the drying of the malted barley. The Scots dry it over smouldering peat, thus it acquires a peaty flavour. The Irish use sealed ovens which results in a concentration of the malt flavour. Scotch whisky is distilled twice but Irish whiskey is triple distilled. This results in a rather smoother taste. The whiskey is matured in oak barrels for at least three years.

Bushmills produce a range of whiskeys. Bushmills Original is a blend which is made from grain whiskey which is matured in barrels for five years before blending with malt whiskey. A superior version is Bushmills Black Bush which is a blend of mostly malt whiskeys which are aged for eleven years in sherry casks. Bushmills 10 year old is a single malt. Bushmills 16 year old single malt has been aged in three different types of cask during its maturation process. At the top of the Bushmills range is Bushmills 1609 which was blended to celebrate 400 years of Bushmills whiskey making.

Paddy Old Irish Whiskey is a blend which is rather light and soft and has a low percentage of pot still content.

John Powers is the most popular whiskey in Ireland. It is nowadays a blend of pot still and grain whiskeys although it was originally a pure pot still whiskey. It has a spicy and somewhat fruity finish.

Tullamore Dew is not very typical of Irish whiskeys since it is made mainly from grain spirit.



The biggest selling Irish whiskey worldwide is Jameson. This is a single distillery whiskey. All the ingredients are produced in the distillery, unlike most other whiskeys which blend products from a number of distilleries. Since 1988 Jameson has been part of the Pernod-Ricard group. Jameson sales are approaching 3 million cases per year and Jameson whiskey continues to be by far the biggest producer of Irish whiskey as it has been for over 200 years.

Before leaving the subject of Irish whiskey we should perhaps look at Irish coffee. Irish coffee was supposedly invented at Shannon airport over 60 years ago. Irish whiskey, brown sugar and hot filter coffee are blended and cream is poured carefully on top and the coffee is drunk through the cream. Wonderful as a nightcap or a digestive after a meal

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