

Whisky



Scotch Whisky

explained in Eleven Easy Lessons

1. What is Scotch Whisky?

Scotch whisky is a distilled spirit with a very strict legal definition, whose recorded origins stretch back more than 400 years. It can only be distilled in Scotland, using wholly natural ingredients – malted barley*, other unmalted cereals, water and yeast – matured in Scotland, using oak casks, for a minimum of 3 years. Over 80 million cases (each of 12 bottles) are sold annually in more than 200 countries.

2. Scotch Malt Whisky

The component of Scotch malt whisky is 100% malted barley and it is distilled in relatively small copper “pot stills”, often in remote rural or island locations. In most years recently, about 85 individual malt whisky distilleries have been operational in Scotland with a further 10 or 12 mothballed or closed.

3. Single Malts

A single malt Scotch whisky is the product of only one malt distillery, although it may be from several casks of different ages. Single malt whiskies are also available often at ‘original’ or ‘cask’ strength – usually in excess of 60% alcohol.

4. Vatted Malts

A vatted malt Scotch whisky is a mixture of selected single malts, chosen so that their different flavours compliment each other.

5. What is Scotch Grain Whisky?

Scotch grain whisky is made from a mixture of malted barley (typically 10 to 15%), and unmalted cereal, usually wheat or maize. Scotland’s 7 large grain distilleries produce twice as much spirit as the combined output of all 85 malt distilleries. Distillation is in large continuous or “Coffey” stills (named after their inventor) which are mostly located in Scotland’s central industrial belt. Grain whisky is lighter in character than malt and almost all is used for blending. However, the lightness of grain whisky can provide a very pleasant introduction to the Scotch whisky sector.

6. Single and Vatted Grains

In the same way as for malts, a single grain whisky is the product of only one distillery whilst a vatted grain is a mixture of several singles.

7. Blended Scotch Whisky

Almost 95% of Scotch sold worldwide is blended, typically containing 1/3 malt and 2/3 grain whiskies. As malt whiskies are heavier in character, they mature more slowly than grains. Hence the younger, 3-5 year old standard blends will contain less malt whisky (say 15-23%) than the older, 12-13 year old deluxe blends (with 40 to 50% malts). It should be noted that many of the best-selling blends will contain up to 40 different single whiskies and that the age statement on any bottle of Scotch refers to the youngest whisky used. The beauty of blends lies in their depth and complexity of flavour whilst single whiskies provide interest from their individuality.

8. Flavour, Character and Style

There are hundreds of complex flavour components or “congeners” in Scotch whisky, emanating mainly from the malted barley, the distillation process and the oak casks. This complexity makes the vocabulary of Scotch whisky odours and tastes extremely difficult. For example, in the western islands such as Islay, malted barley has been traditionally dried over peat fires and this imparts a very peaty, smoky or phenolic character. In comparison, other whiskies may be lightly peated or even unpeated yet still have their own distinctive or subtle characters described by such terms as sweet, grassy, nutty, fruity or malty. Historically, malt whiskies have been categorised geographically: Lowland, Highland, Speyside, Campbeltown and Islands and in general this gradation is from lighter to heavier in character, although there are exceptions! Even the terms “light” and “heavy” can be confusing when the effect of peat smoke and cask types are overlaid on the individual distillery character. For example, a malt whisky matured in an oak cask previously used for sherry will be dominated by a sweetness, colour and flavour derived from the original sherry – quite different from the same spirit matured in a plain oak or ex-Bourbon cask, which will provide a vanilla flavour from the original Bourbon. Less commonly, other casks will be used for only the latter months of maturation to give a “cask finish” flavour (such as Port or Madeira) to a malt whisky.

The modern trend in describing whiskies is to describe their “style” using a combination of the most appropriate flavour terms. Extreme examples would be a “sweet, light and elegant grain” compared to say a dry “heavily peated and oily malt”. Other styles are described as “light, flower” or “sweet, fruity” or “big, rich” often combined with more traditional terms such as malty or peaty. The style may be associated with the drinking occasion – lighter whiskies being preferred with ice on a warm day or before a meal, contrasting with heavier styles following a winter walk or as an after dinner digestive. One of the great attractions of Scotch is its endless variety of flavours, characters and styles – beckoning a lifetime of experimentation and discovery!.

9. How should I drink Scotch Whisky?

The first rule is that there are no rules – you should drink Scotch whisky in the way you enjoy it most! Blended whiskies, especially the younger, lighter styles are great for mixing with anything. However, if you wish to be discerning and to compare the complexities, nuances and subtleties of individual whiskies, then the addition of only pure, soft water is recommended. High alcoholic strength can blind the palate so that most connoisseurs will dilute their whiskies to about 20-25% alcohol, although individual tastes will vary – again it is up to you!

10. Why don't I like Scotch Whisky?

The answer to this question is extremely easy – it is that you do! If you think you don't, then this simply indicates that you have not yet experimented sufficiently with different whiskies at different dilutions to suit your taste – our bar staff will be pleased to advise!!

11. Why do some of the older Scotch Whiskies cost so much?

Once the distilled spirit is placed in oak casks for maturing, approximately 2% of the liquid is lost each year due to the wood being porous. This evaporation is known as “the angels share”. Therefore a whisky matured in cask for 15-25 years has lost somewhere between a third and a half of its volume. This, together with additional financing costs, makes the whisky that is left more expensive than the same amount of younger whisky.

[*malted barley, often simply called “malt”, consists of barley grains which have been steeped in water and allowed to commence growth, thus releasing their natural enzymes to convert the grain's starch reserves into soluble sugars: growth is then halted by heating the grains in a malt – sometimes fuelled by peat which imparts a smoky flavour].

Whisky “Flights”

Introductory

Choose any five from the following for £19.00:

- Aberlour A'Bunadh 59.8%
- Ardbeg Uigeadail 54.2%
- Balvenie Islay Cask 17 Year Old 43%
- Bowmore Dusk 14 Year Old 50%
- Dewar's Special Reserve 12 Year Old 43%
- Glenfiddich 21 Year Old Havana Gran Reserva 40%
- Hedonism Single Grain 43%
- Lagavulin 12 Year Old Cask Strength 57.8%
- Springbank 10 Year Old 46%

Premium

Choose any five from the following seven for £39.00:

- Balvenie Port Wood 21 Year Old 40%
- Bruichladdich Valinch 1986 40%
- Cutty Sark Aged 25 Years 45.7%
- Glenmorangie Fino Sherry Finish 43%
- Linkwood Gordon and MacPhail 1972, 40%
- Port Ellen 1979, 25 Year Old 50%
- Springbank 1974, 27 Year Old, Chieftains Bottling 56.6%
- Talisker 1982, 20 Year Old Cask Strength 58.8%
- Whyte & Mackay 30 Year Old 43%

Superior

Choose any five from the following for £49.00:

- Ardbeg Lord Of The Isles 25 Year Old 46%
- Glen Elgin 1971, 32 Year Old 42.3%
- Glenlochy Old Malt Cask (Douglas Laing) 49 Year Old 43%
- Glenmorangie 1981 Sauternes Wood Finish 46%
- Glenrothes 1973 43%
- Lagavulin 1979, Murray McDavid Mission Range 46%
- Macallan Gran Reserva 1982 40%
- Springbank 1970, 33 Year Old (Cask 1622) 54.4 %
- Talisker 1975, 25 Year Old 59.9%

Millbank Deluxe

Three exceptional aged whiskies for £99.00

- Dunclas 1967, 35 Year Old 46%
- Glenrothes 1967 46.6%
- Glenury Royal 1953, 50 Year Old 42.8%

Whiskies served within the Whisky Flights are offered for sale for consumption in quantities of 25ml.

Scotch Whisky

		50ml	Bottle
Lowland Malts			
Auhentoshan	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Auhentoshan	3 Wood	£9.00	£90.00
Auhentoshan	21 Year Old	£19.00	£190.00
Glenkinchie	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Highland Malts			
Dalmore	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Dalwhinnie	15 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Glen Garioch	21 Year Old	£12.50	£125.00
Glenmorangie	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Oban	14 Year Old	£9.00	£90.00
Royal Lochnagar	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Speyside			
Aberlour		£7.50	£75.00
The Balvenie	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
The Balvenie	21 Year Old Port Wood	£15.00	£150.00
Cragganmore	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Glen Elgin	1971 32 Year Old	£45.00	£450.00
Glenfarclas	10 Year Old	£7.00	£70.00
Glenfiddich	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Glenfiddich	15 Year Old	£9.00	£90.00
Glenrothes	1973 27 Year Old	£25.00	£250.00
Linkwood	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Macallan	10 Year Old Sherry Oak	£7.50	£75.00
Macallan	18 Year Old	£15.00	£150.00
Macallan	1990 17 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Macallan	30 Year Old	£50.00	£500.00
Mortlach	16 Year Old	£8.00	£80.00
The Glenlivet	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Islay			
Ardbeg	10 Year Old	£8.00	£80.00
Ardbeg	Uigeadail	£9.50	£95.00
Bowmore	15 Year Old Darkest	£9.50	£95.00
Bowmore	18 Year Old	£15.00	£150.00
Bowmore	25 Year Old	£30.00	£300.00
Bruichladdich	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Bunnahabhain	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Caol Ila	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Lagavulin	12 Year Old	£10.50	£105.00
Lagavulin	16 Year Old	£8.00	£80.00
Laphroaig	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Orkney			
Highland Park	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Highland Park	18 Year Old	£12.50	£125.00
Isle of Skye			
Talisker	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Talisker	25 Year Old	£25.00	£250.00

		50ml	Bottle
Isle of Jura			
Isle of Jura	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Campbeltown			
Springbank	10 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Vatted Malts (or 'Pure' Malts)			
Compass Box "Eleuthera"		£8.00	£80.00
Poit Dhubh	8 Year Old	£7.00	£70.00
Poit Dhubh	12 Year Old	£7.50	£75.00
Single Grain Scotch Whisky			
Cameron Brig		£6.00	£60.00
Compass Box "Hedonism"		£9.50	£95.00
Blended Scotch Whisky			
Whyte & Mackay		£6.00	£60.00
Whyte & Mackay	30 Year Old Oldest	£25.00	£250.00
De Luxe Blended Scotch Whisky			
Compass Box "Asyla"		£7.50	£75.00
Cutty Sark 25	25 Year Old	£17.00	£170.00
Johnny Walker	Black Label	£6.50	£65.00

A discretionary 10% service charge will be added to your table bill

Weight and Measures Act 1985

Gin, Rum, Vodka, Whisky are offered for sale for consumption on these premises in quantities of 50ml or multiples thereof

