

## Title:

Some Facts About Whiskey Or Whisky

## Word Count:

631

## Summary:

When discussing whisky the first thing that needs to be know is that there are two legitimate spellings. The Scotts and Canadians spell whisky without the "e", while the Irish and Americans spell it with an "e" as in whiskey. This should be the first indication that the world of whisky is a very complicated one and has many regional differences in taste and production. This is part of what makes whisky such an interesting and enjoyable spirit.

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## Keywords:

whiskey, whisky, bourbon, scotch, irish, canadian, spirits

## Article Body:

When discussing whisky the first thing that needs to be know is that there are two legitimate spellings. The Scotts and Canadians spell whisky without the "e", while the Irish and Americans spell it with an "e" as in whiskey. This should be the first indication that the world of whisky is a very complicated one and has many regional differences in taste and production. This is part of what makes whisky such an interesting and enjoyable spirit.

Historically it is believed that the Irish were the first to make whiskey, however the Scotts have also laid claim to being the first whisky producers. The Irish used the term "uisce beatha" ("Water of Life" in Gaelic) to describe whiskey, so it must have been important.

Both the Scottish and Irish make whiskey the same way, except for the malting and distillation process. In Scotland the malted barley is roasted over open peat fires to dry, this results in the grain picking up the peat flavour. In Ireland, the malted barely is dried in closed ovens, and is never exposed to the smoke. The process of mashing and fermentation is much the same for both countries. In the distillation step, the Irish, most of the time, distill their product three times, which results in a very pure distillate which makes Irish whiskey exceptionally smooth. The Scottish distill their product twice and this results in more flavour in the spirit.

In North America there is Canadian whisky and American whiskey, which has a number of regional classifications including Bourbon and Tennessee whiskey. Each product in North America is unique and is regulated by the government. Canadian whisky is the number one imported spirit into the United States and is second in consumption only to vodka.

American whiskey has a number of regulation depending on the definition of the product. Bourbon must be made from fermented mash of not less than 51% corn, rye, wheat, malted barely or malted rye grain. It cannot be distilled at a proof higher than 160 and must be stored in new oak barrels at a proof of 125 or less. Blended American whiskey must be made from at least 20% whiskey aged two or more years with the remainder made from unaged neutral grain spirit. American corn whiskey must be made from a minimum mash of 80% corn. Tennessee whiskey follows the same regulations as Bourbon, but is charcoal filtered (Lincoln County Process), so it does not qualify as a bourbon.

Canadian whisky must be aged for at least three years, but for the most part the Canadian government allows the expertise of the distiller to define the characteristics of the final product so there are no limits on distillation proof or barrel requirements. Any Canadian whisky that is aged for less than four years must have the age listed on the bottle. Most Canadian whisky is aged for six or more years. Canadian whisky is generally a blended spirit. The term "blended" means that the final product is made from a number different types of distilled product. For example, a Canadian whisky may be composed of corn, barely, wheat and rye distillates that have been aged in selected used or new oak barrels. Some Canadian producers put all of the grains in one vat and ferment them as a whole and pre-blend and age the distillate. Other producers ferment each grain individually and age each distillate separately and then blend a final product from a mixture of spirits. Most Canadian whisky is distilled twice.

This article has only scratched the surface of the whisk(e)y world. There are many regional characteristics of whisky and many other countries are producing this fine spirit. It would take a lifetime to explore the complete world of whisky, but it would be a worthy attempt.