



SCOTCH WHISKY TASTING TOOLKIT

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#DiscoverScotch

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WITH OUR WHISKY TASTING TOOLKIT.

There are many ways to enjoy Scotch Whisky - from a traditional tasting, to food pairings and as the base of world-class cocktails.

Tasting whiskies of different ages, from different regions, matured in different casks and in new and different ways is all part of the fun of discovering Scotch - the world's premier whisky and consumers' spirit of choice.

In this toolkit, we will help you to conduct a Scotch Whisky tasting and introduce you to new ways to enjoy Scotland's national drink.

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A GLOBAL INDUSTRY

500 YEARS IN THE MAKING.

To truly appreciate Scotch, it helps to have an understanding of the heritage that is captured in every dram.

Scotch Whisky is a global industry today, but it has grown from humble beginnings and developed over five centuries.

Take a closer look at the history of Scotch Whisky and a few other key facts to boost your understanding and enjoyment.

- Around 39 bottles of Scotch are shipped from Scotland each second
- Laid end to end these bottles would stretch about 350,000kms - that's 90% of the distance to the moon
- More than 10,000 are directly employed in the Scotch Whisky industry, 7000 of them in rural areas providing vital employment and investment
- Some 20 million casks lie maturing in warehouses in Scotland
- More Scotch Whisky is enjoyed globally than US, Canadian and Irish whiskies combined
- There are 128 operating Scotch Whisky distilleries across Scotland - more than at any time since World War Two
- Scotch Whisky accounts for around 20% of all UK food and drink exports
- The largest Scotch Whisky market in the world by volume is France, while the largest by value is the United States
- Scotch Whisky is shipped to all seven continents - in 2016 over 15,000 bottles of Scotch were even exported to Antarctica

The earliest documented record of distilling in Scotland. An entry in the Exchequer Rolls lists "Eight bolls of malt to Friar John Cor wherewith to make aqua vitae."

1494



1644

The first official taxes on Scotch Whisky production are imposed, causing a rise in illicit whisky distilling across Scotland.

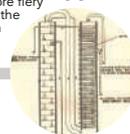
Scotland's Bard, Robert Burns, writes the poem "Scotch Drink" which includes the line "O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink!"

1785



Aeneas Coffey invents the Patent Still. This led to the production of lighter flavoured Grain Whisky which, when blended with more fiery malts, extended the appeal of Scotch Whisky.

1831



The Excise Act is passed and illicit stills and smuggling of Scotch began to fall away. In their place, legal and licenced distilleries flourished, reaching a peak of over 300 in the years shortly after its enactment.

1823



1880

The phylloxera beetle devastates French vineyards. Scots are quick to take advantage, and Scotch Whisky replaced brandy as the spirit of choice.

Prohibition begins in the United States of America. The federal government made an exemption for whisky prescribed by a doctor for medicinal purposes.

1920



1912

The Wine & Spirit Brand Association is formed. It became the Whisky Association in 1917 and then, in 1942, evolved again to become the SWA as we know it today.

1933
First statutory definition of Scotch Whisky

Info



1994

The 500th anniversary of whisky production in Scotland. Exports of Scotch Whisky reach £2 billion for the first time in history.

1939



World War II reshaped the industry's history. One Cabinet Minister said "the country needs food, dollars mean food, and whisky means dollars." Annual export targets were agreed and producers increasingly looked to overseas markets.



2009

The Scotch Whisky Regulations come into force. The rules set out how Scotch Whisky must be produced, labelled, packaged and advertised, helping to protect the reputation of Scotch.

2019

Scotch Whisky is the world's undisputed premier whisky. 39 bottles of Scotch are shipped from Scotland every second to 180 markets around the globe.



#DISCOVERSCOTCH

THERE IS A SCOTCH WHISKY

FOR EVERYONE WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED.

Put simply, Scotch Whisky is a distilled spirit made from just three natural ingredients - cereals, water and yeast. It must be distilled and matured in Scotland for at least three years and bottled at a minimum alcoholic strength of 40% abv.

But with 128 operating distilleries in Scotland - a number that is growing every year - there are thousands of expressions of Scotch to suit every palate. Here are the five categories of Scotch Whisky just waiting to be discovered.

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

Spirit distilled at a single distillery from water and malted barley without the addition of any other cereals. When visiting a Malt Whisky Distillery, look out for the copper pot-stills which are handcrafted with every dent and rivet adding to the flavour of the spirit. Single Malt Scotch Whisky must also be bottled in Scotland.



SINGLE GRAIN SCOTCH WHISKY

Grain Whisky is distilled from a mixture of malted barley and other unmalted cereals such as wheat or maize. Distillation is carried out at a single site using the continuous patent still process, invented in the early 19th century. The vast majority of grain whisky goes into Blended Scotch Whisky, but there are a growing number of Single Grain Scotch Whiskies to discover.



BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY

Almost nine out of 10 bottles of Scotch enjoyed around the world are Blended Scotch Whiskies - a blend of Single Grain and Single Malt whiskies. This category is the foundation of the industry and the art of the Master Blender, combining up to 60 different Scotch Whiskies, is a skill which is revered.



BLENDED MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

Blended Malts are a combination of two or more Single Malt Scotch Whiskies. Unlike Blended Scotch, there is no Grain Whisky in Blended Malts.

BLENDED GRAIN SCOTCH WHISKY

Blended Grain Whiskies are a combination of two or more Single Grain Scotch Whiskies.

EACH SCOTCH WHISKY REGION

OFFERS A NEW EXPERIENCE.

There are five Scotch Whisky regions - Campbeltown, Highland, Islay, Lowland and Speyside.

Each offers a different perspective on Scotch Whisky. When conducting a whisky tasting, you might like to point to the unique characteristics of each region.

SPEYSIDE

The most densely populated Whisky region in the world, famous for fertile glens and, of course, the River Spey. Speyside whiskies are known for being frugal with peat and full of fruit.

Apple, pear, honey, vanilla and spice all have a role to play in expressions from this region, which are commonly matured in Sherry casks.

LOWLAND

Soft and smooth malts are characteristic of this region, offering a gentle, elegant palate reminiscent of grass, honeysuckle, cream, ginger, toffee, toast and cinnamon.

These whiskies are often lighter in character and perfect for pre-dinner drinks.

HIGHLAND

This region, which also takes in the islands, has a huge diversity of flavours and characters. From lighter whiskies all the way through salty coastal malts, the Highlands offers a Scotch for all palates.

CAMPBELTOWN

Campbeltown whiskies are varied and full of flavour. Hints of salt, smoke, fruit, vanilla and toffee mingle in whiskies of robust and rich character.

ISLAY

Islay (pronounced 'eye-luh') is a magical island where the majority of its population are involved in whisky production. Famous for fiery, heavily peated whiskies.



THE RIGHT GLASS

FOR THE RIGHT OCCASION.

Choosing your glass according to the occasion will really make a difference to your whisky enjoyment.

For formal, traditional tastings it is best to have a glass that is specially designed to capture the aromas of the whisky and direct them to the nose.

Here we take a look at whisky glasses for every occasion.



THE COPITA GLASS

This glass is based on the traditional Spanish glass used to sample sherry. It is very popular with master distillers, blenders and whisky connoisseurs around the world.

Its shape concentrates aromas through the slightly narrowed rim, and the glass can be easily cradled so the spirit can be warmed if desired.

A great glass for whisky tasting.

THE GLENCAIRN GLASS

A glass specially designed for whisky by the Glencairn Crystal Company in Scotland.

The shape of the bulb at the bottom of the glass creates the perfect lens to explore the colour of the spirit. The tulip shape allows the aromas to collect inside the glass.

Perfect for traditional whisky tastings.



THE HIGHBALL GLASS

This glass is used to serve highball cocktails and other mixed, long drinks.

As such, it is perfect for Scotch Whisky cocktails like a classic Whisky Highball - increasingly popular in bars from New York to Toyko - or a Smokey Cokey - an Islay whisky mixed with cola.

THE WHISKY TUMBLER

If a Scotch on the Rocks is your drink of choice, then the Whisky Tumbler is for you.

It can also be used for classic cocktails like a Scotch Whisky Old Fashioned, a Whisky Sour or a Rusty Nail.



YOUR GUIDE TO A

TRADITIONAL SCOTCH WHISKY TASTING.

Scotch Whisky, by law, must be distilled and matured in oak casks in Scotland for at least three years - but many Scotch Whiskies are matured for much longer.

Traditional whisky tastings are a great way of savouring this premium, crafted spirit and taking in all its complexity. There are many ways to conduct a tasting, but here we offer one way of helping people to discover Scotch in five simple steps using all five senses.

STEP 1: HEARING

You might think it's hard to hear Scotch Whisky - but the sound of a cork being taken out of the bottle is a sound that helps to toast marriages, celebrate births or mark business deals all over the world. Start your tasting here.



STEP 2: SIGHT

Now hold the glass up and take a good look - the colour of the whisky can give clues about its age and the type of cask used for maturation. New-make spirit prior to maturation is as clear as water, but after years maturing in the cask the spirit takes on the distinctive amber colour of Scotch.



You can also check 'the legs'. Swirl the whisky around the glass, coating its sides thoroughly. Then wait and watch, as the liquid runs back down the side of the glass, the 'legs' of the whisky. The higher the alcohol content of the whisky, the more legs there will be and the slower they will form and fall. In the same way, the longer the whisky was aged in cask, the more they will tend to separate and space out.

STEP 3: SMELL

A master distiller will use the nose alone to make judgements about a whisky. Don't worry if it proves difficult to describe - scientists have discovered a wide range of aromas in whisky and different people will pick up different aromas. With a little practice, it becomes easier.

To help, you can also use the characteristics of the Scotch Whisky regions on page 4 to guide people in the right direction, and most expressions of Scotch Whisky now offer tasting notes on the packaging.



YOUR GUIDE TO A

TRADITIONAL SCOTCH WHISKY TASTING.

STEP 4: TASTE

Now sip the whisky and allow it to lie on the tongue and coat the sides of your mouth.

You might pick out different flavours to those you were aware of using your nose. Roll the spirit around so that it comes into contact with all your taste buds, sweetness at the tip of the tongue, saltiness along the sides, dryness and bitterness at the back. The wonderful flavours will develop, unfolding in the mouth.

Try adding a little still, unchilled water, then taste the whisky again. The water will reduce the alcohol content, and raises the temperature slightly releasing more of the whisky's flavours. People often say this 'opens up' the Scotch.

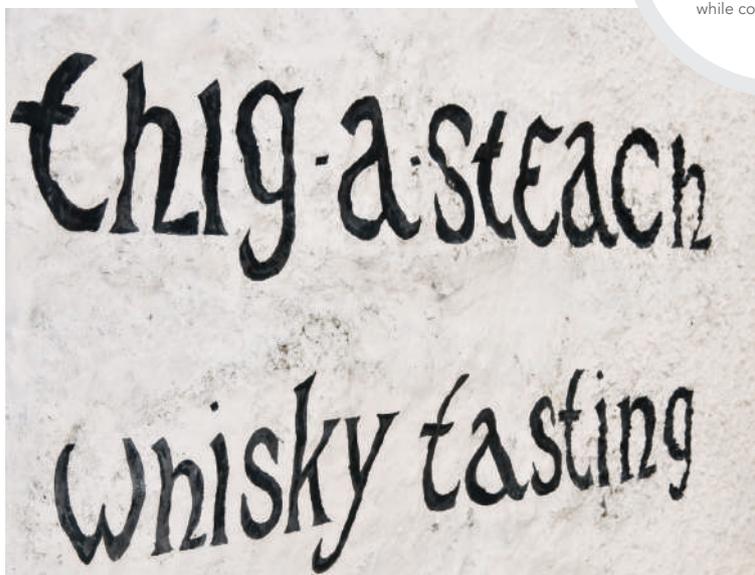
STEP 5: TOUCH

Finally, ask yourself what flavours you are experiencing and how the whisky feels in your mouth.

Does the flavour last a long time or does it disappear quickly? This is the whisky's 'mouthfeel'.

Make sure you have a glass of water at hand during the tasting.

This will help to refresh the palate if you are sampling more than one expression - and also keep you hydrated while consuming alcohol.



FOR WHEN WORDS FAIL YOU...

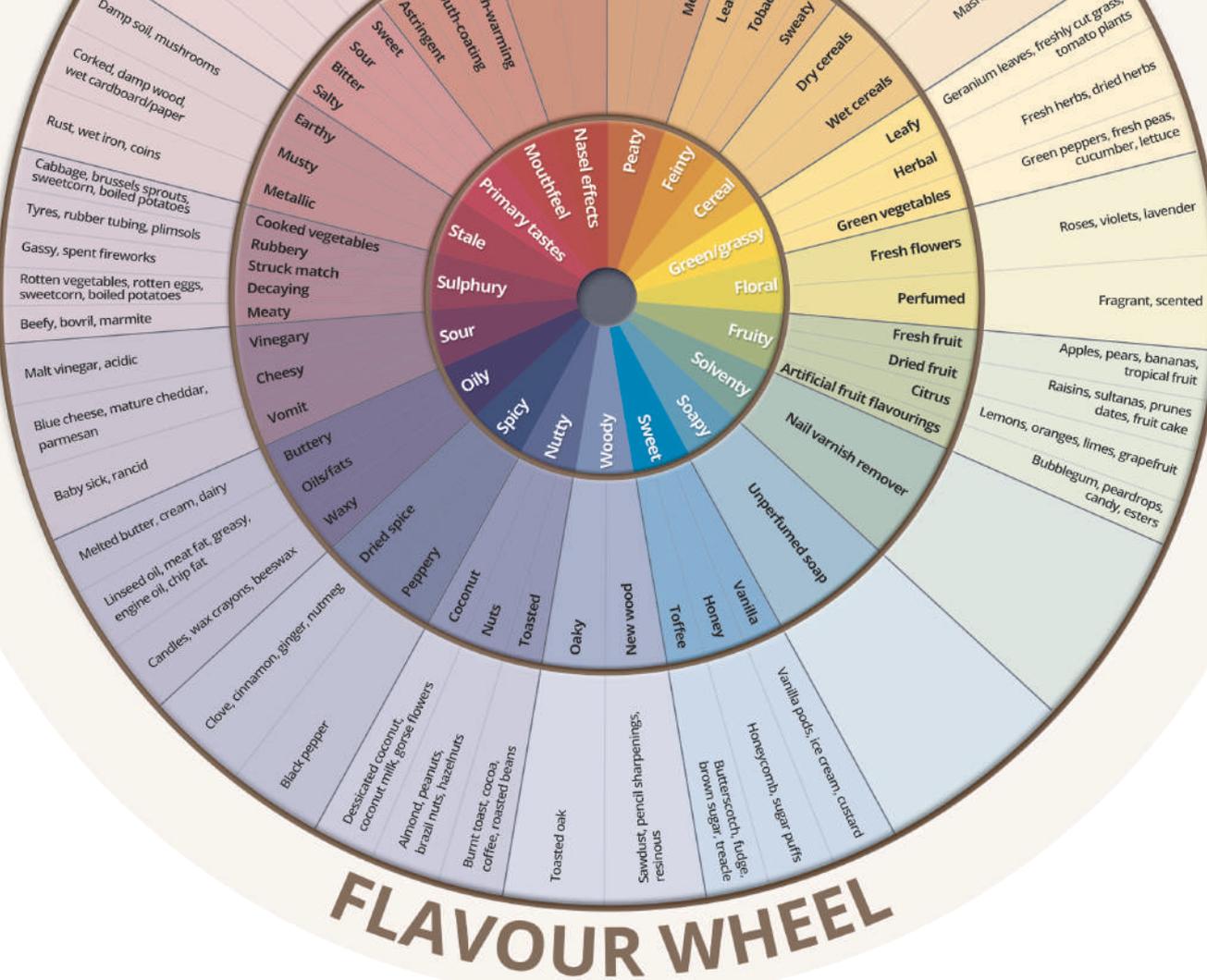
It can be hard to describe the aroma and taste of Scotch Whisky - it is a wonderfully complex spirit.

To help, our friends at the Scotch Whisky Research Institute have developed a flavour wheel which may help you during your tasting.

Find out more on the next page



THE SCOTCH WHISKY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



FLAVOUR WHEEL

DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO ENJOY SCOTCH WHISKY.

In Scotland and across the United Kingdom, people often choose to enjoy Scotch Whisky with just a little water. But Scotch is a global drink and there are many examples of new and exciting ways to enjoy Scotch Whisky.

In Spain they mix it with cola. In Japan Scotch is enjoyed with lots of water and ice, and in China with cold green tea.

Here are a few cocktails to tempt you to try something new.

THE SMOKEY COKEY

Many would frown upon a Single Malt being used in a cocktail, but don't knock it until you've tried it!

Ingredients:

50ml Single Malt Islay Scotch Whisky
150ml chilled cola

Method: Combine whisky and cola in an ice-filled highball glass and stir. Garnish with a thin slice of root ginger.

MINT HIGHBALL

The highball is a versatile cocktail which is a match for any gin and tonic. This is refreshing and light.

Ingredients:

50ml Blended Scotch Whisky
150ml soda
1tsp of white sugar

Method: Combine whisky and soda in an ice-filled highball glass, add the sugar and stir until dissolved. Garnish with a sprig of mint.



The Scotch Whisky industry takes sustainability seriously.

That is why we have pledged to phase out the use of all plastic straws and stirrers from all our offices, industry and events.

When enjoying Scotch Whisky cocktails, please only use bio-degradable alternatives so that Scotch can be enjoyed without discarded plastics continuing to have a damaging impact on land as well as at sea.

#DISCOVERSCOTCH

DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO ENJOY SCOTCH WHISKY.

THE CLASSIC JULEP

A short drink, ideal for hot summer months. As the ice melts, the flavours of the whisky begin to blend with the elderflower. A fragrant and zesty alternative.

Ingredients:

50ml Single Malt Lowland Scotch Whisky

15ml elderflower liqueur

1 tsp demerara sugar

Method: Fill a whisky tumbler with crushed ice, add the ingredients and turn with a cocktail spoon, then fill with more ice. Garnish with the peel of a grapefruit.

THE OLD FASHIONED

One of the best cocktails in the world, and Scotch Whisky forms the perfect base. Try it - you won't regret it!

Ingredients:

60ml Blended Scotch Whisky

1 tsp white sugar

4 dashes of bitters

Method: Place the sugar into a whisky tumbler. Add the bitters and a third of the Scotch before filling the glass with ice. Slowly stir, gradually adding the remaining Scotch until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is chilled. Garnish with a twist of fresh orange zest and a cherry.



We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you think of these cocktails on social media.

Use the hashtag #DiscoverScotch on Twitter and Instagram.

#DISCOVERSCOTCH

PAIR SCOTCH WHISKY

WITH OUR WORLD CLASS PRODUCE.

Scotch Whisky can be enjoyed neat, it can be enjoyed with water, ice, or as the base of a cocktail. But Scotch Whisky can also be enjoyed when paired with world class food made in Scotland and across the UK.

Here are just a couple of ways to showcase Scotch.

SCOTCH WHISKY AND CHEESE

Wine and cheese pairings are commonplace, but whisky and cheese will be a new experience for many. The principles are the same - you should look to combine flavours which compliment each other.

Generally speaking, a hard cheese requires a robust Single Malt while a soft creamier cheese will work best with a smooth Blended Scotch. And try a blue cheese with an Islay Whisky - it will surprise and delight.

SCOTCH WHISKY AND CHOCOLATE

Scotch Whisky can be the perfect end to a meal. As such it can complement the ultimate sweet treat - chocolate.

Scotch works well with the bitterness of dark chocolate, and can equally accompany high-quality milk chocolate, especially those that contain other flavours like lemongrass, ginger or chilli.

Hold some whisky and dark chocolate in your mouth for the ultimate flavour sensation.



SCOTCH WHISKY IS MATURED TO BE ENJOYED RESPONSIBLY.

Consumed responsibly, alcohol can be enjoyed as part of a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

The Scotch Whisky industry is committed to promoting responsible attitudes to alcohol. So whether you discover Scotch through a tasting, a cocktail or with a food pairing, please drink responsibly.

KNOW YOUR UNITS

A single measure (25ml) of Scotch Whisky at 40% abv contains one unit of alcohol. A 50ml measure, therefore, contains two units. That is the same as a pint of beer (3.5% abv) or a 175ml glass of wine (11.5% abv).

COUNT THE CALORIES

A single 25ml measure of Scotch Whisky contains 55 calories. Scotch contains no fat and no added carbohydrates (although there may be a very small carbohydrate level depending on the type of cask used and length of maturation).

GLUTEN-FREE

Even when a cereal that contains gluten is used as an ingredient, all spirits are distilled during the manufacturing process and this removes any trace of gluten.

SUITABLE FOR VEGAN DIETS

Scotch Whisky is not produced from any animal products and is therefore suitable for vegetarian and vegan diets.

GMO FREE

Scientific tests have shown that no DNA or protein is present in the distilled spirit that is matured to become Scotch Whisky. Scotch Whisky does not, therefore, contain any GM material.

SERIOUS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting the natural environment is crucial to the quality of Scotch Whisky. The industry has taken steps to ensure responsible use of water, land and energy. Since 2008, greenhouse gas emissions from the industry have fallen by 22%.

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