

A B S I N T H E



Clear (blanche) or green (verte)

Anise, Fennel, Wormwood

Absinthe is a spirit with a high alcohol content and a unique herbal profile that always consists of the so-called holy trinity of herbs – anise, fennel, and wormwood. It has a rich and controversial history dating back to the 18th century. Its story includes an era of glory and artistic inspiration, but also political bans and controversy.

Its roots lie in medieval Europe, when many herbs were considered medicinal. Little is known about its earliest use in drinks for health purposes, but over time it began to be produced as an alcoholic elixir. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the first recipes appeared, based on anise, fennel, and wormwood – the “holy trinity” of herbs for making absinthe. The first absinthe distillery, Dubied Père et Fils, was opened in 1797.

Absinthe experienced a major rise in popularity during the 19th century, especially in France, where it became beloved among intellectuals and artists. During this period, it was promoted as an inspiring drink, with many artists – including Vincent van Gogh and Oscar Wilde – being regular consumers. Military and political figures also grew fond of it, contributing to its popularity across Europe.

As admiration for absinthe grew, so did the controversies surrounding it. Some began accusing the drink of encouraging decadent behavior, and in 1910, it was banned in Switzerland. Bans later followed in other countries, including France and the United States, due to fears of its supposed psychotropic effects.

Throughout the 20th century, absinthe remained prohibited, but in recent decades it has been rediscovered. Many countries have lifted their bans, and distillers have resumed production in accordance with regulations. Modern absinthe is characterized by high-quality ingredients and a craft-based approach to distillation.

Today, absinthe stands at the crossroads of tradition and modern production. It is made all over the world – from European countries to the United States and new producers in Asia. Many distillers strive to preserve historical methods and traditions, while others aim to bring new innovations.

The history of absinthe is a fascinating journey through periods of fame, decline, and rebirth. This herbal distillate has attracted and inspired people for centuries. Today's absinthe remains not only a symbol of the bohemian era of the 19th century but also of courage and creativity in the world of spirits.

Production

Selection of herbs:

The process begins with the careful selection of aromatic herbs, as their quality determines the final character of the absinthe.

Selection of base alcohol:

Traditionally wine spirit is preferred, though other neutral agricultural spirits may be used.

Maceration:

The first step in production is maceration – the herbs are steeped in high-quality alcohol for several hours to release their aromatic compounds and essential oils. The quality of this stage is key to the final flavor.

Distillation:

After maceration, the herbal-alcohol mixture is transferred to a still. Distillation takes place slowly and carefully to preserve delicate aromas and essential oils. In modern production, multiple distillations are common. In some cases, individual herbs are distilled separately and later blended to ensure consistency of the final product.

Aging:

Absinthe often undergoes a maturation period, during which the distillate rests in stainless-steel or oak casks. This process can last from weeks to months, and for the best absinthes, even years. During this time, aromatic components meld together, developing a complex character while smoothing and rounding the spirit.



Coloring:

Although some producers prefer to leave absinthe naturally colorless, many varieties achieve their characteristic green hue through natural colorants – often from *Artemisia pontica*. Some recipes even produce red-tinted absinthes, using hibiscus, blueberries, and other botanicals.

Bottling:

The final step is bottling the finished spirit, often using historically inspired labels and packaging to maintain authenticity and aesthetic appeal.

Quality control:

Careful quality control is essential throughout the entire process – from the selection of raw materials to the finished product.

Use:

Many classic cocktails feature absinthe as a key ingredient. One of the most famous is the refreshing yet potent Absinthe Frappé, which combines absinthe, water, sugar, and ice. Another popular cocktail is the Sazerac, which blends absinthe, whiskey or cognac, and aromatic bitters with lemon peel.

With the rise of modern mixology, bartenders began experimenting with new combinations and approaches to absinthe – incorporating fruit juices, herbal syrups, and spicy ingredients to create unique drinks.

Absinthe has also found its way into the culinary world. Chefs experiment with adding it to sauces, desserts, and marinades to enhance flavor complexity. Green anise, wormwood, and other herbs bring new dimensions to gastronomy – such as mussels with fennel and absinthe, cheese fondue with absinthe, or vanilla ice cream topped with Swiss-style blanche absinthe.



Ritual Consumption — How to Drink Absinthe?

A return to the culture of ritual consumption, known as La Louche, enhances the aesthetic and traditional experience. This ritual involves slowly diluting absinthe with cold water in a ratio of about 1:3, creating a milky cloud and changing the drink's color. The best method is using an absinthe fountain, whose spigots control the water flow for perfect dilution and a rich louche effect. The higher the anise content, the thicker and more opalescent the louche will be.

The art of absinthe-making unites ancient traditions with modern technology. Every step — from selecting herbs to bottling — contributes to crafting this legendary herbal spirit. In today's world, where the demand for authentic and high-quality beverages continues to grow, absinthe production has become a true symbol of craftsmanship and artistic distillation.