

B O U R B O N & W H I S K E Y



sweet and full-flavored

originated in Kentucky

History

Bourbon is an American alcoholic beverage made primarily from corn. It is known for its characteristic taste, often described as sweet and full-bodied. The history of bourbon is closely linked to the cultural heritage of the United States, especially the region of Kentucky, where this drink originated.

Origin of Bourbon:

Although the exact origins of bourbon are not completely clear, most historians agree that it first appeared in the 1770s, during the time of the American colonies. The name bourbon comes from Bourbon County, Kentucky, which was named after the French royal family, the House of Bourbon. It was in this region that distillers began focusing on producing whiskey – a spirit that would eventually become famous around the world.

Meaning of Kentucky:

While bourbon is not exclusively produced in Kentucky, the state has become synonymous with it thanks to ideal production conditions. Kentucky has excellent water sources and climate, which are highly favorable for distillation. The soil, rich in minerals, also plays an important role as it positively influences the flavor of the final product.

Official definition of bourbon:

In 1964, after several decades of growing in popularity, the drink was officially recognized by the U.S. Congress as the national spirit of the United States. In order to be labeled bourbon, a drink must meet several strict rules.

The most important are:

- Must contain at least 51% corn.
- Must have at least 40% alcohol by volume.
- Must be aged in new charred oak barrels, which give it its characteristic color and flavor.
- Must be produced in the territory of the USA.
- For the European Union, the rule is simple: only whiskey made in the USA can be called bourbon.

Basic Categories of American Whiskey / Bourbon

Straith Bourbon

Must meet all legal standards and be aged for at least two years in new charred oak barrels.

Tennessee Whiskey

Differs mainly by an additional production step. After distillation, it is filtered through charcoal before aging, which removes harsh elements from the fresh distillate.

Corn Whiskey

Must contain at least 80% corn. It does not have to be aged in new charred barrels, and thus the minimum aging requirement doesn't apply. It is often sold clear and unaged, though if aged, it's usually for only a few months.

RYE Whiskey

By law, must contain at least 51% rye grain, along with corn and malted barley. Like bourbon, it must be aged for at least two years in new charred oak barrels.

Blended Whiskey

Created by mixing many types of whiskey from different distilleries – often blending 10 to 50 different whiskeys to achieve a consistent flavor.

Production

Production is a complex process that involves several steps, from grinding the raw materials to final distillation and maturation. This process is strictly regulated and each stage has a great influence on the final quality of the drink.

Ingredients:

Made mainly from corn (at least 51%), combined with grains such as wheat, barley, or rye.

Each distiller can use a unique grain ratio, which influences the flavor profile.

Milling and Mash Preparation:

The grains are ground and mixed with water to create a mash rich in sugars necessary for fermentation. Special yeast is often used to convert the sugars into alcohol.

Fermentation:

A key stage of production. Yeast consumes the sugars and produces alcohol. This process usually lasts several days. The result is a liquid known as wash – similar to beer.

Distillation:

During distillation, alcohol is separated from water and other substances using copper stills, which are essential for creating a clean and refined distillate. Bourbon is typically distilled twice.



Aging in Barrels:

After distillation, the spirit is transferred into new charred oak barrels, where it matures. The oak contributes both color and complex flavors, such as vanilla, caramel, spice, and wood. Aging usually lasts 2–4 years, though premium bourbons may age longer. Each additional year deepens the aroma and smoothness of the spirit.

Bottling:

After aging, the bourbon is filtered and prepared for bottling. Some producers dilute it slightly with water to adjust the alcohol content, which typically ranges between 40–50% ABV.

Use in gastronomy:

Bourbon is not only popular for drinking, but it is also increasingly used in gastronomy. Many restaurants and bars are experimenting with bourbon in cocktails, marinades, desserts... Its rich flavor and aroma add a new dimension to dishes and drinks.

Bourbon is the basis of many popular cocktails.

The most famous are:

Old Fashioned

- Combination of bourbon, sugar, Angostura bitters and orange zest. This cocktail is considered a classic among whiskey drinks.*

Mint Julep

- Bourbon, mint, sugar syrup and ice. This drink is traditionally associated with the southern states of the United States, especially with the Kentucky Derby horse race.*

Whiskey Sour

- Bourbon, lemon juice, sugar syrup and egg white. This cocktail is refreshing and balanced.*



Bourbon is also used in the kitchen to prepare various dishes. Its sweet and spicy notes go well with meat, especially pork or beef. It is also suitable for sweet dishes. Bourbon is an excellent companion for various types of food.

Marinades

- *Bourbon is sometimes used in meat marinades, where it contributes a rich flavor.*

Sauces

- *Bourbon sauces based on butter and broth are popular with steaks and roasts.*

Desserts

- *Bourbon is also used in desserts, such as chocolate or pecan pies. An interesting variation is bourbon caramel or bourbon apple pie.*

Grilled meats

- *Bourbon and grilled steak or pork ribs make an excellent pair thanks to their strong flavors.*

Sweet dishes

- *Bourbon goes great with chocolate dishes, nuts, and even classic pies like pecan pie.*