

SOME FACTS ON SCOTCH WHISKY

COMPILED BY VIPUL M DESAI

According to Master of Whiskey Tom Turner, the first rule of drinking whiskey is “drink it however you like”. There is no second rule, but, if there was, it should definitely be “DRINK IT HOWEVER YOU LIKE”.

Mandates for a whisky to be called Scotch whisky are:

1. Distilled in Scotland.
2. Casked in Scotland.
3. Aged 3 years and 1 day in Scotland.
4. There is no requirement for a barrel of whisky that meets these criteria to be bottled in Scotland. 26 brands of Scotch are bottled in India.

Some 20 million casks, over 500 million cases, are maturing in warehouses in

Scotland. This represents the equivalent of approximately 10 billion bottles of Scotch after bottling.

Scotch is sold in more than 200 markets globally.

Scotch sells three times its nearest foreign whisky.

A closed bottle of Scotch can be kept for 100 years+ and will still be good to drink.

After opening, a half-full bottle of Scotch whisky will remain good for five years.

The most expensive bottle of Scotch whisky today is Isabella's Islay (\$6.2 Million).

The oldest Scotch whisky on the market is the Aisla T'Orten 107 Years old, distilled in 1906 and available for \$ 1.43 million (£870,000).

The highest price paid at an auction for a bottle of Scotch Whisky is \$631,850 for a 6-liter The Macallan "M" Decanter by Lalique, containing a 44.7% AB Single Malt.

The highest price paid at an auction for a standard sized Scotch Whisky is £288,000 (US\$460,000) for a 64-year-old 42.5 % AB Macallan malt whisky.

Glenfiddich is the largest selling single malt in the world, followed by the Glenlivet.

Johnnie Walker Red Label is the world's largest selling Scotch whisky.

Johnnie Walker's premium whisky was originally known as 'John Walker's Extra Special Old Highland'. It was renamed Johnnie Walker Black Label in 1909.

Johnnie Walker Black Label is the world's best-selling deluxe whisky.

The Famous Grouse is now the most popular Scotch whisky in UK, displacing Bell's.

McLelland's (part of Suntory's Bowmore) is the fifth most popular single malt Scotch whisky in the U.S.A.

Experts advise you to drink Single Malt whisky neat or with a tiny bit of water. The water supposedly 'Releases the Serpent' from the whisky.

If there is a serpent, there is also an Angel. As it ages, 2.0-2.5 % of the whisky maturing in a barrel is lost to evaporation every year. Distillers refer to this as the 'angel's share'.

But the Devil has the last word. The larger the barrel used to mature whisky, the more the spirit that is absorbed by the wood and lost, called by distillers the 'Devil's Cut'.

The most expensive country in which to buy Scotch is where it's made, the UK.

Although their proof differs, standard drinks of beer, wine and spirits (liquor) contain an equivalent amount of alcohol - 0.6 ounces each. They're all the same to a Breathalyzer.

Glen turret is the oldest distillery in Scotland (1775), followed by Bowmore (1779).

Glen turret, Oban and Glenlivet are the three oldest malt whiskies currently sold.

William Lawson's blended Scotch, a relatively unknown brand, is a bestseller in Russia.

18,000 liters of Scotch whisky worth over \$800,000 (£ 500,000) were accidentally flushed down the drain at Chias Brothers' Dumbarton bottling plant of in March 2013.

Earlier, Glen Catrine Bonded Warehouse in Catrine illage had spilled 6,600 litres of whisky on 6 September 2011- mostly into the Rier Ayr. They were fined £12,000.

There are a total of 109 distilleries in Scotland, 102 malt and 7 grain or multipurpose, according to the research briefings and fact sheets presented to the UK Parliament.

In the UK, the five most popular Scotch blended Whiskies are The Famous Grouse, William Grant's, Bell's, Teacher's and J&B Rare. Johnnie Walker does not feature in the list of bestselling blends in its home country.

The five most popular Scotch Malt Whiskies globally are Glenmorangie Original, Glenfiddich, The Glenlivet, Aberlour and Laphroaig.

With each bottle of Laphroaig that you buy, you are gifted a lifetime lease of one sq. ft. of the distillery's land, along with a personalized certificate of ownership.

LMH's Glenmorangie distillery is one of the smallest in the Highlands and employs just sixteen craftsmen - 'The Sixteen Men of Tain' - who has become synonymous with the Glenmorangie brand all over the world.

Edradour is the smallest distillery in Scotland - Three people run the entire operation.

The fastest growing Scotch whisky in the world over the last five years is Black Dog. India is a major contributor to its sales.

The Australian Wine Research Institute has introduced a measure called a standard drink. In Australia, a standard drink contains 10 g (12.67 ml) of alcohol, the amount that an average adult male can metabolize in one hour.

Japanese owned Tomatin is the largest capacity distillery in Scotland.

Haig's Pinch(Dimple) is the fourth largest blended Deluxe Scotch whisky in the world.

Persian authorities were required to rule twice on a case; once when stone cold sober and again when intoxicated, in the belief of 'in ino eritas'.

Caden head's Whisky Shop on Canon gate, when owned by the Caden head family, was Scotland's oldest independent bottler till taken over by J & A Mitchell & Co. Ltd. in 1972. The name remains unchanged, even though Mitchell & Co bottle and sell Springbank, Longrow and Hazelburn Single Malt whiskies, along with Campbeltown Loch and Mitchell's 12 year old. Its unique selling point is that customers can have a bottle poured straight from a cask and labeled with a person's name. When sealed it has a label with the 'born on

date', as whisky stops aging as soon as it leaves the wooden barrel so each bottle is a unique blend.

The source of the name Auchentoshan is Gaelic. It means 'corner of the field'. Auchentoshan was probably started by Irish settlers, led by the MacBeathas.

Some sources claim that these Irish whisky distillers brought the Irish custom of triple distillation with them. Auchentoshan uses triple distillation.

Antique records from the year 1800 mention an (illegal) Duntocher distillery, which may have been a predecessor to the legal Auchentoshan distillery. A license for distillation was obtained in 1823.

The 'e' in whiskey: Scotch whisky is always spelled without an 'e'. Most other nations such as United States and Ireland call their similar spirits Whiskey. A very simple way to remember the spelling: if it comes from a country without an 'e' in its spelling, then its spelt Whisky. (e.g., Scotland, Japan, India, Canada, etc.).

Bruichladdich's The Octomore is the heaviest peaked whisky in the world at 167ppm.

The Macallan claims that it has achieved success and fame through its 'Six Pillars', i.e., Spiritual Home, Curiously Small Stills, Finest Cut, Exceptional Oak Casks, Natural Color and The Macallan itself. It has released five expressions in honor of its pillars so far, starting in 2005; the 50, 55, 57, 60 and 62-year-old single malts in bespoke Lalique crystal. The 62nd was released on December 17, 2013 at a price of US\$ 26,000.

Scottish Spirits: Scotch in A Can Each can of Scottish Spirits will contain 12 ounces--about six shots--of 80 proof 'single grain Scotch whisky, or 72° proof UK,' distilled and matured for three years in oak casks in Scotland. While many are calling this a rip off, SWA is more guarded. The latex lid, (patent pending)

produced especially for Scottish Spirits, will allow the can to be resealed and the product to be kept fresh and tasting great. Diehard Scotch drinkers will no doubt protest at this 'blasphemous act', but are unlikely to affect the outcome.

95% of whisky manufactured in India is called Rum overseas. That's because most Indian whiskies are made from molasses.

The largest market in the world for whisky is India.

CSD rates for Black Dog, Teachers, 100 Pipers, The Glenlivet, at 69, etc., are LOWER THAN duty free prices.

Scotch glasses are balloon shaped, not the shot glasses we all use.

95% of Indian whisky drinkers don't know the difference between Blended whiskies and Single Malts.

Whenever you see the word Single on the label of a bottle of Scotch whisky, it means that whisky is the product of ONE distillery. Most Single Malts, like Glenfiddich, are actually *blends* of 15-50 malts manufactured by that company in ONE distillery.

There are 5 types of Scotch: Single Malts (e.g., Glenfiddich), Blended Scotch (Johnny Walker series), Single Grain(Cambus 1991), Blended Grain(Hedonism Blended Grain Whisky) and Blended Malts(Arbeg's 'Serendipity', created by mixing arts of Arbeg and Glen Moray malt whiskies).

Scotch in A Can:

Scotch whisky is now being sold in a can in the United States, putting liquor prized for its pedigree into a humble container known for its affordability and portability. Johnnie Walker has released Red Label Blended Scotch Whisky with Soda, which will be available in both 345ml bottle and 375ml can formats.

Cola mixes are at or below 5% AB. Approximately 15 percent of Scotch whisky is bottled overseas.

Glenfiddich buys German Oak casks and sends them to Jerez, Spain. A sherry-maker is paid rent to make a 'fino' sherry in this cask and bottle it in 2 yrs. The cask is brought back to Scotland and filled with a brand new make of raw malted whisky and matured for 10-15 years. The end result is an expensive Scotch whisky. Macallan does the same, except that at 10-12 years, the whisky is shifted for another 2-5 years into once-used American bourbon casks that last held Oloroso sherry. The end result is a bloody expensive Scotch whisky, most popular in China for corporate gifts.

90% of Scotch sold is Blended Scotch. Some drinkers have just realized that Single Malts are far superior to blends and that much more expensive.

Old Smuggler, at 69, Black and White, Haig, Cutty Sark are examples of 3-year old Scotch whiskies. Pig's Nose, Cutty Sark rare, Mackinlay, Famous Grouse, Black Bottle, Red Label are all 5-yr olds. Red Label contains 12% Talisker single malt.

Most blends have 65-70% Grain whisky (made from wheat, rye or maize+ 10% Barley), 25-30% malt whisky and 0-5% neutral alcohol.

Whisky bottled in Scotland is only 70 proofs (40% alcohol by volume, AB) and sold in 700 cc bottles. Elsewhere, it is 75 proofs (42.8% AB) and sold in 750 cc bottles.

The more exclusive single malts tend to be SINGLE-SINGLE, i.e., *a single malt from a single barrel. *These are normally bottled at cask strength, i.e., 56-63% AB. These hit you hard!

Tasting notes:

Scotch #1: The Singleton of Glendullan

Pairing: Wolfgang's Salad

Singleton is smooth and sweet with strong tobacco flavor often mistaken for smoke. It paired surprisingly well with a house salad covered in Canadian bacon chunks, highlighting the sweetness of the tomatoes and accentuating the salty rich bacon.

Scotch #2: Cardhu Single Malt

Pairing: Wolfgang's Sirloin Sliders

Cardhu is the primary scotch of Johnny Walker and the reason is abundantly clear upon first sip. It is initially hot with intense floral and honey notes, but the burn quickly vanishes making way for the delicious spicy flavors. I needed a change of drawers after pairing it with the unfathomably tender Wolfgang's sirloin slider.

Scotch #3: Oban 14 Year

Scotch #4: Talisker 10 Year

Pairing: Porterhouse appetiser

Oban (pronounced "Oban", like "Oban the bottle already!") is renowned for its balance. It has a smooth caramel flavor, a hint of spice, a touch of sweetness, and a rich peaty finish that wraps the flavor in a brown paper package tied up with string. It was excellent on its own and strong enough to compliment the juicy porterhouse.

Talisker is strong, peaty, and pungent with a smoky nose that smells uncannily like Band-Aids (in the best way possible, I assure you). The smell originates from the strong iodine content of peat moss used to flavor this bold beautiful scotch. Adding water highlights the smoky flavor in an interesting way. The scotch meshed beautifully with the roasted exterior of the porterhouse, dancing a forbidden smoky tango on my taste buds.

Here are most important takeaways:

- Adding water to whiskey is completely acceptable behavior for every type of scotch. In the words of Mr. Turner, “If you don’t like a whiskey, keep adding water until it tastes good”.

- The Scottish refers to adding water to scotch as “releasing the serpent”. Even still, if you meet a Scottish guy who asks if you want to release the serpent, you should probably make sure he’s serving you scotch.

- When you taste whiskey – or any spirits for that matter – swirl the glass in front of you and breathe in through your nose and mouth at the same time, which allows you to smell the different flavors in the drink and prevents the alcohol fumes from making you feel like you lit a match in your sinuses.

- Peat moss does not look like moss, it looks like a log. The moss hardens underground and is extracted in giant’s bricks that look more like firewood than a leafy fern. Total mind bomb.

- New favorite beverage pairing is a “pint and a halfer”, a pint of beer and a shot of whiskey. You alternate sips of beer and whiskey: the beer coats your mouth, cutting and softening the whiskey much in the same way adding water would. Any pairing that substitute’s beer for water gets an official Drink with Aloha seal of approval.

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How to Drink Scotch Whisky

Scotch whisky inspires a near cult-like devotion in some drinking circles. Known for its pungent, peaty aroma and long, lingering finish, it's mostly designed to sip, not shoot. While all whisky (or "whiskey") can be enjoyed responsibly by anyone with an interest in spirits, Scotch whisky is best enjoyed with certain framework in mind, the boundaries of which are hazy. If you've poured yourself a wee dram and wish to savor its silky texture in a whole new light, read on.

Part 1 of 3: Familiarizing Yourself with Scotch Basics



The Singleton Single Malt Scotch Whiskey.jpg

1 - Distinguish the single-malts from the blends.

One of the most important distinctions in Scotch whisky is a technical one. It may not seem terribly important, but being able to identify a single-malt from a blend will tell you a lot about the whisky before you even sip it. So, what is the difference between single-malts and blends?

- A single-malt Scotch is made just from water and 100% barley. Although it comes from a single distillery, it can contain whiskies from different barrels, and even from different batches.[1] A single malt from Bruichladdich distillery, therefore, may have whiskies from different barrels, but it will only contain whisky distilled at Bruichladdich.
- A blended malt Scotch whisky is made from two or more single-malt whiskies produced at different distilleries.[2] Many distilleries sell their whisky for use in blends. Few independent bottlers identify which distilleries produced the whiskies made in their blends, preferring instead to name only the general geographical area.

2 - Don't blindly prefer single-malts over blends.

Although single-malts are arguably more prestigious than blends, their price tag certainly advertises it — there are some very tasty blends out there, sometimes even nicer than single-malts. Overall, you'll probably squeeze more quality out of single-malts, but they're more expensive than blends and not always better. When drinking Scotch, it pays to be judicious and agnostic. Don't be a complete and utter snob.



The Balvenie Doublewood Aged 12 Years.jpg

3 - Know that Scotch whisky generally improves with age.

Scotch whisky ages for at least three years in oak barrels. Sometimes, those oak barrels have been previously used to age sherry or bourbon. The provenance of the oak itself often varies: Some distilleries use American oak casks, while others prefer European oak. The process of allowing the whisky to age in oak barrels, sometimes for several decades, often produces a finer whisky. As a wise man once said, "Never commit Scotch pedophilia!"

- Why does whisky improve with age? Oak, like all woods, is porous. Scotch that is housed in oak barrels seeps into the oak barrel's pores, picking up some of the oak's unique flavor. As the whisky ages, a portion of the alcohol evaporates, mellowing the flavor. The whisky that evaporates during the aging process is referred to as the "angel's share."
- Scotch whisky barrels are sometimes charred before the introduction of the spirit. This charring imparts a unique flavor. The charred wood also helps purify the whisky; the carbon left in the charcoal filters away some impurities as it ages.
- Whiskies are often given a "finish," so to speak. They are aged in one cask for a majority of the aging process, and then transferred to another cask for an additional 6 to 12 months. This gives the whisky a richer flavor profile.
- It is generally thought that whisky does not continue to age once it is bottled. It may lose a bit of alcohol through evaporation and therefore "mellow," but most of its deep flavor is likely to have developed while it was still casked.

4 - Look for all-natural whiskys without added colorants.

Some whiskies are given caramel color injections before bottling, ostensibly to maintain visual consistency from one bottling to the next. Steer clear of these whiskies. If the whisky tastes good, what does it matter how it looks? Here's the bottom line with Scotch and with other spirits to which colorant are added: If the distiller or bottler is willing to lie about the color of the spirit, what else are they willing to lie about?



Map of rail routes of the Royal Scotsman luxury train.jpg

5 - Note where the Scotch comes from.

While whisky can technically be produced the world 'round — Canada, Australia, and even Japan all make fine whisky — start off with whiskies from the wind-tipped rim of Scotia. You almost can't go wrong. Here's a quick look at the different regions of Scotland, some of their characteristics, and some of their most heralded whiskies:

Regional Whisky in Scotland

<i>Regional Whisky in Scotland</i> ^[8]		
Region	Distinctive Regional Flavors	Representative Brands
Lowland	Light-bodied, gentle, malty, grassy	Glenkinchie, Blandoch, Auchentoshan
Highland	Firmer, spicy, both dry and sweet	Glenmorangie, Blair Athol, Talisker
Speyside	Sweet, mellow, often fruity	Glenfiddich, Glenlivet, Macallan
Islay	Heavily peated, smoky, spindrift	Bowmore, Ardbeg, Laphroaig, Bruichladdich
Campbell	Medium- to full-bodied, peaty and briny	Springbank, Glen Gyle, Glen Scotia

Part 2 of 3: Nosing, Sipping, and Savoring



1 - Get the right whisky glass.

While it's certainly fine to drink your whisky out of any old glass, choosing the right one will enhance your whisky experience. Experts agree that a tulip-shaped glass is generally the best: It allows you to swirl the whisky without it spilling, as well as concentrating the whisky aroma near the glass's neck. If you can't find a tulip-shaped whisky glass to sip out of, try using a wine or champagne glass instead.



Whiskey.jpg

2 - Pour a small amount of whisky and swirl it around gently.

Pour yourself a small glass — depending on your pleasure, of course — usually not more than an ounce. Gently swirl the glass, coating the sides of the glass with a thin film of whisky and allowing the spirit to breathe. Enjoy the color of the whisky and its texture as the filmy coat of caramel spindles down the glass.

3 - Nose it. Smell your whisky.

Bring the whisky glass up to your nose and inhale deeply. Take your nose away (the first nose will smell entirely of alcohol) and then come back to the

whisky. Spend a good 20 to 30 seconds breathing in the whisky, setting it down, and coming back to it, all while free-associating about the kinds of smells or flavors the spirit evokes. When nosing, pay attention to the following kinds of smells.

- Smokiness. This includes peatiness, as malted barley is often thrown over a peat fire in order to smoke it.

- Saltiness. Can you taste the briny spindrift of Islay whiskies? Many Scotch whiskies have a distinctly maritime smell.

- Fruitiness. Can you pick out dried currants, apricot, or cherry from your whisky?

Sweetness. Many Scotch whiskies rely on a caramel, toffee, vanilla or honey. What confections can you smell?

- Woodiness. Since oak is such an integral companion in the whisky-aging process, wood smell is often headily present in Scotch. It sometimes interacts with the smell of sweetness.



Milano Whisky Festival.jpg

4 - Take a tiny sip.

Bring in enough whisky so that it coats your entire tongue, but not so much that your taste buds are overwhelmed with the flavor of alcohol. Swirl the Scotch around in your mouth a bit and try to develop a good "mouthfeel." How does the whisky taste? What does it taste like?

5 - Savor the finish.

Swallow the whisky and open your mouth slightly to help taste the lingering afterglow of the whisky. What flavors, if any, develop after the whisky has been swallowed? This is referred to as the "finish." In elegant whiskies, the finish will be distinct from the mouthfeel, and will add another layer of pleasant complexity to your tasting experience.



Bruichladdich classinc, waterjug and glencairn.jpg

6 - Add a small amount of water to your whisky.

Many whisky aficionados like to add water to their whiskey, enough to dilute the alcohol volume down to about 30%. This is usually less than a teaspoon. Some whiskies will take more water, other will take less; as with most things delicate, it's better to add too little than too much.

- Here's a tip for determining how much water to add to your whisky. Add a couple drops at a time until the stinging or burning sensation in your nose you get from smelling the alcohol disappears.
- Why add water to your whisky? Water dilutes the whisky. At stronger alcohol contents, the alcohol in the whisky can mask some of the more unpleasant flavors or aromas. When you take that heady alcohol smell and taste away, the true spirit of the whisky starts to shine through. Adding water separates the men from the boys, so to speak.
- Try covering the whisky with a cap of some sort (try a clean coaster, for example) and let it mellow for 10 to 30 minutes. This will give the whisky enough time to interact with the water, producing a better drinking experience.

7 - Repeat the whole process, this time with the diluted whisky.

Swirl, nose, taste, and savor the whisky again. How does it taste diluted? How is the whisky any different from what it was undiluted? What things do you notice now about the whisky that weren't apparent on the first pass? Continue drinking and savoring the whisky slowly, preferably with friends.

Part 3 of 3: Enhancing the Scotch Drinking Experience



Scotch whiskies.jpg

1 - Make your own blends.

Who says you have to rely on distilleries to blend the whisky for you? You can make your own blends quickly and easily, and to good effect with a little bit of practice. Here's the basics of how.

- Start with two whiskies, preferably from the same distiller. Two different kinds of Bruichladdich might work well together, or two different vintages of Talisker. It's easier to blend whiskeys that were sold by the same distiller.
- Blend a very small amount of two or three whiskeys and set aside for a week or two. This is your "test run," designed to see whether you enjoy the final product. If, after two or three weeks, you like the blend, you can be reasonably sure that blending more won't result in total disaster.
- Take an empty whiskey bottle and fill it almost to the brim with your new blend. You can use 50/50 of two whiskies, or 45/55, or even 33/33/33 of three. The choice is yours. Filling your bottle up almost to the brim neutralizes some of the oxidation that can affect the taste of your whisky.

2 - Once you open a bottle of whisky, drink it within a year.

As soon as you expose your precious whisky to O₂, the spirit starts losing some of its character. Oxygen starts converting the alcohol into vinegar. So drink responsibly, but don't sip so slowly that your cargo turns into undrinkable acid.

Bottoms up!



Barrels 1.jpg

3 - Experiment with wood-aging yourself.

Whisky is aged in oak barrels, but the whisky entrepreneur can also learn how to age spirits himself using string and a toasted twig of wood. Try experimenting with woods such as birch, cherry, or oak for extra flavor. Of course, only use this technique to enhance whisky that leaves something to be desired; very good whiskies probably won't benefit from extra wood aging.

- Make sure the branch or twig is small enough so that it will fit inside your whisky bottle.

- Heat your branch or twig in the oven for several hours on low heat to remove all moisture.
- With a blowtorch, lightly toast the branch. The goal here isn't to char; you just want to toast the branch or twig to give it extra aroma.
- Fasten the branch to a piece of string and submerge it in your whisky, tasting the whisky every 30 minutes. You don't need to submerge the branch long to have a big effect on taste. 30 minutes to an hour is sometimes all it takes to produce a nice enhancement.
- Note: Be sure that the type of wood you're using is safe to use in whisky. Some types of wood are poisonous to humans and/or won't produce a pleasant taste or aroma. Your health should always be your first priority.

4 - Try to refrain from adding ice.

Of course, if you like your whisky cold and super-diluted, go for it. But most whisky drinkers consider ice to be passé. Cool temperatures tend to mask certain flavors, and over-diluted whiskey is more water than whisky, anyway, right?

- If you really want your whisky cold, try using whisky rocks instead. They can be put in the refrigerator or freezer and, if manufactured properly, don't leave an aftertaste.



Edinburgh Scotch Whisky Experience 3.jpg

5 - Try your hand at starting your own whisky collection.

Of course, if you're just a beginner, this may seem a bit odd. But many people consider whisky collecting a fun and enlightening hobby. Here are a couple things for you to consider when starting your own collection:

- Buy what you enjoy drinking, not what you think will be worth big bucks later on. The whisky auction market is quite volatile. Prices fluctuate often. The best bet for collecting is to stick what you like; that way, if the price of whisky plummets in ten years, or doesn't outstrip inflation, you'll still be happy drinking your whisky.
- Keep your receipts. Keep your receipts in the whisky bottle itself. It's a nice little reminder of what you paid, and helps you enjoy the whisky more once you finally decide to pop the cork.
- Keep your stash in different places. If a snooping child or a devastating fire were to hit your stash, it pays to diversify. Don't keep your eggs all in one basket.

WITH WARM REGARDS

VIPUL M DESAI

<http://suratiundhiyu.wordpress.com/>