

LIQUORICE – Bittersweet roots.

NUTMEG – Brings warm and sweet flavours to the Gin.

ORRIS – A root from the iris plant that, like Angelica, fixes the taste during distillation.

Some Gin Definitions

LONDON DRY – Introduced at the end of the 19th century; unsweetened in contrast with Old Tom and easier to mix than Genever; a highly rectified, neutral spirit, colourless and tasteless until flavoured with various botanicals. A style of Gin that must be redistilled. The Gin need not be produced in London.

PLYMOUTH – A heavier more strongly flavoured gin that must be made in Plymouth and, in taste, lies somewhere between London Dry and Dutch.

DUTCH/ GENEVER – Full-bodied and richly flavoured by the botanicals. A relatively large quantity of Juniper and the base spirit are distilled at least twice in a pot-still but only to relatively low levels of alcohol and from a mash containing malt and rye so generating a spirit that is far from neutral. This Gin is described as 'jonge'. A second type, called 'Oude' may be slightly coloured. The Dutch will often sip this Gin neat and from narrow, tall glasses.

OLD TOM – One of the earliest and most popular styles of Gin. A sweetened Gin and the basis of the original Gin Sling, 'Tom Collins'.

STEINHAGER – A German Gin, distilled from fermented Juniper berries, colourless and with a heavy Juniper flavour. Sold in stone flagons.

Knowledge in the Glass The Power to Connect with Guests

Red Snapper (The Real Bloody Mary)

The Bloody Mary was first made with gin, not vodka, and was christened the Red Snapper, a mixed drink that quickly found fame with those finding themselves suffering from a little excess. The drink was traditionally mixed with 2 ounces Tanqueray, 4 ounces tomato juice, the juice of half a lemon, a few shakes of salt and pepper, followed by a splash of Worcestershire sauce and then Tabasco. Many bartenders also add a dash of dry sherry, a splash of olive brine, white horseradish, celery salt and

garnish either with a salted celery stalk or asparagus. The Red Snapper always manages to keep stomachs weighed down and spirits high and everyone claims their's to be the best.

According to one story, Ferdinand "Pete" Petiot, a bartender at Harry's New York Bar in Paris, concocted a blend of tomato juice, vodka, and seasonings that, sometime in the early '20s, the American entertainer, Roy Barton, dubbed a "Bucket of Blood". Here again, there is substantiated speculation that the drink was first made with gin, a far more popular spirit at that time.

When Volstead's Noble Experiment ended in 1933 Petiot took his fabulous creation back to the King Cole Bar in NYC but found that the years of 'bath-tub' gin had rather ruined the spirit for his patrons and Vodka (known in those days as white whiskey) was growing in popularity. The Red Snapper became forgotten to both customers and bartenders.

But origins aside, it's always good to quote Hemingway when summing up the merits of the Bloody Mary. In a 1947 letter, our favourite bad boy of the cocktail world claimed that he introduced the mixed drink to Hong Kong in 1941 and that the drink "did more than any other single factor, except the Japanese Army, to precipitate the fall of that Crown Colony. "

The Ramos Gin Fizz

Without doubt this is one of the truly unique cocktails still to exist and that's still drunk. In fact it has gained popularity with the rise of the modern mixologists. To disrespect it and call it just a Gin Fizz would be unwise but many people call it by the name Orleans Fizz as that is from where it hails. Give credit where credit is due and call it by the creators' name, though try to bring in New Orleans' reputation as America's favourite City of Sin.

The Ramos Gin Fizz would be better known if it had not been for the Noble Experiment known as Prohibition. Paradoxically however we might not know its ingredients at all if not for that very same impediment. The Ramos Brothers who ran the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans were very proud of their concoction and at the same time were vain and tried to keep the recipe secret. With the advent of prohibition they "in a fit of generous aberration" allowed the recipe to slip out - they had invented it in 1888 and it was not until the late 1920's

that the secret ingredients became known.

It has been described as "dulcifying froth" (whatever that may mean) but rather think of it as tasting how a cloud might be, if you could capture it's essence. When one first tastes the Ramos it is difficult to pick out all or even any of the flavours and ingredients. The Roosevelt Hotel used to employ 8 large bar backs whose sole job was to shake the fizzes until they tired and then pass the drink down the line to the next!

Recipe

1 1/2 oz Gin

1/2oz lemon juice

3 dashes orange flower water

Dash gomme, 1 egg white, 2oz cream, Soda

Method

Shake all except the soda very hard and very long. Strain into an ice-filled highball and then 'charge' with soda. Garnish with orange slice.

Tips

Try using rose water instead of orange flower water.

Try adding a few drops of vanilla essence to the mix, especially in summer.

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The Taste and Flavour School for Spirits



GIN EXPLAINED

'... the tart with the heart' or
'...the glamorous ice queen'

Geraldine Coates
author of Classic Gin



Gin – A Tale of Rags to Riches

A journey described by Lord Kinross in his book, 'The Kindred Spirit' as '...the ardent spirit which rose from the gutter to become the respected companion of civilized man', so giving an accurate description of Gin's journey from the slums of 18th century London, through improvements in quality and social status in the 19th century, to being today's truly international spirit.



The Origins of Gin

Most early spirits tasted really bad. Distillers matured some to mellow the raw spirit but the Dutch experimented with juniper as a flavour to mask the taste of their raw rye spirit and so Genever (Gin) was invented.

Juniper was already well-known for its medicinal qualities so the spirit proved to be useful to the Dutch wanting to protect themselves from tropical disease in the East Indies. The Juniper made the spirit taste better as well. Lucas Bols built his first distillery in 1575, followed by De Kuyper a century later.


Tales of Gin and Dutch Courage arrived in England in the second half of the 17th century. In 1689 William of Orange became King of England and encouraged local production of Jenever or in its local corruption, 'Gin'.

Called upon to be patriotic and to drink for England, the masses responded with enthusiasm and the popularity of Gin grew, not only as a cure-all but now as a pleasure too. One sign hanging outside a Southwark Inn famously read,

*'Drunk for a 1d
Dead Drunk for 2d
Clean Straw for nothing'*

By 1750 Gin had become the choice of the masses and the source of widespread drunkenness, not to say death, on account of the lethal ingredients contained in many concoctions. Hogarth sketched vivid records of the resulting drunkenness and misery.

Only with the invention of the Continuous Still in the 1830s and production of a spirit with many of the impurities and harmful elements removed, did Gin's reputation improve. At this time the most popular Gin was sweet and called 'Old Tom'.



Gin and The Royal Navy


In the early 19th century, in the town of Angostura in Venezuela, a German Doctor perfected a blend of aromatic and tonic bitters containing bark from the Angostura tree. This concoction, named after the tree and town, became renowned for its medicinal value, but more important for Gin, it was adopted by the Royal Navy, to add to their Gin to produce a more palatable drink, the so-called 'Pink Gin'.

It was also The Royal Navy that created the link between lemons and alcohol. Though the link may be natural today, initially lemons were exotic fruits of the East. It was the Navy who chose to mix lemon juice, first with their Rum rations and later with Gin, to prevent scurvy and in so doing, discovered that the juice also brought freshness and sharpness to their drinks.

At this time, in distant parts of the Empire, recognition of quinine was extending beyond its use in the fight against malaria, to its ability to mix well with Gin. Jacob Schweppe, born in 1740 and an amateur scientist was experimenting with ways of making carbonated waters. He perfected a process for making mineral soda water and in 1798 moved his business to London. In the 1870's, this Company created Indian Tonic Water, by adding quinine to the soda water before shipping the bottles out to the Services in the East.

Returning home, the habits of the servicemen continued and the enjoyment of Pink Gins and Gin and Tonics with a slice of lemon encouraged many of today's famous names to start their businesses. During the Victorian era, the reputation of Gin improved beyond all measure and the better quality of spirit encouraged experimentation with the drier styles that have since become the norm.

By the 1890's Gin was being enjoyed at home and by the 20th century, Gin was acquiring universal recognition as a world-class, quality spirit, particularly in America. During Prohibition appetites had grown for what was denied and even homemade 'Bathtub Gin', an all too often lethal mixture of industrial alcohol, glycerine and oil of Juniper carried some romance. The belief grew that drinking should be valued as a civilized pursuit and Gin became recognized, more than any other spirit, as sophisticated and exotic. In the years since, Gin has become the most widely consumed of all spirits, classless and enjoyed equally by both sexes.



How is Gin Made?

Gin is an agricultural product and not an industrial creation. There are three methods of production but, in all cases, the base liquid is high alcohol, very pure neutral spirit, distilled to around 96% abv. and tasteless. To become Gin, Juniper and other botanicals, usually between 8 and 20, must be added and, though specific recipes remain unique to each brand, all are dominated by Juniper.

Cold Compounding

The process is to add flavours in the form of extracted essences to neutral spirit. Producing Gin in this way is easy and cheap. The Gin cannot be called 'London' Gin or carry the description, 'distilled'.

Distilled Gin

What we could call 'proper gin' must result from a re-distillation of the neutral spirit with natural botanicals and flavours, such as juniper, coriander and citrus peel. For all quality Gins, neutral spirit is mixed with the botanicals and distilled in a pot-still. When heated the flavoured spirit rises in vapours, cools and condenses into a more concentrated distillate. This process tends to generate rich botanical attachments and full-bodied Gins.

Prior to distillation and, only on rare occasion, such as with Beefeater, the botanicals and spirit may be first steeped together for up to 24 hours, to encourage more attachment between the alcohol and the botanicals. This process is costly but tends to yield more complexity and depth of flavour and causes the Gin to retain its flavour longer, once poured into a glass.

The distillers of Bombay Sapphire choose to place some of the more delicate botanicals in a perforated copper box or basket, situated in the swan neck above the spirit. Then only the spirit vapours pass through to mix with these volatile flavours. This process, known as 'racking' or 'flavour infusion' is most suitable for the attachment of delicate flavours, otherwise damaged by direct contact with the spirit and it tends to produce a more subtle style of Gin.

Both these processes release more subtle, complex and long lasting flavours into the spirit than Cold Compounding.

Maturation is not required as the spirit has been highly rectified during distillation to remove the fusel oils and other impurities. If stored for too long, Gin can even deteriorate and, in particular, lose its freshness.

Bottling

The final bottling strength also plays an important part in taste delivery. Alcohol not only delivers a pleasant warm effect but it also binds in the flavours that have been distilled into the Gin. Just as there is an optimum temperature for the service of wines so there is a strength at which the botanicals in Gin are most attractive. Only when the strength is reduced, for example by the addition of tonic, preferably around 3:1 will these aromas be released.



Some of the more popular botanicals

Botanicals and their Characteristics combine to create 'liquid steel', a very apt American description, for the coldness of Gin.

The Dutch and English dominated the spice trade and so the influence of botanicals was natural and expected in the creation and development of this Dutch/English spirit.

ALMOND – Bitter almonds, ground to release their oils.

ANGELICA – An aromatic and earthy root with floral character. Used to stabilize the other flavours.

CARDAMOM – Tiny seeds used to sweeten the breath and aid digestion.

CASSIA BARK – A relative of cinnamon but stronger and more bitter with the smell and taste of chewing gum.

CORIANDER – The second most commonly used botanical, similar to parsley but with citrus undertones.

CITRUS PEEL – A clean flavour, rich in oils and used to enhance the dryness of Gin.

CUBEB BERRIES – Member of the pepper family from Java, with spicy, peppery aromas.

GRAINS OF PARADISE – Another peppery berry with hints of lavender and camphor.

JUNIPER – A purple berry, native to Europe, bittersweet with hints of pine, lavender and camphor. Gives the basic stimulating flavour and essential freshness to Gin.