

## Whiskey



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*Ryan Maloney has over twenty five years experience in the spirits industry. He has appeared in and on the cover of several international whisk(e)y and trade publications. He is the "go to" guy for all things alcohol related for the Phantom Gourmet T.V. and radio show. He has done consulting work for major players in the beverage field. He is the founder of The Loch & K(e)y Society and the creator of [www.lochandkey.com](http://www.lochandkey.com) a forum based whisk(e)y website. However, Ryan is most recognized as the owner of Julio's Liquors in Westborough MA, where amongst other accolades he has been twice awarded "Retailer of the Year".*

# Whiskey...





# *Under Lock And Key*

## *The Golden Age of Whiskey*

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*I have often heard friends say,  
“I don’t like whiskey.” To which I reply,  
“Have you tried them all?”*

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**I** have other friends that say, “I haven’t found a whiskey that I didn’t like; I just like some more than others” (don’t panic, Brad, I won’t mention any names). I worry about both sets of friends, but mostly the latter. Such a blanket statement is not quite fair to a spirit that offers such a diverse palate. Few people, for example, would say, “I don’t like movies,” but instead might say, “I don’t like horror movies.” By the same logic, specificity is also necessary when referring to whiskey, a category which includes a vast array of flavors ranging from sweeter bourbons with nuances of vanilla and caramel, to heavy, peaty (having the flavor of decaying vegetation) Islay single malts with intense smoke and iodine hues.

Just think of all the types of whiskies that are available here in the U.S. In your local liquor store or watering hole, you can find Bourbon, Irish, Canadian, American, Japanese, Indian, French, Single Malt Scotch and Blended Scotch, and there are even subsets to all these categories – plus there are innovators who are blurring the lines between all of these styles. But, the fact remains that ALL of these are whiskies!

Recent trends in mixology have made many people curious to find out what all the whiskey hubbub is about. If you’re one of the newly curious, you’ve picked the right time because we are living in the Golden Age of Whiskey!

Now is a great time to experiment with this new spirit. You might consider gathering a group of friends for an at-home whiskey tasting party, or, check with your local liquor store and see if they have any whiskey tastings (many of the tastings are free), or even whiskey dinners on the calendar. Go online and see if there are whiskey-themed events happening around you. A couple of sites to check out are: [www.whiskyguild.com](http://www.whiskyguild.com), [www.maltadvocate.com](http://www.maltadvocate.com), [www.whiskycast.com](http://www.whiskycast.com) and my whiskey site, [www.lochandkey.com](http://www.lochandkey.com).

For those hesitant to dive in headfirst, I suggest taste testing with a whiskey-based mixed drink. Many establishments throughout New England boast, and rightfully so, that they employ some of the best mixologists in the country. The next time you’re in one of these fine establishments, tell the bartender that you want a whiskey-based cocktail and also tell them which flavor profile you enjoy, sweet or savory (tangy or salty).

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Then, stand back and watch them work (more than likely you will end up with a new favorite drink). Remember, there is also nothing wrong with keeping it simple. You would be surprised how refreshing an Irish whiskey and ginger ale, or a bourbon and cola, can be. My beautiful wife, Jennifer, loves the smell of many of the whiskies I drink, but she is less-than-enthusiastic about their flavors. Recently, while traveling in New Orleans, I ordered a Sazerac (a rye-based drink made famous in the Big Easy). Jennifer asked if she could try some. Well, let's just say I never got my drink back.

Another nice introduction to whiskey can come from the new explosion of whiskey based liqueurs or infused whiskeys, many of which you may have heard of. From the "old school" we have Irish Mist and Drambuie, and the "new kids on the block" include Jim Beam's Red Stag (black cherry), Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey and my personal favorite, Wild Turkey's American Honey. Most of these can be mixed or enjoyed straight up (no water, no ice). On warm or hot days, I like Wild Turkey American Honey with lemonade; on cool or cold nights, I prefer it with black tea. Many people in "the whiskey world" look down their noses at these products. But, much like how White Zinfandel has served to introduce people to other, more serious wines, these whiskies have introduced a new wave of consumers to the whiskey world. You will find, as most White Zinfandel drinkers did, that your palate will change over time and the lure of stronger tastes will drive you to try more styles of whiskey. Indeed, the wine scene is full of Cabernet Sauvignon drinkers that began their love for wine vis-à-vis some sort of fruity wine product, although most won't admit it!

I hope I've piqued your interest to explore outside of your comfort zone in drink selection. As the old saying goes "don't knock it until you try it!" Given the variations available to you in this golden age of whiskey it might take awhile before you can pass a final judgment on this most versatile spirit. **F**



*You'll find that when you're reading labels that whiskey is spelled Whisky or Whiskey. The presence of the "e" or lack thereof has been the subject of many debates and, yes, even brawls. The general rule is as follows: no "e" in Scotland, Japan and Canada; "e" in Ireland and just about everywhere else.*

*American whiskey producers usually have the "e", but there are exceptions (i.e., Maker's Mark). Theories explaining the differences include: The Irish put the "e" in to differentiate themselves from some of the inferior product coming out of Scotland in the early 1800s, to a Scotsman taking the "e" out to save 'coppers' (pennies) on printing. (It's important to remember that these are just theories, so please, for the love of the drink, don't write me saying that I disparaged a great grandfather)*

### *A Couple of Whiskey Drinks*

#### **Seth Fagans' Bitter Sand:**

1oz Douglas X.O. Blended Scotch Whisky  
1/2oz Cherry Heering  
3/4oz Aperol  
3/4oz Sweet Vermouth  
2 dashes of whiskey barrel bitters  
(old fashioned bitters can be substituted in a pinch)  
Mix all the ingredients in a pint glass filled with ice and stir  
Strain into a chilled cocktail glass

#### **Bay of Haggis: (a whiskey man's take on a Mojito)**

1 1/2 oz Glenmorangie Original Single Malt Scotch  
3 fresh mint sprigs  
2 tsp sugar  
3 tbsp fresh lime juice  
cold Polar seltzer  
In a tall thin glass, crush part of the mint with a muddler, (or the handle of a wooden spoon) to coat the inside of the glass  
Add the sugar and lime juice and stir thoroughly and top with ice  
Add scotch and mix  
Top off with seltzer  
Add a lime slice and the remaining mint to garnish.



