

## Let's Talk About Vodka!

Vodka, has become the second best selling spirit in Canada hence the wide selection of brands are trying to capitalize on the growth of this highly versatile liquor. There is a lot to know about Vodka but I thought for the first article I would clear up some common many misconceptions about this liquor category.

Today vodka is made all around the world and is created using a base of potato, rye, wheat, corn or even a combination of several. Each vodka has a distinct flavour which is partially created from the base product; potato or corn will tend to produce a vodka on the sweeter side. Each country uses a different base product or mash that is typically the most common grain or vegetable in the region.

All vodkas taste different. Good vodka has a distinct flavour that delivers a clean finish with little or no burn. Great vodkas can be sipped and will present a round taste experience that has a subtle flavour yet crisp. Typically the brands that have a great finish are distilled at least 3 times and use various high tech filtration methods such as charcoal or diamond filters. One such vodka is even filtered in pressurized tanks to remove any impurities such as esters and conjoiners from the final product. These impurities are exactly what cause the symptoms commonly attributed to a hangover and the burn in the finish of a sip.

A very easy way to test the purity of your vodka at home is to slowly pour it over 1 cube of ice in a rock glass. Watch how the vodka slips across the ice and the glass. If the vodka coats the ice cube and produces legs on the glass when swirled that look thick, you have a pure vodka. Basically the least amount of impurities the higher the viscosity when cold. This is not to say that the vodka will be thick when you drink it but it will have a very smooth appearance in the glass.

Shaken or stirred? Well for all of you James Bond fans out there I always shake my vodka martinis but most will stir a Gin martini (which is the original martini). The two schools of thought are that by shaking the martini you chip the ice and these little bits will melt quicker in the drink thereby diluting the recipe. However, those that shake will tell you that stirring a martini simply allows the ice more time to melt and dilute the drink. So, really the choice is up to you. Try it both ways and see if you can taste the difference, I haven't met one person that can consistently without looking!

Jeremy's Vodka Picks: Belvedere, Pearl, Stolichnaya and Rain vodka.

Notes: Each of these vodkas has a distinct flavour and each is a great product to try at each of the various price points available.