

# Chapter 10

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## Gin

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Discovering the origins of gin
  - ▶ Recognizing the different kinds of gin
  - ▶ Avoiding cheap well gin
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**G***in* is basically a distilled grain spirit flavored with extracts from different plants, mainly the juniper berry. The Dutch were the first to make gin and have been doing so since the late 1500s.

### *A Little History*

Gin was invented by Franciscus de la Boe, also known as Dr. Sylvius. Why? Who knows but Mrs. Sylvius? Dr. Sylvius was a professor of medicine and a physician at Holland's University of Leyden. He used a juniper berry elixir known as *genievere* — French for “juniper.” He thought that juniper berries could assist in the treatment of kidney and bladder ailments.

British soldiers sampled his elixir when returning from the wars in the Netherlands and nicknamed it *Dutch courage*. When they brought the recipe back to England, they changed the name to *gen* and later to *gin*, which soon became the national drink of England.

## Types of Gin

Although gin has been produced and consumed for centuries, the methods for making the quality gin that you drink today have been around only since the turn of the 20th century. Gin comes in many types; the most popular include the following:

- ✓ **London dry gin (English)** is distilled from a grain mixture that contains more barley than corn. It's distilled at a high proof and then redistilled with juniper berries.
- ✓ **Dutch gin or Holland gin** contains barley, malt, corn, and rye. It's distilled at a lower proof and then redistilled with juniper berries in another still at low proof. Dutch gins are usually slightly sweet.
- ✓ **Flavored gin** is a new product. It's basically gin to which natural flavorings (lime, lemon, orange, and so on) have been added. The flavoring always appears on the bottle.

## Popular Brands

The following are all London dry gins. Each brand has its own distinctive flavor that comes from a carefully guarded recipe.

- ✓ **Aviation:** A gin distilled in Portland, Oregon, from an adventurous blend of spices from around the world.
- ✓ **Bafferts:** A London gin that's handcrafted with a closely guarded recipe.
- ✓ **Beefeater:** A gin made in the only premium dry gin distillery in London.
- ✓ **Beefeater WET:** A lighter-tasting gin (70 proof) made with natural pear flavors.
- ✓ **Bluecoat:** An American gin distilled in Philadelphia.
- ✓ **Bols Genever:** A gin from Holland made with high-quality malt wine. (Gins from Holland are also called Genever.)
- ✓ **Booth's:** A London dry gin.
- ✓ **Bombay:** Made from a well-guarded recipe that dates back to 1761.

- ✔ **Bombay Sapphire:** Conceived by Michel Roux, president of Carillon Importers, Sapphire has more natural botanical ingredients than any other gin.
- ✔ **Boodles:** Named after the London club; one of the most popular gins in the United Kingdom.
- ✔ **Bulldog:** A London dry gin infused with poppy and dragon eye.
- ✔ **Citadelle:** Made in Cognac, France, with 19 exotic botanicals.
- ✔ **Cork Dry Gin:** An Irish gin distilled in Cork City.
- ✔ **Damrak:** A high-quality gin from Amsterdam.
- ✔ **Genevieve:** Made in the United States by Anchor Brewing Company in San Francisco. A throwback to the earliest forms of gin.
- ✔ **Gordon's:** First distilled more than 225 years ago in London by Alexander Gordon, who pioneered and perfected the making of an unsweetened gin with a smooth character and aromatic flavors known as London Dry.
- ✔ **G'Vine:** A gin from France made with a Ugni Blanc (Trebiano grapes) base spirit, infused with green grape flowers.
- ✔ **Hendrick's:** A Scottish gin with juniper, coriander, rose petal, citrus, and an infusion of cucumber.
- ✔ **Magellan:** A French gin handcrafted in small batches, using natural exotic botanicals from around the globe.
- ✔ **Martin Miller's:** A London dry gin, considered the world's first super-premium gin.
- ✔ **Plymouth:** Legend has it that a surgeon in the Royal Navy invented this gin to help the sailors make their Angostura bitters more palatable (pink gin). You can read more about Angostura bitters in Chapter 6.
- ✔ **Right:** An ultra-premium gin made with juniper, cardamom, and coriander leaf.
- ✔ **Seagram's Extra Dry:** A citrus-tasting golden gin.
- ✔ **Tanqueray:** Its unique green bottle is said to be inspired by an English fire hydrant.
- ✔ **Tanqueray No. Ten:** A super-premium gin from Tanqueray with a blend of fresh botanicals, including grapefruit and camomile. It's distilled four times.

## Storing and Serving Suggestions

As you peruse the recipe section of this book (Part III), you'll probably notice that gin appears in many cocktails, so choosing the right gin (that is, your favorite) can really affect your enjoyment of a given drink. Never, ever use cheap, nonpremium gin when making a drink. The results will be a disaster. Cheap gin tastes like disinfectant. Good gin has an herby, spicy, organic flavor, so stick to the premium brands such as those I list in this chapter.



When you're at a bar, don't order a Gin & Tonic because you'll end up with some cheap, awful bar (or *well*) gin. The *well* is the easiest-to-reach place behind the bar and usually contains the most widely used — and cheapest — bottles of alcohol. If you don't request a brand by name, the bartender will reach for whatever is in the well. Order a Tanqueray & Tonic or a Sapphire & Tonic, and you'll get a decent drink. The same goes for gin Martinis: Always specify what brand of gin you want.

Store an unopened bottle of gin in a cool, dry place out of direct light. After you open a bottle, it should last about two years.



### Famous gin-related lines

From one of the most romantic movies of all time, after Ingrid Bergman comes into Rick's bar in *Casablanca*, what does Humphrey Bogart say? "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine."

Eliza Doolittle, in the movie *My Fair Lady*, makes this remark about someone's drinking at a fashionable horse race: "Gin was mother's milk to her."

Finally, a little poem:

I'm tired of gin  
I'm tired of sin  
And after last night  
Oh boy, am I tired.  
—Anonymous