

About Gin

Gin is a neutral spirit flavored with juniper berries and a wide variety of other botanical flavorings. Spices, roots, seeds, flowers, leaves, and fruits can all be used to flavor gin, but juniper must be the main flavor. Gin originated in Holland but can be produced all over the world. Styles of Gin include London Dry, Plymouth, Old Tom, and Genever.

There are two main categories of gin. Compound gin is less expensive and involves blending neutral spirits with flavorings and extracts. Distilled gin is made from a fermented mash in a pot still. The botanical components are added during the second distillation and can be mixed into the distilling mash or placed on a screen above the mash. Distilled gins have a more elegant and distinct flavor.

Types

Genever (or Schiedam gin) is the Dutch and Belgian version and the original style of gin. It was first distilled for medicinal purposes and was the original gin used in many of the classic American cocktails of the 19th century, rivaling Old Tom as the star of the bar. Genever is distilled from malted grain mash in a manner similar to whiskey. It tends to be lower proof (70 to 80 proof) than its English counterparts. Genever is often aged in oak casks for one to three years and comes in two styles. Oude (old) genever is the original style with a straw color; it is relatively sweet and aromatic. Jonge (young) genever has a drier palate and lighter body.

London dry gin is the best-known and most widely produced style of gin in the world today. It's often considered the benchmark that defines gin. This is a juniper-forward, very dry gin. Its flowery and aromatic characteristics are a result of adding the botanicals during the second or third distillation. The vapors from these flavoring agents reach the alcohol as they pass through a specialized still with an attachment called a gin head. London dry gin is often preferred for making martinis and the most versatile for cocktails.

Plymouth Gin is a clear, slightly fruity, full-bodied gin that is very aromatic. This style originated in the port of Plymouth on the English Channel. Only one distillery, Plymouth, Coates & Co., has the right to produce it today, so it is both a style and a brand name. It is typically a good choice for cocktails that include fruits.

Old Tom gin is a sweeter version of London dry gin. Simple syrup distinguishes this older style from its contemporaries and many include notes of citrus. Old Tom was the original gin used for the popular Tom Collins and the gin of choice for much of the 19th century. Not too long ago, Old Tom gin could be found almost exclusively in the U.K. Today it's produced by several U.S. distilleries as well.

Navy Strength gins must be 57 percent alcohol, or 114 proof, the same requirement that the Royal British Navy had for gins beginning in the early 1800s for officers. The reason given back then was: Gunpowder could still be fired if 114 proof gin was accidentally spilled on it.

"New Western Dry" gin (or "New American" gin) are names adopted by the international bartending community to describe a number of modern gins released in the early 2000s. These brands downplay juniper and were so different from the standard gins that there was much debate as to whether they could be classified as gin. Many were produced with modern cocktails and vodka drinkers in mind. They have a great appeal to consumers who are not fond of a heavy pine taste.

Uncle Val's Restorative Gin

Uncle Val's Restorative Gin features a relatively light botanical bill features a pair of botanicals— rose and cucumber— that rose to fame in one of the contemporary style's forefathers, Hendrick's. All of Uncle Val's Gins are distilled from a base of grain at an unspecified distillery in Bend, Oregon. There's no guess from me, as there are several distilleries in Bend. They are currently all housed under the "3 Badge Beverage" brand name, formerly known as 35 Maple Street Distillery, out of Sonoma, CA.

Distillery: Not Mentioned ABV: 45.4% Region: California, Oregon, USA

Known Botanicals: Coriander, Cucumber, Juniper, Rose

Uncle Val's Botanical Gin

Uncle Val's Botanical Gin is named after August's favorite uncle in Italy — Valerio Cecchetti. Evidently, Uncle Val is a smart guy who grows fresh herbs and vegetables at home and the botanical mix was culled from his garden. This includes juniper, lemon, sage, lavender, and cucumber. Uncle Val's Gin is perfectly balanced, and August says that's because they don't just toss all of the botanicals in the infuser. Each one is steeped for a different amount of time to get things just right.

Distillery: Not Mentioned ABV: 45.4% Region: California, Oregon, USA

Known Botanicals: Cucumber, Juniper, Lavender, Sage

Rabbit Hole Gin

This is a perfect point-of-entry for people who've never bonded with a gin. The juniper is uncharacteristically soft, riding in a floral wave of geranium and rosewater. No one but Rabbit Hole finishes gin in Kentucky rye whiskey barrels. The effect is sublime. Layers of white pepper and coriander and the faintest touch of wood leading to a citrus finish, and a nearly irresistible desire to take another sip.

Specs: 89 Proof / 44.5% ABV

Ransom Old Tom Gin

This Old Tom Gin is a historically accurate revival of the predominant Gin in fashion during the mid-1800's and the golden age of American cocktails. The recipe was developed in collaboration with historian, author, and mixologist extraordinaire David Wondrich. Old Tom is the Gin for mixing classic cocktails dating from the days before prohibition. Its subtle maltiness is the result of using a base wort of malted barley, combined with an infusion of botanicals in high proof corn spirits. The final distillation is run through an alembic pot still in order to preserve the maximum number of aromatics, flavor and body.

The first domestic Old Tom Gin to be released since Prohibition, Ransom's Old Tom Gin is a pioneer in the 21st century renaissance of Old Tom Gin and barrel-aged gins. Only the "heart of the hearts" (the very best portion of distillate) is retained for this special bottling.

Empress 1908 Gin

Handcrafted in small batch copper-pot stills, Empress 1908 Gin is a collaboration between Victoria Distillers and the legendary Fairmont Empress Hotel in Victoria, British Columbia. On top of traditional botanicals, we add a signature blend of black tea served at the Empress Hotel and butterfly pea blossom, an exotic herb that balances the traditional citrus notes of gin with a warm herbal earthiness and gives the gin its natural indigo color. Empress 1908's combination of exquisite taste, delicate aroma, soft texture, and remarkable presentation provide the perfect base for a new aesthetic of cocktail creation and enjoyment.

Distillery: Victoria Distillers ABV: 42.5% Region: British Columbia, Canada

Known Botanicals: Black Tea, Butterfly Pea Flower, Cinnamon, Coriander, Ginger, Grapefruit, Juniper & Rose

Koval Cranberry Gin Liqueur

KOVAL Cranberry Gin Liqueur offers an enticing blend of fruit-forward and bittersweet flavors, surrounded by the crisp, well-rounded notes of KOVAL Gin's signature 13 botanicals. An homage to aperitif culture, it is an excellent base for easy, enticing cocktails for all seasons - simply mix with a splash of Prosecco or any sparkling water, and a signature spritz is born! Made from all-natural ingredients sourced directly from local, organic Midwestern farmers.

60 Proof, Organic and Kosher