

Whiskey

God made whiskey, the joke goes, to keep the Irish from ruling the world. Not a bad trade, that. Although most historians believe that whiskey was developed by Irish monks in the twelfth century, there is a legend that Patrick used this *aqua vitae*, or “water of life” (the literal meaning of *uisce beathe*, or “whiskey,” in Gaelic), to teach a lesson in Christian virtue. One time during his missionary travels an innkeeper gave him a glass of whiskey that was far from full. Patrick told the man that a devil was living in his cellar, which was causing him to be stingy and dishonest, and that the only way the man could banish the devil was by filling each glass to its brim. When Patrick returned to the inn later, he saw that each cup was full and proclaimed the devil duly exorcised. This story is honored on St. Patrick’s Day with the custom of Pota Phadraig, or “Patrick’s Pot,” drinking a full measure of whiskey. It is also called “drowning the shamrock” because a cloverleaf is sometimes floated on the drink.

Keep this custom with any number of Irish whiskeys, or “Irish” as they are called. Irish is not as well known as scotch, but Jameson, Bushmills, Tullamore Dew, Connemara, Tyrconnell, and Michael Collins are all commendable. We are particularly fond of Knappogue Castle, an affordable single-malt Irish (which is somewhat uncommon) and the silky smooth Redbreast.

Or, if you are in the mood for a mixed drink, try an Irish Ale Cocktail.



Irish Ale Cocktail

2 oz. Irish whiskey
3 oz. ginger beer
3 lime wedges

Fill a highball glass with ice. Squeeze the lime into it and then pour in the whiskey. Top with the ginger beer and stir gently.