



RUM

Not Just Rice & Peas

Celebrating Windrush in Devon



Rum's origin

According to most historians, rum production was originally invented by plantation slaves in Barbados in the 17th century, when sugar was produced for export to Great Britain and Europe. The slaves discovered that molasses, a viscous substance resulting from refining sugarcane into sugar, could be fermented into an alcoholic drink.

Rum was first mentioned in historical records from Barbados, the island considered to be the birthplace of the liquor. In about 1650, it was called "kill-devil" or "rumbullion", along with many other names and by 1667 it became known as rum. Mount Gay distillery in Barbados - founded in 1703 - is believed to produce the oldest rum found anywhere in the world.

By 1655, Britain had taken over rule of Jamaica from the Spanish and the colonists brought their knowledge of rum production over from Barbados.



How rum is produced

To make rum you need sugar, which was introduced to Jamaica in 1494 by Christopher Columbus. It is made from sugarcane molasses or juice; yeast and water are added to the base ingredient to start the fermentation process. After this, it is distilled to produce a clear liquid which is then aged in oak barrels offering three types of rum: white, gold, and dark.

Rum is now produced in nearly every sugar-producing region of the world, particularly the Caribbean and North and South America. Rum plays a part in the culture of most islands of the West Indies.

A rum's calibre is dependent on the quality and variety of the sugarcane that was used to create it, and the sugarcane's quality depends on the soil type and climate that it was grown in.

Interesting facts

The association of rum with the Royal Navy began in 1655, when a Royal Navy fleet captured the island of Jamaica. With domestically produced rum being readily available, the British changed the daily ration of liquor given to seamen from French brandy to rum.

Rum was the first alcohol to be manufactured and distilled. It was also the first spirit that was drunk for pleasure and that was not used for medical purposes.