



VODKA

The world's most popular spirit comes in many guises. Its name is derived from the Russian word "little water". Initially distilled almost 700 years ago in Russia, Vodka has a multitude of different, individual and unique characters.

Vodka is most commonly made from potatoes, molasses, or grain – especially rye (mainly in Poland) and wheat (mainly in Russia and Sweden), although Barley is most widely used in Finland and Maize in the US.

The base ingredient is cooked and mixed with water and yeast to begin fermentation and create a "wash". The wash is then distilled, sometimes in a pot still (a kettle-like structure), which allows the vodka to retain some of the characters of its base ingredients, but more often in a patent still. The latter uses continuous distillation, a process that purifies the spirit in one go.

For over 200 years many producers have also been filtering their distillate through charcoal to remove any impurities.

Once the spirit is made it is diluted with water to adjust its alcoholic strength – usually down to 40%. If the vodka is a flavoured style, the flavouring agent is usually added at this stage. As a general rule vodka that is made in the US and Western Europe is generally more neutral and subtle in flavour than those made in Eastern Europe. Poland in particular has an almost infinite variety of uniquely flavoured vodkas. The wheat vodkas of Russia and Sweden often have a distinct aroma of aniseed, whilst the popular rye vodkas from Poland have a nutty sweetness.

Vodka is the world's most flexible drink. It can be drunk straight, on ice, with virtually any mixer or juice and can be used in an enormous range of different cocktails. In Russia, chilled vodka is often served with zakuski – appetizers – such as slivers of smoked fish or spicy mushrooms. But the ultimate in decadence is vodka with beluga caviar!

Vodka does not improve with age- so drink up...

LUKSUSOWA (Poland)	40%	\$9
<i>Awesome value potato vodka from Poland. Really this is the first stop shot vodka.</i>		
SQUARE ONE Cucumber (USA)	40%	\$12
<i>Made by the only female Vodka distillery owner on the planet. The beautifully named Alison Evanow has created this sublime mixture of cucumber and Vodka. To me the whole concoction tastes a little like caramel coated cucumber pieces. Sounds weird I know, but it works. Best on ice.</i>		
ZUBROWKA Bison Grass (Poland)	40%	\$10
<i>Each bottle contains 1 blade of European Bison grass, which gives this Vodka its distinctive greenish yellow colour and floral grassy aroma. After spending several nights getting to know this vodka with some gentlemen from Champagne many years ago, I would suggest this to be "The Desert Island" Vodka. Drink it any way you like. It is always good. Green apple juice works a treat though!</i>		
WYBOROWA Exquisite Single Estate (Poland)	40%	\$15
<i>Another truly premium Polish Vodka. Very smooth and powerful with a richness and presence few vodkas possess. A gorgeous modern art bottle designed by Frank Gehry.</i>		
KETEL ONE (Holland)	40%	\$10
<i>Launched in 1992 this pot distilled Vodka is very classy. It is powerful, spicy and grainy. Made by the Nolet family who have been making spirit since 1691. A cracker of a vodka.</i>		

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- GREY GOOSE (France)** 40% **\$12**
Unusually made by blending corn, wheat, rye and barley. After distillation it is filtered through limestone and has soft fruity characters and a subtle finish. Made in the Cognac region of France and considered a darling of the Vodka world. Loved by many, the world over, it has developed a reputation as one of the world's most premium.
- VAN GOGH Raspberry (Holland)** 35% **\$10**
Similar in production to Absolut in that it is distilled only once but over 50 hours but it is made from barley not wheat. It is clean and sharp, but with a soft berry flourish at the finish.
- CARIEL Vanilla (Sweden)** 37.5% **\$10**
Not too sweet, this is probably the world's best vanilla vodka. We use it in our Espresso Martinis, but it works equally well as a shot or in other cocktails.
- MEDOS Honey Vodka (Poland)** 40% **\$10**
A wonderful traditional vodka style that dates back to the 14th century. One of the most popular vodkas in Poland, it is made with natural honey from wild bees and is best consumed at room temperature or even warmer. But is pretty damn tasty on ice in the Summer months as well.
- VAN GOGH Espresso (Holland)** 35% **\$10**
Coffee and vodka! What a combination. In the 1980's and 1990's we were playing with fruit and vegetables with our vodka, but it took a gifted mind to blend to of the world finest drinks together. Sheer genius. Try a shot today.
- GREY GOOSE Citroen (France)** 40% **\$11**
It is clean, sharp and citrusy with a serious bite at the finish. Quite possibly the best in the range. A really stylish drop. Perfect balance between citrus lift and vodka grain bite. Great with a dash of lemonade or soda.
- GREY GOOSE La Poire (France)** 40% **\$11**
Cracking pear flavoured vodka. Made with true French artisan attention. Not too sweet, but with wonderful subtle musky pear spice. But still with a good hit of the hard stuff!
- SIWUCHA (Poland)** 40% **\$22**
Extremely rare & desired, Sixucha uses raw grain in with distillate giving it unique and idiosyncratic flavours. Full mouth feel with a long complex finish. Best savoured neat. As big and wide as a Mid-West American highway.
- ANCHOR Hop Head (USA)** 45% **\$14**
Wowers! A hop loaded Vodka. Unique. Brilliant and loaded with green herbal notes, hints at bongwater, elements of pine needles in a country fire and warming heat from the 45% delivery shot. This may well be my new favourite Vodka. I recommend it as a "Boilermaker" with your favourite hoppy beer.
- SIPSMITH Barley Vodka (UK)** 40% **\$14**
Tiny batch vodka. About 200 bottles at a time are made in a copper still right in the heart of London. Textural with a soft mouth-feel. Its one of the best new vodkas to hit the market in years.
- PRAVDA (Poland)** 40% **\$13**
Triple distilled and quadruple filtered has made this Vodka seriously close to neutral, making it the perfect mixer or cocktail base. Very smooth and very clean on the palate.
- SQUARE ONE Botanical (USA)** 45% **\$12**
WOW! What a great idea. Made with a grain base this is Vodka made in the style of Gin, with sumptuous botanical in the mix to give it a unique spicy flavour. The is no juniperberry in the mix though, so it never quite veers too closely to Gin and stays true to a unique Vodka.
- HEAVY WATER (Sweden)** 40% **\$11**
A design orientated firm has created this unique vodka. An interesting rod running down the centre appaently infuses each shot poured with oxygen in a similar way to aerating wine via decanting. Pre-historic underground lake glacier water is filtered through Norweigan black birch and then distilled 3 times to create an ultra smooth, ultra pure vodka.
- SACRED Spiced Vodka (UK)** 40% **\$12**
A unique small batch Vodka distilled in the London Dry "Gin" style - featuring angelica, nutmeg and Frankeincense. Makes one of the better Vodka Martinis getting around.