

THE EARLY HISTORY OF SCOTCH WHISKY (РАННЯ ІСТОРІЯ ШОТЛАНДСЬКОГО ВІСКИ)

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У доповіді наводиться рання історія шотландського віски, розповідається про корені та перші етапи становлення цього дійсно культового національного спиртного напою.

The art of distillation spread to Scotland and Ireland no later than the 15th century, as did the common European practice of distilling «aqua vitae», spirit alcohol, primarily for medicinal purposes. The earliest mention of whisky in Ireland comes from the seventeenth-century *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, which attributes the death of a chieftain in 1405 to «taking a surfeit of aqua vitae» at Christmas. In Scotland, the first evidence of whisky production comes from an entry in the *Exchequer Rolls* for 1494 where malt is sent «To Friar John Cor, by order of the king, to make aquavitae», enough to make about 500 bottles.

James IV of Scotland (r. 1488–1513) reportedly had a great liking for Scotch whisky, and in 1506 the town of Dundee purchased a large amount of whisky from the Guild of Barber Surgeons, which held the monopoly on production at the time. Between 1536 and 1541, King Henry VIII of England dissolved the monasteries.

The distillation process was still in its infancy; whisky itself was not allowed to age, and as a result tasted very raw and brutal compared to today's versions. Renaissance-era whisky was also very potent and not diluted.

In 1707, the Acts of Union merged England and Scotland, and thereafter taxes on it rose dramatically. After the English Malt Tax of 1725, most of Scotland's distillation was either shut down or forced underground. Scotch whisky was hidden under altars, in coffins, and in any available space to avoid the governmental excisemen or revenueurs. Scottish distillers, operating out of homemade stills, took to distilling whisky at night when the darkness hid the smoke from the stills. For this reason, the drink became known as moonshine. At one point, it was estimated that over half of Scotland's whisky output was illegal.

In 1823, the UK passed the Excise Act, legalizing the distillation (for a fee), and this put a practical end to the large-scale production of Scottish moonshine.