



The Complete Book of Spirits: A Guide to Their History, Production, and Enjoyment (Drinking Guides)

By Anthony Dias Blue

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An indispensable follow-up to his classic *Complete Book of Mixed Drinks*, Anthony Dias Blue presents *The Complete Book of Spirits*, a comprehensive collection of history, lore, and tasting tips, along with recipes for select cocktails. Here, in one concise and easy-to-use volume, is all the information a consumer needs to shop, mix, and sip like a spirits expert.

From bathtub gin to mojito madness, Blue brings the dynamic history of the spirits industry alive, demonstrating that spirit making is not only one of mankind's oldest pursuits but also perhaps its most colorful. In ten captivating chapters, readers are treated to everything they ever wanted to know about their favorite liquors, including vodka, aquavit, tequila, and whiskey. Blue also provides step-by-step instructions on how to host spirit tastings to educate your palate and to help you and your friends discover your favorite brands and blends. For every chapter and every spirit, there is also a handy tasting-notes section, with Blue's expert comments and his favorites, along with price points.

If you've ever wondered about the difference between potato and wheat vodkas, or between mescal and tequila or American and Irish whiskeys, or what makes single malt Scotch so desirable, look no further. With Anthony Dias Blue, America's leading wine and spirits expert, and *The Complete Book of Spirits* as your guides, you will take your enjoyment to a new level.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Many bartending guides provide scant information about drink ingredients themselves. So a Mai Tai calls for rum—what kind? If you're mixing a Vodka Tonic, how should the vodka smell? Why does a Bombay Sling require bitters? (And what are bitters, anyway?) Blue, who is Bon Appétit's wine and spirits editor, intelligently answers these questions and others in this full analysis of libations other than beer and wine. He covers vodka, aquavit, gin, rum, tequila, scotch and Irish whiskey, North American whiskey, brandy, liqueurs and bitters, addressing what each spirit is made of, how it's made, its history, the various flavors that exist and even the numerous brands available. Blue's historical outlines of each spirit are fascinating; for example, in the chapter on vodka, he tells the saga of the Smirnov (later changed to Smirnoff) family and their exile from Russia to Paris. But with the history comes up-to-the-minute information on popular beverages like the mojito, a rum drink that's currently "one of the hottest drinks on the club scene." Although the guide isn't lighthearted, it's casual enough to inspire page-flipping and informal perusal.

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About the Author

Anthony Dias Blue is the author of several books, including *The Complete Book of Mixed Drinks* and *American Wine: A Comprehensive Guide*. For twenty years he has been Wine and Spirits editor of *Bon Appétit*. His reviews have appeared in magazines and newspapers across the country, including *Wine Spectator*, *Robb Report*, *epicurious.com*, *American Way*, and *Decanter*. *Mr. Blue's Lifestyle Minute* is broadcast several times daily on CBS radio. He lives in California.

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Michael Hansen:

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