

# ALSTON BAR & BEEF

## Busting Gin Myths

### Gin is for cocktails - not on its own

You can drink tequila and mescal as shots, and vodka is served chilled with food (zakuski) in its native land. Bourbon, rye and whiskey drinkers might add some ice or a splash of water. Gin is meant to be mixed, however, as the botanicals (herbs, spices etc.) come to life in cocktails and add complexity to the drink. This is why so many classic cocktails call for gin.

### There are more classic cocktails made with gin than with any other spirit

Negroni, Ramos Gin Fizz, Martinez, Gin Rickey, Red Snapper, Tom Collins, White Lady, Hanky Panky, Clover Club, Alexander, French 75, Gimlet, Vesper, Singapore Sling, Silver Bronx, Pegu Club, Bee's Knees, Southside. And that is just scratching the surface!

### Holland made gin first

Gin is England's national spirit and there are few things more English than a refreshing gin & tonic. Most of the most famous gins you see around the world hail from the UK, so it is forgivable to think that the spirit first came from here. The English actually discovered gin when they were fighting the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century in Holland and saw Dutch soldiers drinking Jenever to boost morale before heading into battle. The term "Dutch Courage" was born, and the English brought the idea of making and drinking gin back with them. It would take another 150 years before they would have their own version.

### London dry gin is not always from London

Gin does not have the same geographical restrictions as spirits such as cognac, scotch or tequila. Only a tiny handful of London dry gins are actually made in the city. There are, however, 13 gins that have a "geographical indication." The most famous of these is Plymouth gin, which has been made in Plymouth, England since 1793.

### A martini means gin

A martini consists of gin, dry vermouth and optional bitters. When the golden age of the martini was in full swing, most people in cocktail drinking nations had not yet tried vodka. During the era of the three-martini lunch, Smirnoff released a very clever campaign, "Vodka leaves you breathless," that combined with the cool of James Bond to help vodka hijack gin's place in the iconic drink.

### Gin can be used for medicinal purposes

In 1269, the first major mention of juniper-based health-related tonics appeared in a Dutch publication. Ever since, gin has had a history of being used "for medicinal purposes." The Royal Navy mixed gin with lime cordial to stop scurvy, and angostura settled the stomach at sea. Tonic water with quinine was anti-malarial, giving them a great excuse to drink more gin and tonics.

### Saying you don't like gin is like saying you don't like sauce

All gin uses juniper as its main ingredient. After that, however, there are very few limits to the hundreds of ingredients a distillery can use. Some gins have as few as three or four botanical flavors, while the Scottish gin Botanist has 31! The flavors in gin range from cucumber and rose (Hendricks) to lavender (Aviation) to lemongrass and black pepper (Bombay Sapphire East). No two gins are alike, making the spirit very diverse in flavor and exciting for the budding bartender.