The types of whisky manufactured by distilleries in Scotland are: Scotch malt whisky and Scotch grain whisky. Products are widely known as ‘single malt Scotch whisky’ or ‘single grain Scotch whisky’. ‘Blended Scotch whisky’ is the mixture of ‘single malt Scotch whisky’ and ‘single grain Scotch whisky’. Scotch whisky is an amber-coloured liquid with different gradients of colour. The alcohol concentration by volume is at least 40%.

Production and processing

Scotch malt whisky is made with three natural ingredients: barley, water and yeast. The first step is the malting process using barley. This can take between 8-12 days. During this period the barley has to be stirred from time to time. Then the barley needs to be dried in a kiln to stop germination, using natural peat fuel. This gives a smoky flavour and distinctive taste to the Scotch whisky. The barley is ground and mixed with hot water in a mash ton. This process will make the starchy barley liquid become sweet. Normally, Scotch malt whisky is distilled twice or even three times using different copper stills.

Scotch grain whisky is made from cereal grains such as wheat or corn that are ripened with steam at high pressure to convert the starch into sugar grains. This causes fermentation to occur. The liquid acquired by fermentation is called ‘wash’. The liquid is distilled using a still, which has a continuous distillation system. This liquid is matured in large wooden barrels and stored in cold, dark rooms in Scotland. After maturing for at least three years, the liquid will turn into Scotch whisky. Most Scotch whiskies are matured for much longer periods, from 5 up to 15, 20 or 25 years or more. This process is carried out during the cold Scottish winter season, which allows the fresh air to be absorbed into the wooden barrels and give the products a unique character.

Main characteristics/features

Scotch whisky is the famous Scotch whiskies. A unique smell found in many Scotch whiskies is that of heather, which gives the product its final touch. The human factor plays a significant role in the manufacturing process, from fermentation, distillation, maturation, and mixing, which are all traditional methods developed and inherited up to now. The history and production of Scotch whisky can be found in records dating back to 1494. The name of Scotch whisky has spread quickly throughout the 20th century, and today it has become a popular product in many countries.