

# Trendy Bourbon

## Move over, 'ordinary' whiskey!

Story & photos by Tracy Beard

The holidays are over, but are you finished celebrating? What should you drink? Wines and cocktails are often affiliated with certain seasons. The hot summer months seem like the perfect time for a fruity drink or a chilled glass of rosé, and the cold winter months call for something warm, a Spanish coffee or a hot toddy. But if you are looking for something to warm you from the inside out, try a cocktail with bourbon.

### The History of whiskey in the US

During the United States' early history, most people imbibing in spirits drank rum, but things changed near the end of the 1700s. The Revolutionary War interrupted the rum trade, and Scottish and Irish immigrants arrived with whiskey. Individuals inhabiting the eastern territories began producing whiskey with rye because that particular crop grew better in the local climate. People that settled further west in places like Kentucky planted corn that they used to produce bourbon whiskey.

The whiskey industry has had numerous ups and downs over the years. Small uprisings occurred when the US Congress levied liquor taxes to help pay off the Revolutionary War debts. These uprisings were known as the Whiskey Rebellion. In the 1920s Prohibition took its toll on American whiskey production when bootleggers imported lighter Canadian whiskeys and blended whiskeys. During the thirteen-year "dry spell," tastes shifted to an appreciation of the milder blended whiskeys. Later when the US joined in World War II, distilleries were required to produce industrial alcohol. The whiskey stock declined, and rum once again rose to the top of the preferred list because it was easier to access. In the 1980s Scotch whiskey became popular, and the US began producing whiskey "en masse." American whiskey producers are now creating excellent bourbons and adding flavors to their whiskey.

Today's bartenders and mixologists have turned cocktail creation into an art form. Bourbon and rye have replaced whiskey in many

traditional drinks. Unique flavor profiles inspire cocktail makers to invent new and exciting libations that pair exceptionally well with America's exciting new food scene.

### What is the difference?

Whiskey is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from fermented grain mash, malted barley, rye or wheat. The alcohol is typically aged in white oak casks. The mash must be distilled at 160 proof or less and cannot be more than 125 proof when put into the new charred oak barrels. Distilled beer is also used to produce whiskey. Various grains are used to make different types of whiskey.

- Bourbon whiskey contains a minimum of 51% corn and is aged in new charred oak barrels. It must be bottled at 80 proof. Bourbons tend to be sweeter than the other whiskeys and exhibit a caramel color.

- Rye whiskey must contain at least 51% rye grain and typically exhibits bitter notes and a spicier taste.

- Scotch and Irish whiskey are predominantly made from barley.

### Bourbon profiles

Bourbon comes in a variety of styles. Some bourbons are very harsh and must be served on ice or with a mixer or water. Others are fantastic served straight up or "neat." Angel's Envy bourbon is smooth and velvety with vanilla and spice notes. Woodford Reserve, my current favorite, is made in small batches with Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey and contains more than 200 flavor notes, including sweet aromatics, spice, fruit and floral. BSB® (brown sugar bourbon) is incredible served with dessert. It is smooth and features strong notes of cinnamon and brown sugar. It warms you from the inside out as it goes down.



Vancouver, Wash. resident Tracy Beard writes about luxury and adventure travel, traditional and trendy fine dining and libations for regional, national and international magazines. She is the "Out & About" columnist, now in her sixth year contributing to CRR.



## RECIPES

### Manhattan

The classic Manhattan typically used whiskey, but many bartenders and mixologists today are using bourbon. Mix (stir, never shake) 2 parts bourbon, 1 part sweet vermouth and a splash or two of bitters.

### Whiskey Sour

Combine 2 ounces bourbon, ¾ ounce fresh lemon juice and ¾ ounce simple syrup in an ice-filled cocktail shaker. Add one egg white. (optional); shake for 20 seconds and strain the liquid into an old-fashioned glass filled with ice or into a margarita glass. Garnish with an orange wheel, cherry, or decorative drops Angostura bitters. *To make Simple*

*Syrup: Heat 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup water in a saucepan 'til sugar dissolves. Cool. Cover and refrigerate, keeps about a month.*

### Tracy's Old Fashioned

Put 2 ounces of Woodford Reserve bourbon, or your favorite bourbon, with 2 teaspoons of simple syrup and 3 shakes of Angostura bitters in an old-fashioned glass. Use a vegetable peeler and peel off a large piece of zest from a fresh orange. Rub the slice of orange along the rim of the glass. Stir the ingredients. Place one large ice cube in the glass with the orange zest and one or two Bordeaux maraschino cherries.

### Pairing Food with Bourbon

The same concept of complementing and contrasting wine with food applies to pairing bourbon and food. When you complement the two, the flavors meld; when you contrast them, you bring out new tastes in the food or bourbon to create a different unanticipated flavor. Bourbons with sweet aromatics would complement sweet desserts and contrast with salty or spicy foods like cheese or fried chicken. Burgers and ribs pair fabulously with bourbon.

One of my favorite pairings is bourbon and candied bacon. Try making breakfast for dinner one night. You probably should not begin the day with a glass of bourbon. For the bourbon, make any of the above cocktails or pour an ounce of BSB® in a glass.

Cook up some of my spicy candied bacon and serve it with a poached egg on buttered toast. The strength of the bourbon cuts right through the ooey-gooey egg, the bacon's caramelized sugar complements the drink and the salt and spice make a perfect contrast to the libation.



### Tracy's Candied Bacon

1 pound thick-cut bacon  
 ½ cup light brown sugar  
 1 teaspoon garlic powder  
 ¼ teaspoon chipotle chili powder  
 Mix the three spices in a bowl and pour onto a plate. Dredge both sides of the bacon in the spice mix and lay on a metal rack on top of a cookie sheet covered with foil. Bake at 400° (preheated) for 25-35 minutes, or until crispy.