

# COLONIAL COCKTAILS

Our colonial forefathers not only liked to drink, but they literally tried to make alcohol from literally anything they could get their hands on.

The types of mixed drinks – or shall we say cocktails – that came out of the colonial period derive from 4 basic cornerstones:

1. Cider
2. Rum (We'll talk more about this in a later episode)
3. Beer
4. Wine (We'll talk more about this in a later episode)

NOTE: We could add whiskey to this list, but I choose to leave this off, because in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the basic rule was it's okay to add whiskey to something else, but you don't add anything to whiskey. There are a few exceptions, but whiskey as a mixed drink is more of a 19<sup>th</sup> century concoction.

## I. Cider

The apple was among the first thing planted by the early colonials and it was one of the few early success stories. Unlike grains and vines, which consistently proved frustrating for farmers, the apple's spread was rapid and stretched quickly from New England to the South.

Apples became abundant and while they could be fashioned into a wide variety of alcoholic beverages – apple brandy, applejack, etc. – it was cider that reigned supreme.

### **DEVIL'S BANG**

This is as simple as it gets: Whiskey and Cider in the same glass. The Devil made us do it.

*The Cocktail:*

2 ounces (60 ml) whiskey

10 ounces (300 ml) Hard Apple Cider

Pour the whiskey into a pint glass full of ice. Top with the hard cider.

## II. Rum

Rum was a crudely distilled liquor first imported from the West Indies and then made even more crudely in New England. Rum is cheap. Rum is easy to produce. Rum is strong enough to peel the paint off a wall. Rum becomes a cheap salve, a social menace, a fixture in the military, and a ceremonial drink alike and, for a time, as good a currency as legal tender. (It was used as a trade item in the Atlantic Slave Trade.)

Rum has its origins with the production of sugarcane in the West Indies (i.e. Barbados) during the early 1600s. It's fair to say that rum as we know it today originated in these islands. Only it wasn't rum at first: It was called "KILL-DEVIL." When it became lucrative, it's name transitioned to RUMBULLION (a hybridization of British and Gypsy slang), and from there, to simply RUM.

Here's how it is produced:

- The remains of processing sugar cure themselves over time into molasses.
- Molasses will ferment if you leave it rotting in the heat for days on end.
- After the resulting sludge has been laid out, you can then mist it with water, citrus, and spices and then distill it one to three times.
- And then you age it...or not.

## STONE FENCE

This colonial-era cocktail is best known for being the drink of choice for Vermont's Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys. The night before their assault on the British-controlled Fort Ticonderoga, the boys drank a potent mixture of rum and hard cider to muster up their courage for the impending attack.

### *The Cocktail:*

2 ounces (60 ml) dark rum                      10 ounces (300 ml) Hard Apple Cider

Pour the rum into a pint glass full of ice. Top with the hard cider.

## III. Beer

Beer was ubiquitous. There many different varieties – just like today – but in colonial times everyone drank it – men, women, and children. NOTE: Men usually enjoyed the strongest ales and women & drink usually drank something called “small beer.” It was brewed and fermented for a much shorter time, had a lower alcohol level, and not as strong a flavor. (It tastes slightly sour.)

To make Beer:

- You need a grain (most often barley) and you need to malt that grain, only then to make a hot mas out of it.
- Boil it with hops and allow the resulting “wort” to cool.
- Strain the wort and ferment it with yeast.
- Wait, and then you have beer.

## RATTLE SKULL

The name for this drinking is very fitting, because it is what it sounds like: a powerful mixture for only the most hearty drinker. We're talking about 3 to 4 ounces of hard liquor dropped into a pint of strong beer.

### *The Cocktail:*

1 ¼ cups (300 ml) chilled brown ale                      1 ounce golden rum

1 ounce brandy    1 ounce fresh lime juice

Freshly grated nutmeg, for garnish

In a pint glass, combine all the ingredients but nutmeg and stir. Garnish with a couple gratings of nutmeg.

## Bibliography

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