Moonshine Encyclopedia Article

Moonshine

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Moonshine

Moonshine (white lightning) is the colloquial term for illegally produced hard liquor—whiskey, rum, brandy, gin, and vodka. The term probably originated around 1785, when it was recorded in a British book on vulgar language—used to describe the white (clear) brandy that was smuggled to the coasts of Kent and Sussex in England. In the New World, moonshine was made in homemade stills, usually from corn, especially in rural areas in the southern United States—before, during, and after Prohibition—and continues to be made today. The ethanol (drinking ALCOHOL) content is usually high, often approaching 80 percent (160 proof). First-run moonshine contains a number of impurities, some of which are toxic, so it is necessary to double and triple distill the liquor to purify it for drinking.

See Also

Legal Regulation of Drugs and Alcohol; Still)

Bibliography

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