

GinMonger Presents

THE GIN REPORT



The Guide to Tasting Gin

GinMonger's Guide to Tasting Gin

Some people like to create parties with a wine tasting as the focal point and theme. We like to do it with gin! What better way is there to enjoy the company of friends than to taste and experience some of the world's most exotic botanicals and spices through a well balanced gin? The fundamental process is no different than a wine tasting; you are focused on the senses of sight, smell, taste and touch.

Below you will find a basic guide to tasting Gin:

Choose the Brands of Gin to be sampled:

Experiment with some of the ultra premium gins currently on the market (you may want to pick from the top ten list presented on GinMonger.com). Try to select some with distinct differences in botanicals so you can really taste the impact each blend of ingredients. You can even place a lower quality gin in the mix to really get an appreciation for the quality of the ingredients and distillation process of the high end gin producers.

Use the proper glass:

The choice of the proper glass is critical and makes a big difference in the ability to smell ("nose") the gin effectively. To properly nose the gin, use either a small wine glass or a snifter type glass. These glasses are preferred over a cocktail glass due to the shape of the glass and the stem they sit on. A glass that curves inward at the top will trap more of the aromas around the rim where they are more easily detected. The stem on the bottom will keep the heat of your hands from warming the spirit and will allow you to properly swirl the spirit in the glass.

Once you have procured the items above, it is time to start the test.

Pour :

Pour one ounce of gin into the glass

Look :

Hold the glass to the light and look at the Gin's color. The botanicals will impart color as well as flavor. For example, Magellan Gin uses the Iris as one of its botanicals which gives it a nice blue hue.

Mix :

Add one ounce of still water to the ounce of gin. This will reduce the alcohol content of the gin and release the flavors of the botanicals, which otherwise would be overpowered by the alcohol. Still water is used because it will not distort or disguise the flavors and will show you the true personality of the gin.

Swirl :

Swirl the gin around the glass to mix in some oxygen and gather the aromas around the rim where they are more easily detected.

Smell :

Take a strong sniff of the gin to carry the fragrances to the nerve ends at the top of your nose. The aromas most commonly associated with gin are citrus, fruit, floral, earth, spice, sweetness and wood. (Note: A strong chemical or astringent odor is a clue that you are dealing with a poor quality gin, which will also smell of artificial flavorings and other chemical extracts).

Taste :

Sip the gin and swirl it around your mouth to assess the primary taste. Let the gin rest on your tongue, then swirl it around your mouth to analyze the flavors.

The first sip should be pleasant, warm and smooth with a subtle taste of juniper.

Take time to notice the flavors as there are a multitude of botanicals used to

make gin -- coriander, citrus, cucumber, licorice, etc. Up to fifty different botanicals can be used. All of the flavors should blend well together, but there is one flavor that should come through above the rest, juniper. It is, after all, what makes a spirit gin.

Next, taste for dryness. A dry sensation on the rear of the tongue means that the gin contains a greater proportion of botanicals from roots such as orris or angelica. Sourness on the tongue indicates larger amounts of lemon peel or other citrus.

Finally, a great gin should finish clean and fresh. The juniper shouldn't linger too long, and by the time you are ready for your next sip, the remnants of the last sip should only be a memory. To fully understand and analyze each gin, you will want to repeat this process several times. With each taste you'll notice smells and flavors that you may have missed the first time.