A LEARNLI REFERENCE COLLECTION

WORLD WHISKY & BOURBON ATLAS

Place, grain, copper and cask.



An illustrated guide to whisky places, production, styles and people.

LEARNLI / HLNA LABS

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CONTENTS

Contents / learning and places.

Final review pagination / begin with a question, a process or a country.

Grain, craft, labels and tasting 6

Foundations: material, stills, wood, labels, colour and tasting

Scotland 38

Regional maps, production routes, named accounts and tables

Ireland 70

Whole-island geography and distinct Irish categories

United States 86

Kentucky, beyond Kentucky, Tennessee, rye and single malt

Canada 122

Canadian rules, grain whisky and six production settings

Japan 130

Law, the member standard and the named release

India 146

The domestic category and separate malt-producer routes

Taiwan 154

Local rules and warm-climate maturation

Australia 158

Tasmania, mainland producers and South Australian context

New Zealand 170

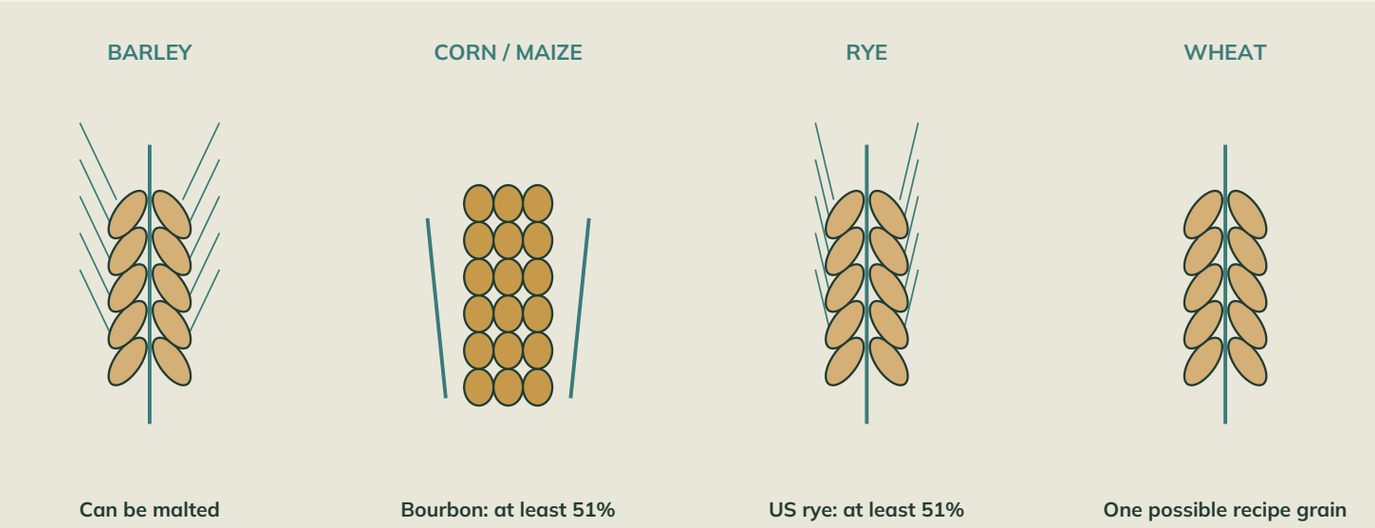
Shared code, local guidelines and selected journeys

Country chapters connect overview maps with site context, producer accounts and editorial comparisons. Squares, warehouse symbols and visitor markers answer different questions; the symbol key on each map takes precedence.

FOUNDATIONS / GRAIN, CRAFT AND THE GLASS

Start with the grain.

Cereals hold starch / a recipe is only the beginning of a whisky.



Four cereals, many choices / the drawings identify ingredients, not guaranteed flavours.

Starch before alcohol

Barley, maize, rye and wheat store energy as starch. Yeast cannot simply turn a dry kernel into whisky: the grain must be prepared, its starch made accessible and fermentable sugars produced. That makes the field only the start of a long chain. Variety, growing conditions and grain condition matter alongside the choices made after delivery.

A mash bill is a recipe

A mash bill records the grains and their proportions. In bourbon, corn must make up at least 51%; rye whiskey instead needs at least 51% rye under the US standard. Those are category thresholds, not complete recipes. A producer may describe a high-rye or wheated bourbon without publishing every percentage. Do not fill the gaps with an invented recipe.

Flavour words are not ingredients

Corn can be associated with sweet-smelling styles, rye with spice and malt with cereal or biscuit notes. None is an automatic result. Fermentation, still operation and oak can change the outcome substantially. Vanilla-like aroma is not evidence that vanilla was added, and a sweet aroma does not measure sugar. Start with the actual grain claim, then ask about the process.

Follow two different examples

Four Roses explains two mash bills and five yeasts on page 89; that is a recipe system, not a promise of ten simple flavours. American single malt starts with 100% malted barley, but its oak histories can differ, as page 115 explains. The useful comparison is not corn against barley alone: keep the rest of the production record visible.

Read the chapters as evidence of particular practices. No grain icon or colour on this page is a flavour score.

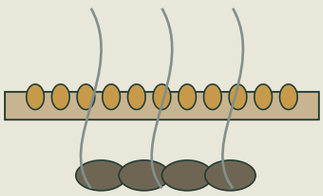
SOURCE DESK / 01, 04, 08 / Full records in the foundations companion.

FOUNDATIONS / GRAIN, CRAFT AND THE GLASS

Smoke begins before the still.

Peat can influence malt during drying / smoky whisky is not one compulsory national style.

SMOKE CONTACTS MALT



Peat fire during drying

Later processes still matter
Mash, ferment, distil and mature. A malt phenol number is not a bottle smoke score.

Peat-smoke route in a malt example / oak charring is a different treatment, shown on page 17.

An optional drying influence

In some malt production, smoke from burning peat contacts barley during drying. Compounds associated with that smoke can carry through the later production chain and contribute smoky aromas. The grain still needs milling, mashing, fermentation, distillation and maturation. Peat is not an added flavouring tipped into the finished bottle, and many Scotch whiskies use unpeated malt.

A number needs its measuring point

A phenol figure quoted in parts per million may refer to malt before distillation rather than liquid in the bottle. It cannot be read as a universal sensory smoke score. Later processing changes the mixture, and different smoky compounds can be perceived differently. Compare the method, the measurement stage and the exact release before using a number to rank two bottles.

A place is not a taste guarantee

Islay includes peated and unpeated production. Bruichladdich Classic Laddie and Laphroaig 10 appear on page 56 as different sourced examples, not opposite ends of an atlas-assigned score. Other regions can also make peated whisky. A regional name locates a production origin under its rules; it does not require every distillery there to produce the same level or kind of smoke.

Separate three kinds of evidence

A peatland landscape, a malt specification and a tasting description are different records. The first does not prove the second, and neither automatically supplies a sensory rating for a particular sample. Peat also belongs to a wider environmental and land-management story. Keep the actual production claim narrow, then use page 29 to record what is observed rather than what a landscape picture suggests.

Peat smoke, barrel char and charcoal filtration are three different processes. They should not share one smoke icon or one explanation.

SOURCE DESK / 09, 12, 16 / Full records in the foundations companion.

SCOTLAND / PLACE, CRAFT AND THE GLASS

Read the place. Read the category.

The legal foundation comes before the regional shorthand.

Single Malt

One distillery / malted barley / batch pot distillation

Single Grain

One distillery / excludes Single Malt and Blended Scotch

Blended Malt

Single Malt A + Single Malt B

Blended Grain

Single Grain A + Single Grain B

Blended Scotch

Single Malt + Single Grain

Scotland is the production origin

Scotch is made in Scotland from water and malted barley, with other whole cereal grains allowed where the category permits. Conversion uses the malt's own enzymes and fermentation uses yeast. It is distilled below 94.8% ABV, so character from the raw material and process remains. Single Malt requires batch distillation in pot stills at one distillery; copper is common practice, not a material written into that definition.

Three years, oak and strength

Maturation must take place wholly in Scotland, in oak casks no larger than 700 litres, for at least three years. The finished whisky must be at least 40% ABV. Water and plain caramel colouring are permitted; added flavourings and sweetening are not. Single Malt Scotch must leave Scotland in retail-ready labelled bottles, rather than in bulk for bottling abroad.

Five categories; five protected place names

Single Malt and Single Grain refer to production at one distillery. Blended Malt combines Single Malts from different distilleries; Blended Grain combines Single Grains from different distilleries. Blended Scotch combines malt and grain. The protected places are Highland, Lowland, Speyside, Islay and Campbeltown. These are not five styles or five grades.

This chapter's six journeys

Speyside 42-45; Highland 46-49; island journeys 50-53; Islay 54-57; Campbeltown 58-61; Lowland 62-65. Pages 66-69 connect method, labels, comparison and sources. The selected sites are examples, not a directory of every distillery. Island is an editorial grouping; it does not add a sixth protected regional name.

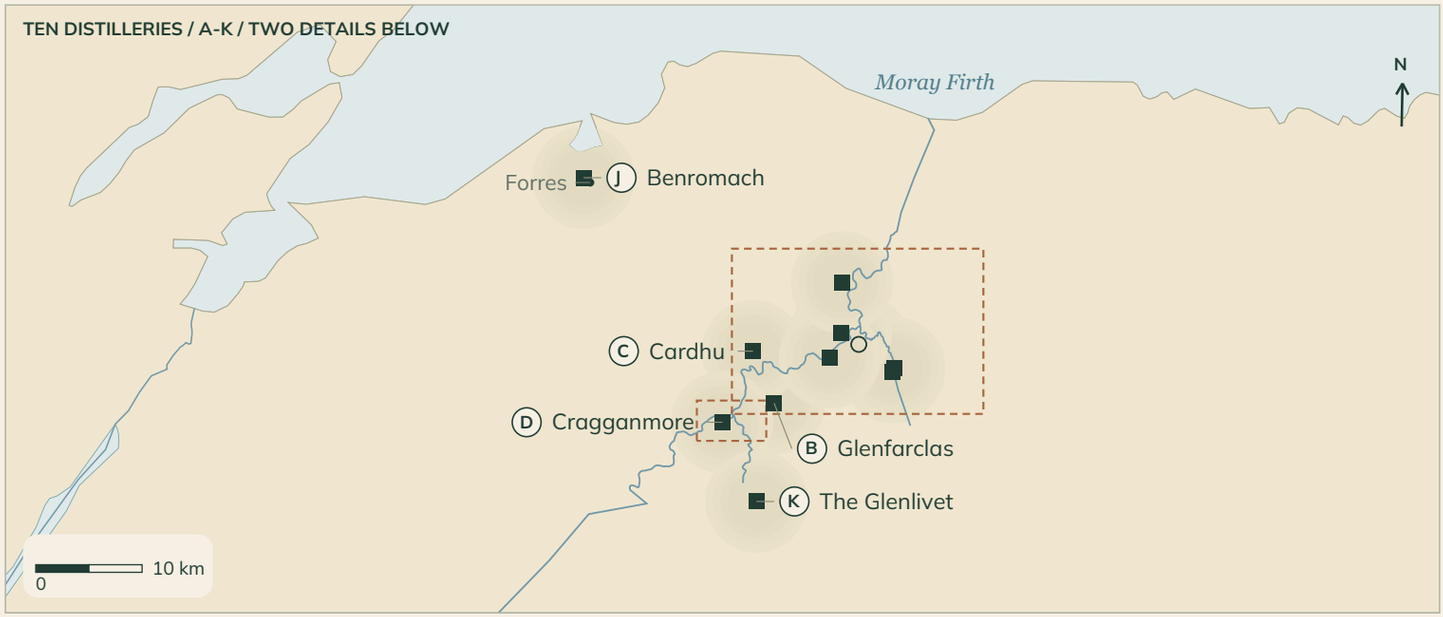
Legal anchor: Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009, especially regulations 3, 7, 10 and 12. Regional names identify distillation origin; storage and visitor functions need separate evidence.

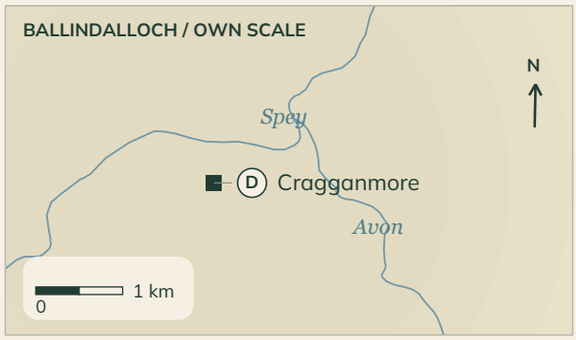
REFERENCE DESK / 01, 02, 03, 04, 06 / Full records in the chapter source ledger.

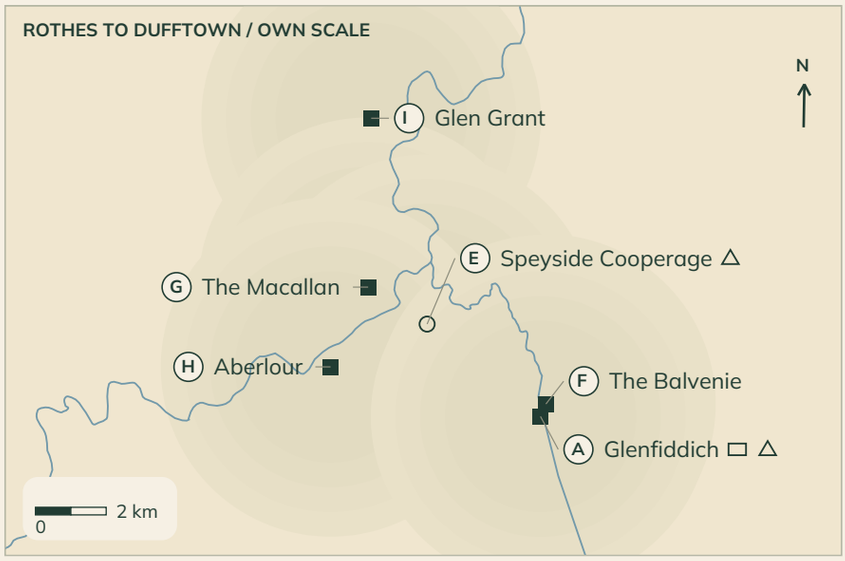
SCOTLAND / PLACE, CRAFT AND THE GLASS

Speyside

Ten distilleries, the cooperage and two local detail maps.







Two scales, two questions
The river detail locates D beside the Spey and Avon. The larger site detail separates A, E, F, G, H and I, keeping nearby campuses distinct. Letters match the guide opposite.

■ Distillery ▭ Warehousing △ Visitor function ○ Cooperage

Letter badges match the guide opposite; only selected sites receive full profiles. W / V icons beside names identify verified site functions, not separate building locations. A missing icon leaves that function unspecified.

Small halos locate sites, not relief or boundaries. Coastlines use Natural Earth except the OSM Campbeltown detail. Spey-system geometry uses OSM extracts with simplified context continuations. Lower Clyde remains an editorial trace.

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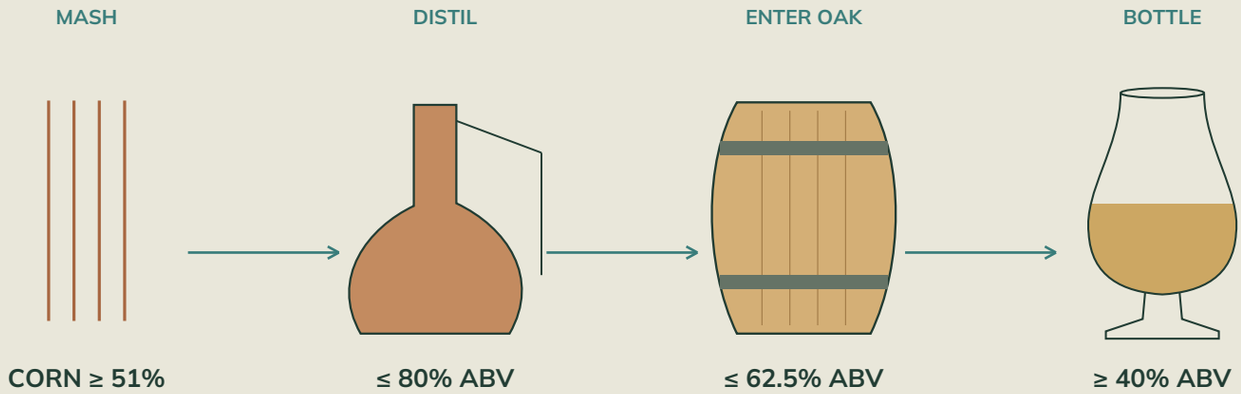
REFERENCE DESK / 01, 06, 29, 30 / Full records in the chapter source ledger.

UNITED STATES / GRAIN, OAK AND ORIGIN

Read the grain. Read the oak.

Federal identity first / state names and producer language add other kinds of information.



BOURBON / US production / charred new oak / no added color or flavor

Bourbon is a US whiskey

Bourbon must be produced in the United States from a fermented mash containing at least 51% corn. It is distilled at no more than 80% ABV, placed in charred new oak at no more than 62.5% ABV, and bottled at at least 40% ABV. Coloring and flavoring are not permitted. Kentucky is a major production centre, not the only state where bourbon can be made.

Straight and age statements

Bourbon has no general minimum maturation period beyond its oak-storage requirement; straight bourbon adds at least two years. Under-four-year whiskey generally needs an age statement, subject to the applicable labeling rules. An age statement refers to the youngest whiskey, not the average. A reused barrel cannot simply replace the charred new-oak requirement and still satisfy bourbon identity.

Rye and American single malt

Rye whiskey requires at least 51% rye, with the same 80% distillation and 62.5% new-charred-oak entry ceilings. American single malt instead requires 100% malted barley, one US distillery, US mashing/distillation/aging, distillation no higher than 80%, and oak barrels no larger than 700 litres. Used or new oak is allowed. Bottling is at least 40%; disclosed caramel coloring is permitted.

Terms that need separate reading

Bottled-in-bond adds one distiller, one distillery and one season, at least four years in bond, and 100 proof at bottling. Small batch and high rye have no universal federal numerical thresholds. Tennessee has its own statutory conditions, discussed on page 107. The American single malt rule took effect in 2025 with a transition provision for qualifying older-standard labels; page 115 keeps that distinction visible.

US proof is twice ABV: 80 proof = 40%, 100 proof = 50%, 125 proof = 62.5%, 160 proof = 80%. These limits apply to different stages, not to one all-purpose strength.

SOURCE DESK / 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 / Full titles and addresses in the companion.

AUSTRALIA / GRAIN, WOOD AND MANY CLIMATES

The Gospel rye, Sydney malt and Albany casks.

Dated producer descriptions / named expressions, with regional food comparisons opposite.

The Gospel Straight Rye Whiskey

07 / Melbourne / named 45% release



ASSESSMENT —

Producer account: The Gospel specifies 100% unmalted Australian rye from a Murray Mallee farm and at least two years in new American oak in Melbourne. Its comparisons include rye bread, toffee, vanilla, clove and pepper. These describe a rye-led Australian whiskey, not barley single malt or US-made rye.
Compare: Try rye bread plain, then with a little mature cheese.
Label: Grain origin in South Australia is separate from Melbourne production. Straight is the producer's product name, not an imported Australian legal definition.

Archie Rose Single Malt Whisky

09 / Sydney / named 46% release



ASSESSMENT —

Producer account: The producer uses six malts and describes an apera, ex-bourbon and ex-rye cask account. Its vocabulary includes fruit, toffee, chocolate and espresso. Malt streams and cask choices are production details; they do not imply six different distilleries.
Compare: Try a small cooked Sydney rock oyster with seasoning kept aside.
Label: The current main production site is Banksmeadow; the Rosebery visitor venue is shown separately.

Limeburners Apera Cask

11 / Albany / named 43% release



ASSESSMENT —

Producer account: The current producer range lists Apera Cask at 43%, formerly named Sherry Cask. Limeburners describes second-fill bourbon wood with fortified-wine cask influence across relevant expressions. The place is Albany; a group visitor venue elsewhere does not relocate the stills.
Compare: Compare a small cooked fish bite plain and with a little lemon.
Label: Apera is an Australian fortified-wine name. It is not proof the previous wine was Spanish Sherry.

Dashes mean not independently assessed. Glass colours are illustrative, not age or strength measurements. Flavour vocabulary is attributed; it is not an ingredient list or an atlas score.

SOURCE DESK / 04, 15, 18 / Full records in the chapter companion.