

Chapter 1 – Alcoholic Beverages

Definition — A potable (meaning drinkable) liquid containing ethyl alcohol or ethanol of 0.5 percent or more by volume is termed as ‘alcoholic beverage’. Alcohol is mobile, volatile fluid obtained by fermenting a liquid containing sugar.

The word ‘alcohol’ is derived from the Arabic al – kohl. Pure alcohol is colourless, clear liquid with a burning taste. It derives its colour from the wood of the cask in which it is matured, and / or from the caramel which may be added during its maturation or bottling.

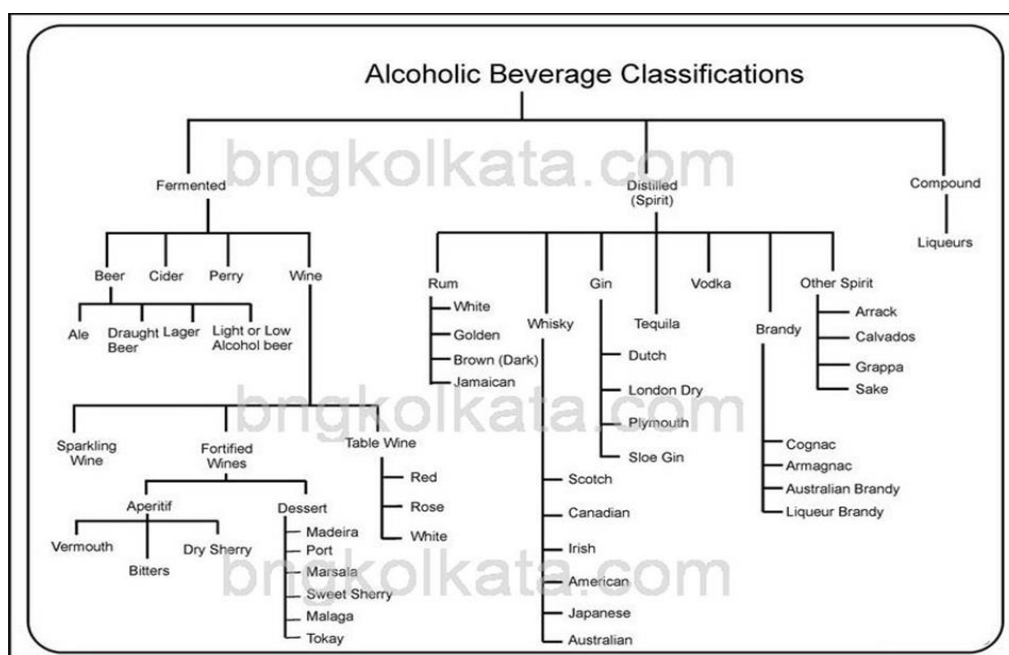
How is Potable Alcohol (Alcoholic Beverage) obtained?

All alcohol or alcoholic beverages are obtained by a process called fermentation. It is concentrated or increased in strength by distillation. The percentage of alcohol in a drink varies from 0.5 – 9.5%, depending on the method by which the alcohol is obtained.

Fermentation is the process in which the yeast acts on sugar and converts it to ethanol and gives off carbon dioxide. The fermented liquid has 3-14% alcohol and it can be concentrated up to 95% by a series of distillations.

Distillation is the process of separating elements in a liquid by vaporization and condensation. In the distillation process, the alcohol which is present in the fermented liquid (alcoholic wash) is separated from water.

Classification of Alcoholic Beverages



Alcoholic beverages are classified as Fermented beverages, Distilled beverages and Compound beverages.

Fermented Beverages

Fermented beverages can be divided into two groups, wines and beers, broadly defined. Wines are fermented from various fruit juices containing fermentable sugars. Beers come from starch-containing products, which undergo enzymatic splitting by diastase, malting, and mashing, before the fermentable sugars become available for the yeasts and bacteria. In short, wines are fermented and beers are brewed and fermented. (Fermented Beverages Other Than Wine And Beer, n.d.)

Examples – Wine, Cider and Perry

Wines can be defined as alcoholic beverage made from fermented grape juice. Wines can be classified on the basis of following aspects –

Nature / Characteristics – Still, Sparkling, Fortified, Aromatised, Tonic, Organic

Colour – Red, White, Rose

Taste / Degree of sweetness – Dry, Medium, Sweet

On basis of alcohol content - De – alcoholised wine (max 0.5% ABV), Alcohol free or No Alcohol (max 0.05% ABV)



*ABV – Alcohol by Volume

Cider – An alcoholic beverage made from fermented juice of cider apples. 25% of pear juice can be used while manufacturing cider. Cider is popular in countries like United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. In USA, non – alcoholic cider is termed as ‘sweet cider’ and alcoholic cider is termed as ‘hard cider’.

Perry – An alcoholic beverage made from fermented juice of pears similar to the way cider is made from apples. It has been common for centuries in England, particularly in the Three Counties (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire). It is also made in parts of South Wales and France. It is also manufactured in Commonwealth countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Brewed and Fermented Drinks

It is similar to fermented drinks but the only difference is that the base ingredient, which is usually malted and crushed cereal, is brewed in hot water to extract maximum soluble sugar from the malt. It is then cooled, and allowed to ferment with the addition of yeast.

Example – Beer and Sake

Beer is classified on the basis of type of fermentation – Top or Bottom. Top fermented beers are known as Ales while bottom fermented beers are known as Lagers.



Sake – Sake, is an alcoholic beverage made from fermented rice and originates in Japan. Sake is light in colour, is noncarbonated, has a sweet flavour, and contains about 14 to 16 percent alcohol. (Britannica, 2020)



Distilled Beverages

To obtain any alcoholic beverage fermentation is required and the strength of alcohol is increased by application of distillation. These drinks are distilled from a base of a fermented liquid and have a high percentage of alcohol compared to fermented drinks. Newly distilled spirit (young spirit) is raw, sharp and harsh in taste. These drinks are aged in wooden barrels to mellow and to make them flavourful. Examples are as follows –

Spirits – Whisky, rum, gin, vodka, tequila, and brandy

Other spirits – Arrack, Toddy, Feni, Slivovitz



Compound Beverages

Compound alcoholic beverages are **defined** as a mixed **beverage**, which is blended or composed carefully by extracting flavour, colour and sweetness from various fruits, herbs, plants, and nuts. Such **beverages** include: Liqueurs, Cocktails.

Definition – Liqueur – A liqueur is alcoholic beverage, which has a base of spirit (grain spirit, neutral spirit) which is flavoured with fruits, herbs, spices, flowers, seeds, plants and are sweetened and can be coloured or colourless. They are also termed as Digestif / Digestive. Liqueurs are not usually aged for long periods, but may have resting periods during their production to allow flavours to blend. Liqueurs can be further categorised as – fruit liqueur, cream liqueur, coffee liqueur, chocolate liqueur, schnapps, herbal liqueur, depending upon the flavouring agents used.



Cocktails - A cocktail is an alcoholic mixed drink, which is either a combination of spirits, or one or more spirits mixed with other ingredients such as fruit juice, flavoured syrup, or cream. There are various types of cocktails, based on the number and kind of ingredients added.

Examples of Classic Cocktails – Martini, Margarita, Mojito, Whiskey Sour



References

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