

The drink-makers' guide to the galaxy of inebriation

The variety of alcohol out there may be staggering, but these handy suggestions will help you take the edge off with an ethanol knife



OPINION
STAFF

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Commentary

Today is Thursday—also known as mini-Friday—which means there's a good chance that you might delight in a pre-weekend liver workout. But before you head to the liquor store, we've got some advice on how best to strip your gut lining.

Sarah Stead

One argument I often hear from non-drinkers is that they choose not to consume alcohol because "it's bad for you." To this I say, "Not if you drink vodka." Here's a fun fact: vodka is made from potatoes, and potatoes are a vegetable. Canada's Food Guide says that growing young adults (that's you!) need between 10–12 servings of fruits and vegetables every day—and this is where vodka comes in.

Let's call one shot of vodka a serving of vegetables. The "excessive" drinking habit your friends and family tell you that you have is now your ticket to health. It's also efficient: at 40 per cent by volume, even the seasoned drinker doesn't need to down much to feel its effects. The average beer is somewhere around five or six per cent, and the volume of beer one has to consume to achieve drunkenness is staggering by comparison.

If your mission is intoxication, or just a desire to be a better dancer, vodka is obviously the superior choice. Vodka is also extremely versatile in the number of mixed drinks you can make with it—vodka slimes, vodka sours, screwdrivers, and cosmopolitans, to name just a few.

But why weigh down a tasty liquor with the empty calories that sodas and colas provide? If vodka deserves to be mixed with anything, it may as well be fruit juice, like cranberry or orange. Just think of it as one more serving of fruit that Canada's Food Guide will congratulate you for choosing. So next time you raise a shot glass full of the colourless alcoholic nectar of the Gods to your mouth, make a toast to your health.

Ramin Ostad

Have you ever had an iced cappuccino? Have you ever put vodka in that iced cappuccino, or thought about doing it? I have, and sadly, it doesn't taste very good—which is strange to me, since my favorite drink, black Russian, tastes so much like the aforementioned cold beverage.

What is a black Russian, you say? Well, it's part vodka, part Kahlua. Pretty simple, right? I usually throw Coke into the mix, since most bars only do a half-shot of each—though, even with a double, Coke does make it a bit sweeter.

Now, some have called me effeminate for having this as my drink of choice—among other reasons—but don't confuse this delectable booze

with its puffed cousin—or really girly sister, if you prefer—the white Russian, which adds disgusting, indigestible milk to the vodka/Kahlua combo.

Black Russians are a man's drink, and are for those with refined taste.

Maria Kotovych

When confronted with the decision of what to have, I usually apply the umbrella test: if the drink comes garnished with a colourful little paper umbrella, that's the beverage for me.

Margaritas, bellinis, daquiries—those "girly drinks" are the ones that I like most. Coming in a wide variety of fruity flavours, these drinks soften the sting of the liquor that's inside. And then there's the umbrella. It hangs off the edge of the unusually shaped glass, adding to the visual spectacle. I admire the thing in front of me knowing that soon I'll be able to consume its sweet goodness.

What other beverage is as colourful and fun as a girly drink? It makes for a great conversation piece as well—when a server at a restaurant places a delectable blended concoction in front of me, everyone starts talking about it with an energy and vigour that the sight of a plain old pint could never arouse.

Yes, I know men who enjoy these drinks as well, and I see nothing wrong with a guy who, like me, prefers to drink something pink and frothy instead of a beer. Unfortunately, girly drinks and those who enjoy them take a lot of flak from the big, tough drinkers of beer or hard liquor. But I don't care,

because only when someone invents a way to serve scotch with an umbrella (and also to make it stop tasting like gasoline) will I consider switching.

Lauren Lamont

Think wine is too good for you? Think again.

One of the many criteria that attests to wine's unabashed greatness is its versatility. Wine doesn't discriminate against certain socio-economic classes, which is made evident through its wide array of packaging. The swanky high-roller can most typically be found sipping a finely bottled Bordeaux, while the lowly bus-stop resident is perfectly content to suckle on the spout of a flaccid-bagged, stale red.

Recent studies have also shown that red wine reduces HDL (ie bad) cholesterol and also functions as a blood thinner—which is good news to those doughnut-embracing members of our population. However, recent studies also show that thin blood may cause one to bleed in excess when you collapse mid-stumble back home after a few too many wobbly-pops.

Wine also offers the consumer a wide variety of colours and flavours from which to choose, and each seems to have its own ideal culinary companion. Red wine is most frequently paired with a thick slab of beef, while white wine compliments the more delicate proteins. Nothing flatters a fine spread of fish more than a fair Pinot Grigio.

The superior ranking of *el vino* can also be attributed to the wide variety of locales in which this tasty beverage can

be consumed. Wine can be quaffed in a pub, club, or even a religious institution. So next time you're out to get smashed, try loading up on the blood of Christ.

David Johnston

My drink of choice is sobriety. If I'm not mistaken, we're here at the U of A to further our mental faculties and stimulate our creative minds. Pickling our brains in vodka, beer, or whatever it is the kids are drinking these days doesn't seem like the best way to achieve that goal.

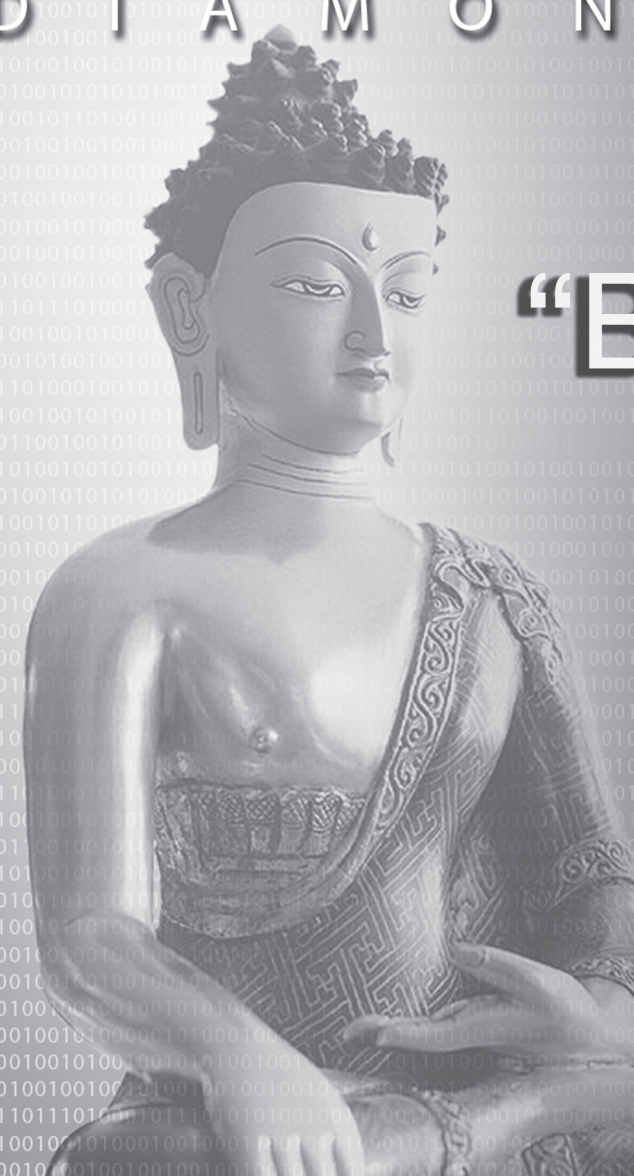
Whenever I explain to someone that I don't drink, I always get funny looks—or, more often, excited looks that quickly fade when I tell them that I won't be the designated driver. It's not like I never drink—in my wild days, I was known to slam back a veritable plethora of beers (two) and boy, those were some wild nights—but I really don't think much of the taste, and mood-stimulators like alcohol do very little for me socially, spiritually, or financially. I prefer to save up my money for a drink I can be conscious enough to enjoy, like a root-beer float or a nice cool glass of water—refreshing and economical.

So the next time some lecherous greaseball or tempting succubus offers you an addicting alcoholic beverage, take a page out of my book. Hold your ground, look them straight in the eye, and firmly chirp, "No thanks, I'd rather go to heaven." It'll do wonders for your social life, I guarantee it.

Besides, weed is so much better.

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