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LIQUOR ENGLISH

(Learn the correct English terms regarding liquor/alcohol)

...focusing on Chinese, Korean, and English Liquor/Alcoholic Beverages.

Foreword

Hello, Fellow Liquor Lovers:

One might seem it strange that I would have a liquor page on an English educational website. Well, I don't think it strange. And, let me explain why. Firstly, let me pose the question: are not the English words pertaining to liquor part of the English language? Of course they are, and as such should be a part of any adult ESL/EFL education. Secondly, liquor is perhaps the most important cultural beverage of any country and communication thereabout is of paramount importance for both business and social occasions of a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic setting (where English is the *lingua franka*). Thirdly, there are SO MANY ERRORS in the bilingual lexicons that it is just not funny any more. This page focuses on English liquor, Korean liquor, and Chinese liquor, as that is what I am familiar with.

Sincerely,
Leon
Webmaster

Contact Info



Bai Jiu

Bai jiu is a Chinese liquor. *Bai* means "white" (or in this case: clear), and *jiu* means "liquor". Like *soju*, a Korean whisky, **in its broadest sense, it covers ALL distilled, clear liquors**. In China, it is most commonly a distilled liquor, made of grains, mostly rice and wheat. It is sold in qualities between 36% alcohol (the cheapest) and 58% alcohol (the most expensive). My favorite is the 38% stuff. Goes down easier and gives one less of a hangover than the cheaper 36% stuff.

Leon's Translation:

***Bai Jiu* = [Chinese] Grain Whisky**
or, it could be translated as: **[Chinese] Grain Brandy**

BEWARE; If you go to China, the Chinese think it is WINE, and this because the bilingual lexicons are wrong.

Beer

Beer is NOT a distilled liquor although it may be boiled to sanitize the brew. Hence it varies from 3% to 6% alcohol. It is made from water, yeast, malt, and hops. The yeast (a fungus) converts the starch from the malt (made from barley) into alcohol. The hops adds flavor to the beer.

Beer relatives: Ale, Stout, Lager

The difference between beer, ale, stout, and lager seems to be the kind of yeast used.

Bok Bun Ja Ju

Bok Bun Ja literally means: "man who pees in a pot". *Ju* means liquor. I have been told that it is called this because it makes one pee a lot. I didn't notice any such affect. Bok Bun Ja Ju is a raspberry wine made only in Korea.

Brandy

"Brandy" is distilled wine. (see "Distillation" below).

Cocktail

The origin of the name comes from "cock" a male bird, usually a rooster, which has a VERY colorful tail. I believe that the drinks are metaphorically named "cocktails" because they are so colorful.

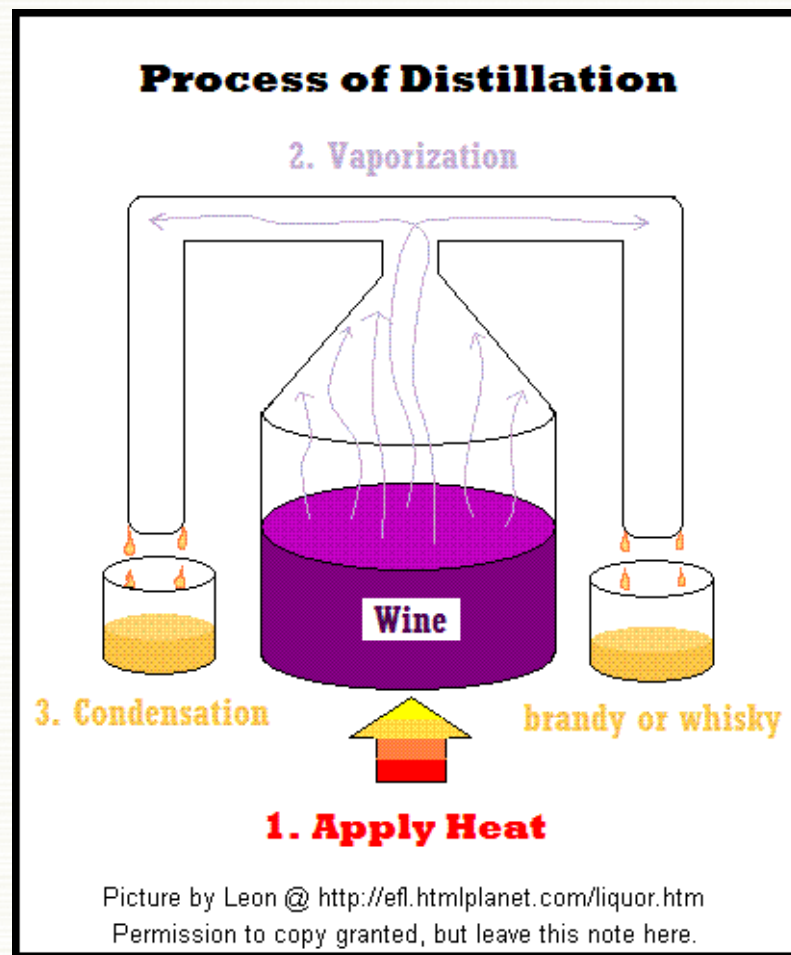
Cocktails (the alcoholic kind) are generally a colorful mixture of liquors and/or liqueurs (see "liqueurs" for definition).

Cognac

Cognac is a grape wine brandy made in Cognac, France.

Distillation

Distillation increases the concentration of alcohol, because alcohol has a very low boiling point, (and for other reasons). So, distilled liquor usually has between 20% and 90% alcohol (depending upon how many times it has been distilled. (see diagram below)



Dong Dong Ju /dohng dohng joo/

Dong dong ju is a Korean rice wine. I don't know how it is made, but I'm sure it isn't distilled.

Leon's Translation:

***Dong Dong Ju* = [Korean] Rice Wine**

Note: *Dong Dong Ju* is NOT listed in the Korean-English lexicons

Fermentation

Merriam-Webster's online Dictionary defines alcoholic fermentation thusly:

a process in which certain kinds of sugar (as glucose) are converted into alcohol and carbon dioxide by the action of various yeasts, molds, or bacteria on carbohydrate materials

Lai Jiu

Literally "milk liquor", it is made by taking cow's milk, fermenting it, and distilling it. It is around 40% alcohol and is as clear as water. I absolutely love the stuff. It has a sweet after-taste to it, like evaporated milk (if you've ever tried that). It gives one such a lovely high (much better than *bai jiu*). To my knowledge, (and I've looked), it can ONLY be found in the province of China called: Nei Meng Gu (Inner Mongolia). It is a Mongolian drink. I had a friend look for it in "Outer Mongolia" (the independent country), but he couldn't find it there. So, if you ever have a chance to visit Inner Mongolia, find a Mongolian restaurant and order a bottle. You won't regret it!

Liqueur

A liquor which is flavored, aromatic, and sweet. Examples include: banana liqueur, blueberry liqueur, strawberry liqueur, raspberry liqueur, etc.

Mae-Shil Ju

Mae-Shil is a fruit, which I call the "**green apricot**", because it looks and feels exactly like an apricot, but is green, and sour. It grows all over the Far East. Some bilingual lexicons translate it as a kind of **plum**, some as "**Japanese apricot**". Mae-Shil Ju is a wine and has about 14% alcohol.

Leon's Translation:

Mae-Shil Ju: Green Apricot Wine

Mak-keol-li

Makkeolli is a crude, **raw rice wine** in Korea. It is very cheap and easily found at

any market. It is of an opaque cream color with low viscosity and a pungent odor.

Basically, it is a cheaply made *Dong Dong Ju*.

Proof

"Proof" is a measurement of alcohol content. Proof = 2 x % alcohol. Why? [If you'd like to find out why, check out [Wikipedia](#)].

Rum

Rum is also a kind of distilled liquor. It is made from sugar cane or molasses. The percent-alcohol is between 30% and 95%. Bicardi 151 is 75.5% alcohol. It is called "151", because that is the "proof" (see "proof" above).

Sake /sah-keh/

Sake is a Japanese liquor made from rice {and water and yeast (a fungus) and koji (a mold spore)}. *Sake* is not distilled, however. It is only pasteurized. Since rice is a grain and all grains are by definition fruits (the seed-bearing part of a plant), AND since it is NOT distilled, it seems appropriate to call it "rice wine". *Sake* is sold around 20% alcohol.

Leon's Translation:

***Sake* = [Japanese] Rice Wine**

Soju /so-joo/

Soju literally means: burning liquor. It collectively covers all distilled liquors in its broadest sense. However, when Koreans say, "*soju*," they generally are referring to a distilled liquor made from fermented sweet potatoes (and water). Hence, we could classify it as a sweet potato whisky. *Soju* is sold at 23% to 25% alcohol.

Leon's Translation:

***Soju* = Korean Sweet Potato Whisky**

Soju relative--Andong Soju /ahn-dohng so-joo/

Andong Soju is a distilled liquor made in Andong, South Korea. It is made from fermented rice (and water). It is a distilled liquor, sold at around 45% alcohol.

Leon's Translation:

***Andong Soju* = Korean Rice Brandy**

Tequila

Tequila is hard to classify, because it is neither made from a fruit, nor from a grain (which is a fruit). So, I'd have to put it in a class all its own. It is made from the heart of the *agave* plant (commonly found in Mexico). It is a distilled liquor and ranges from 40% to 43% alcohol.

Vodka

The word "Vodka" is a derivation of the Russian word for "water" (Voda), probably cause it looks like water. I originally thought that vodka was made from potatoes, as that's what I was told. I guess you just cannot believe everything you hear from people, 'cause I just found out on December 20,2005 that it is made from grains, such as rye and wheat. So, definitely, we can call vodka a whisky. AND HOW APROPO! The word "whisky" comes from a Gaelic word which means: water of life.

New A friend or mine who spent like two years in Russia claims that some people do make Vodka out of potatoes, especially the home-made stuff. So, it appears that the word "Vodka" can be used for any clear distilled liquor.

Whisky

Whisky is also a kind of distilled liquor. It is usually made from grains, such as corn. Scotch Whisky is made from corn. Merriam-Webster's also includes distilled liquors made from potatoes as whisky as well.

Wine¹

First of all, let's address the word "wine". It comes from the Latin word: "vino", which means "vine", as in "grape vine". Wine, therefore, primarily is an alcoholic beverage made from grapes, which have fermented. There has been NO distillation, and the percentage of alcohol ranges between 12% and 16%.

Wine²

The word "wine" has come to mean the fermented beverage made from any fruit (or seed). Some examples are: strawberry wine, green apricot wine (see *Maeshil Ju*), raspberry wine (see *Bok Bun Ja Ju*), and even rice wine (see *Sake* and *Dong Dong Ju*).

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