

## **vodka**

Vodka is the sexy drink of choice these days and the popularity of HBO's hit; *Sex and the City* didn't hurt. Hot girls about town drinking Cosmopolitans and this "tini" and that "tini" created a surge in demand for the crystal clear elixir among the savvy and the sophisticated. The explosion of luxury brands and boutique vodkas only adds to the cache of being associated with your favorite brands. These days we all know which celebrity favors which vodka. Now "that's hot".

### **History**

Around the beginning of the 12th century it is estimated that vodka was born in Russia. Although the Poles also claim to be the originators of this elixir it is generally agreed that the Russians were the first to produce a standardized drink called "vodka", meaning little water. Originally intended for medicinal purposes, the crude anesthetic and disinfectant distilled from rye was found around the 14<sup>th</sup> century to possess intoxicating qualities.

As the drink grew in popularity other ingredients were used to produce the clear and potent distillation. Potatoes, because they were cheap and plentiful, were the source of homemade vodka making among peasants. However, it is Rye, wheat, barley, and corn, which are commonly used today.

By the 14<sup>th</sup> century vodka began to be produced in large quantities and made available for export. The distillation process had been refined and by 1716 the exclusive right to own a distillery was allowed only to the nobility.

The early 1800's brought with it aromatized vodkas infused with absinth, anisette, lemon, and mint among others; however, there was no standardization of production until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1894 the production and distribution of vodka became in Russia a state monopoly allowing for the adoption of a standard of production technique, therefore, a guarantee of quality.

Vodka was introduced to the Western world after the Russian Revolution whereby the Smirnoff family took exile in France and set up a distillery that was subsequently sold to an American drinks company and by the early 1940's, America's love affair with vodka begins. It was the Moscow Mule in the 1950's that truly put vodka on the palette and now accounts for 20% of the spirits market today.

### **Web guide**

Check out these links to get more info and to learn how to make the perfect vodka martini.

**Cocktail Times** [[www.cocktailtimes.com](http://www.cocktailtimes.com)] A great website filled with all the information you'll ever want to know about vodka and many of your favorite spirits. Here, also, find links to party ideas, what's hot in mixology, barware, photo galleries, and much, much more.

**iVodka** [[www.ivodka.com](http://www.ivodka.com)] This site claims to be the largest most reliable source of vodka-related information on the web and it just may well be. This site has every vodka under the sun listed and informational links to state and federal alcohol related sites.

**Drinks Mixer** [[www.drinksmixer.com](http://www.drinksmixer.com)] Here, find the recipe to every imaginable drink and hints to make your own concoction a success. Also, find general information and a guide to drinking games.

**The Authentic Bartender** [[www.the-authentic-bartender.com](http://www.the-authentic-bartender.com)] This site has so much information, from the history of your favorite alcohol, to drink recipes and how to make your own wine.

**Vodkaphiles** [[www.vodkaphiles.com](http://www.vodkaphiles.com)] This site provides a wealth of vodka information, folklore, and recipes for all of your vodka needs.

**Beer liquors** [[www.beerliquors.com](http://www.beerliquors.com)] This site allows you to purchase, read reviews, and make yourself familiar with everything the market has to offer.

**Alcohol Reviews** [[www.alcoholreviews.com](http://www.alcoholreviews.com)] Find information and critiques on all of your favorite liquors and brews. Stay up to date on alcohol news and enter the chat forum and share your thoughts.

## **Vodka Brands**

Huge marketing and advertising campaigns have made vodka the sexy drink of choice. Below find links to your favorite brands and check out these sleek and sophisticated sites.

**Absolut** [[www.absolut.com](http://www.absolut.com)] This site is out of control! There are free downloads of music for MP3, iPod and more and a review of the trendy ultra-pop ad campaign. Definitely worth a look.

**Skyy** [[www.skyy.com](http://www.skyy.com)] It is amazing the amount of stuff on this site. Find short "Skyy" films, entertaining, and cocktail recipes and much, much, more.

**Grey Goose** [[www.greygoosevodka.com](http://www.greygoosevodka.com)] Serene and lovely, this site offers information on events, mixology, and Grey Goose lore.

**Stoli** [[www.stoli.com](http://www.stoli.com)] This site offers drink recipes, info on the up-coming Stoli Be Real documentary, and general vodka facts.

**Finlandia** [[www.finlandia.com](http://www.finlandia.com)] There is a lot of information on cocktail recipes, Finlandia promotions and events, contests and more.

**Ketel One** [[www.ketelone.com](http://www.ketelone.com)] Find interesting Ketel One info and promotional videos and news on up-coming events.

**Level** [[www.levelvodka.com](http://www.levelvodka.com)] Absolut launches Level vodka and the website is just as slick and filled with fun and frivolity.

**Effen** [[www.effenvodka.com](http://www.effenvodka.com)] Effen means; smooth, even, and balanced, in Dutch. On the website find news and info on upcoming promotional events, recipes and availability.

**Ciroc** [[www.ciroc.com](http://www.ciroc.com)] Ciroc vodka is made from fine French grapes. The website offers a brief history and recipes for the perfect Gimlet.

**Smirnoff** [[www.smirnoffvodka.com](http://www.smirnoffvodka.com)] Read reviews, enter contests, and view the sleek ad campaigns.

**Three Olives** [[www.threeolives.com](http://www.threeolives.com)]Vote for your favorite Three Olives girl and stay up to date on hot cocktail recipes and up-coming events.

**Vox** [[www.voxvodka.com](http://www.voxvodka.com)] Checkout podcasts, blogs, events, and tunes on this website.

**Jewel of Russia** [[www.jewelofrussia.com](http://www.jewelofrussia.com)] Considered one of the finest vodkas around, this site offers info and special promotions. It would be sinful to mix it! No recipes to be found here.

**Chopin** [[www.chopinvodka.com](http://www.chopinvodka.com)] This Polish vodka is made from potatoes and distilled 4 times. This is considered to be the only luxury potato vodka in the world. The website offers gifts for purchase for the connoisseur of vodka.

## **Basic Vodka Cocktails**

### **Vodka Martini**

1 ½ oz Vodka

¾ oz dry Vermouth

Shake vodka and vermouth in shaker with a few ice cubes and strain into glass, garnish with olives and serve

### **Vodka Gimlet**

1 oz lime juice

1 ½ oz vodka

1 tsp powdered sugar

Stir all ingredients with ice, strain into a cocktail glass and serve.

### **Vodka Salty Dog**

5 oz grapefruit juice

1 ½ vodka

¼ salt

Pour ingredients over ice in highball glass, mix well and serve.

### **Vodka News**

**St. Paul Pioneer Press** [[www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/living/14378552.htm](http://www.twincities.com/mld/twincities/living/14378552.htm)]

Donald Trump has entered the vodka market with, *Trump Super Premium Vodka*, set to start shipping May 1, 2006, with an excess of \$5 million in advance sales.

**MSNBC** [ <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/12252524/>]

The world's best selling vodka, Stolichnaya, is still number one after an 18 month court dispute in Russia's "vodka wars".

**Luxist** [ <http://www.luxist.com/2006/04/14/ivanabitch-vodka-plans-to-help-firefighters/>]

Not the arch nemesis of the Donald but rather a kinder gentler breed. "We're giving back to the heroes who give it all" is the motto of Ivanabitch vodka which donates \$1 for every 750 ml bottle sold to firefighters charitable organizations.

**Dr. Andrew Weil** [<http://www.drweil.com/u/QA/QA348386/>]

Dr. Andrew Weil endorses vodka as the cleanest alcoholic beverage and the healthiest way to enjoy imbibing.