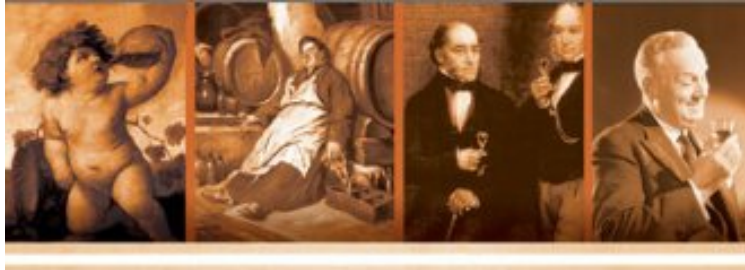


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Drink: A Cultural History of Alcohol

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DRINK

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF ALCOHOL



IAIN GATELY

"Thorough, informative, briskly readable, and witty...In taking us from ancient Greece to MADD, Gately doesn't miss a beat." —JONATHAN YARDLEY, *THE WASHINGTON POST*

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A spirited look at the history of alcohol, from the dawn of civilization to the modern day Alcohol is a fundamental part of Western culture. We have been drinking as long as we have been human, and for better or worse, alcohol has shaped our civilization. Drink investigates the history of this Jekyll and Hyde of fluids, tracing mankind's love/hate relationship with alcohol from ancient Egypt to the present day. Drink further documents the contribution of alcohol to the birth and growth of the United States, taking in the War of Independence, the Pennsylvania Whiskey revolt, the slave trade, and the failed experiment of national Prohibition. Finally, it provides a history of the world's most famous drinks-and the world's most famous drinkers. Packed with trivia and colorful characters, Drink amounts to an intoxicating history of the world.

From Publishers Weekly
With the same ambitious sweep and needle-in-history's-haystack approach of his previous tome on tobacco, Gately takes on all things alcohol. From absinthe to Jay-Z's boycott of allegedly racist Cristal, from Mayan pulque to Pilsner Urquell, he covers the history and the culture of the medicinal and mind-altering product that since at least 8000 B.C. has been part of human civilization. The book's first chapters chronicle the history of fermentation and distillation from early civilization through the late Middle Ages, before the narrative's bulk gives over to alcohol's story since the colonization of the New World. Gately touches on such minutiae as the tableware and music selections onboard the expedition ships that followed Raleigh to America and an exacting chronology of laws enacted to ban the sale of alcohol to Indians. He ecumenically includes historical information from every civilized continent; yet for a book on booze, it's at first drier than straight gin, definitely for those who like their history neat. Like a good party, however, it becomes livelier as the author works in such far-flung cultural materials as the plays of Alfred Jarry and Budweiser's '80s mascot, Spuds McKenzie. In the end, Gately ranges so wide and deep that this may become a classic reference on the subject. (July) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Following his earlier treatise on tobacco, historian Gately focuses on another of humanity's consuming passions: alcoholic beverages. Beginning with classical civilizations, he traces the rise of vintner, brewer, and distiller, whose demand for fruits, grains, and new markets helped fuel the expansion of empires. Gately contrasts Christianity's intimate embrace of the fruit of the vine with Islam's absolute rejection of intoxicating libations. European explorers carted wines over oceans only to discover that New World civilizations had already concocted their own sophisticated and highly drinkable spirits. Rum became inextricably bound with slave trading, and mass production and undisciplined consumption of whiskey and gin threatened to unravel the social fabric of newly industrialized European and American economies. Governments adopted different strategies for dealing with alcohol abuse, ranging from regulation of the opening hours of public houses to outright prohibition. A grand, always engaging survey of the role of booze in both cultural and social history. --Mark Knoblauch "Thorough, informative, briskly readable, and witty." -Jonathan Yardley, The Washington Post "This is a book to be read with pleasure, best sipped in leisure like good bourbon." -Dallas Morning News
British author Iain Gately calls alcohol the "equivocal liquid," and his exploration of our love-hate relationship with it is "by turns entertaining, inspiring, sobering, informative and simply fascinating," writes reviewer Janice Kennedy in the Ottawa Citizen. As he did with Tobacco, his earlier cultural history, Gately offers what amounts to nothing less than a history of human civilization. From the archeological evidence of fermented potables in northern China nearly 10,000 years ago to the notion that American rap culture has been the salvation of France's champagne and cognac industries with its taste for both pricey libations, Drink covers it all: the colour, comedy, catastrophe and controversy. er Kennedy concludes that "the book is bursting (or should that be overflowing?) with scrupulously researched facts, statistics, historical events and marvellous anecdotes, all of it just as scrupulously acknowledged in endnotes. But the wonder of it is its immense readability." Buy it.- The National Post (Canada)