



Moonshine: A Cultural History of America's Infamous Liquor

Jaime Joyce

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Hooch. White lightning. White whiskey. Mountain dew. Moonshine goes by many names. So what is it, really? Technically speaking, “moonshine” refers to untaxed liquor made in an unlicensed still. In the United States, it’s typically corn that’s used to make the clear, unaged beverage, and it’s the mountain people of the American South who are most closely associated with the image of making and selling backwoods booze at night—by the light of the moon—to avoid detection by law enforcement.

In *Moonshine: A Cultural History of America's Infamous Liquor*, writer Jaime Joyce explores America’s centuries-old relationship with moonshine through fact, folklore, and fiction. From the country’s early adoption of Scottish and Irish home distilling techniques and traditions to the Whiskey Rebellion of the late 1700s to a comparison of the moonshine industry pre- and post-Prohibition, plus a look at modern-day craft distilling, Joyce examines the historical context that gave rise to moonshining in America and explores its continued appeal. But even more fascinating is Joyce’s entertaining and eye-opening analysis of moonshine’s widespread effect on U.S. pop culture: she illuminates the fact that moonshine runners were NASCAR’s first marquee drivers; explores the status of white whiskey as the unspoken star of countless Hollywood film and television productions, including *The Dukes of Hazzard*, *Thunder Road*, and *Gator*; and the numerous songs inspired by making ’shine from such folk and country artists as Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Alan Jackson, and Dolly Parton. So while we can’t condone making your own illegal liquor, reading *Moonshine* will give you a new perspective on the profound implications that underground moonshine-making has had on life in America.

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