

THREE CHEERS FOR GLUTEN-FREE SPIRITS

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

The holiday season is approaching, bringing with it glorious parties and the customary host and hostess gifts. Many people opt for a nice bottle of wine, but why not break from the norm and bring a bottle of spirits, such as gin, rum, vodka or liqueur?

Although a great deal of controversy is still stirring in the gluten-free community about the safety of spirits made from wheat grains, science has proven that the distillation process leaves behind the “mash” of glutinous grains and delivers a safe and tasty product. For those who remain concerned, many types of vodka are made from potatoes, buckwheat and corn, at least one brand of whiskey is made from sorghum, and rum is made from sugar cane. So kick back, relax and check out our recommendations for boozy gifts this year.



Make homemade gin in just 36 hours with the **Gin Kit by W&P Design**. This six-piece set contains a hand-selected blend of juniper berries, botanicals, spices and aromatics, along with all the hardware needed to produce two bottles of small-batch gin—that’s right, you could keep one of the finished bottles and gift the other.

Impress friends with your cocktail-making abilities using **Mocktails Brand’s** non-alcoholic beverages. The mixers come packaged in reusable glass shaker bottles, so add ice, shake and pour over the alcohol of choice for a perfect cocktail every time. Flavors include Karma Sucra Cosmopolitan, Vida Loca Margarita, Sevilla Red Sangria and Scottish Lemonade Whiskey Sour. They recently launched individual-sized four-packs that are perfect for on-the-go events. The mixers contain no high fructose corn syrup, preservatives, or artificial flavors or colors, and they taste fresh thanks to the clean and simple ingredient list.





Deep Eddy's line of flavored vodka is the real deal. Distilled from corn in a state-of-the-art column still, premium juices, essential oils, natural sweeteners and honey combine to create five smooth, clean-tasting vodka flavors: Ruby Red, Sweet Tea, cranberry, lemon and peach. Real ingredients make all the difference in this small-batch vodka produced in Austin, Texas. The Sweet Tea is a favorite of mine, but the Ruby Red is their best seller.



Dixie Vodka's citrus varietal blend is a combination of lemon, lime and tangerine distilled from corn. Produced by Grain & Barrel Spirits in Charleston, South Carolina, the 80-proof spirit's all-natural ingredients create a well-rounded and crisp finish designed to kick up club soda a couple of notches or mix a refreshing craft cocktail.



Stolichnaya (known as **Stoli**) has been distilling vodka in Russia from gluten grains for more than 80 years, but that all changed in 2016 when it introduced Stoli Gluten Free, distilled from corn and buckwheat. Made from a combination of 88 percent corn and 12 percent buckwheat, this vodka is just as smooth as its counterpart, if not more so. Pour it over ice with a squeeze or two of fresh lime or lemon, and enjoy.



Tito's Handmade Vodka is made with corn instead of potatoes and certified gluten free by the Gluten Intolerance Group. According to founder and owner Tito Beveridge, "some producers add a little bit of mash back into the spirit after distillation, which would add gluten content into an otherwise gluten-free distillate [if using wheat as the base], but I don't do that regardless." Made in batches using old-fashioned pot stills, Tito's sold its first case in 1997 and is now one of the best-selling vodkas in the U.S.



Almondaire liquor is a blend of chocolate, vanilla and almond flavors that delivers a smooth and creamy experience. Made with corn grain to ensure the product is naturally gluten free and almond paste that does not include any dairy, it is an amazing vegan alternative to traditional cream liqueur. Use it to create spiked sweets and mixed drinks, or serve it over ice for a dessert cocktail.



Sorghum Whiskey by **New Southern Revival** is made by High Wire Distilling Company in South Carolina. This smooth whiskey features notes of maple syrup, cashew and vanilla with a long, clean finish. Sip it neat or over ice, or use it to make a cocktail like an Old Fashioned, a Dark & Stormy, or a Manhattan.

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