



The Book of Gin: A Spirited World History from Alchemists' Stills and Colonial Outposts to Gin Palaces, Bathtub Gin, and Artisanal Cocktails

Richard Barnett

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Gin has been a drink of kings infused with crushed pearls and rose petals, and a drink of the poor flavored with turpentine and sulfuric acid. Born in alchemists' stills and monastery kitchens, its earliest incarnations were juniper flavored medicines used to prevent plague, ease the pains of childbirth, even to treat a lack of courage.

In *The Book of Gin*, Richard Barnett traces the life of this beguiling spirit, once believed to cause a “new kind of drunkenness.” In the eighteenth century, gin-craze debauchery (and class conflict) inspired Hogarth’s satirical masterpieces “Gin Lane” and “Beer Street.” In the nineteenth century, gin was drunk by Napoleonic War naval heroes, at lavish gin palaces, and by homesick colonials, who mixed it with their bitter anti-malarial tonics. In the early twentieth century, the illicit cocktail culture of prohibition made gin – often dangerous bathtub gin—fashionable again. And today, with the growth of small-batch distilling, gin has once-again made a comeback.

Wide-ranging, impeccably researched, and packed with illuminating stories, *The Book of Gin* is lively and fascinating, an indispensable history of a complex and notorious drink.

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