



Gardaí le stíleanna poitín ar ghlac siad seilbh orthu
Gardaí with confiscated poitín stills

POITÍN

Is biotáille dhriogtha mídhleathach é poitín a bhfuil leibhéal ard alcóil ann. Thioctadh dó go mbeadh sé an-bhaolach don tsláinte mar gheall ar an leibhéal ard alcóil atá ann agus ar an ábhar neamhghlan a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ann mar thoradh ar an gcaoi a ndéantar é. Bhíodh dleachtanna a d'íocfaí leis an stát de ghnáth as táirgeadh biotáille gan íoc, agus is é sin an fáth a mbíodh na húdaráis go díograiseach ina n-iarrachtaí chun stad a chur le déanamh poitín.

Cé go ndearnadh gníomh mídhleathach de dhéanamh an phoitín in Éirinn in 1661, leanadh ar aghaidh de bheith á dhéanamh faoi rún. Cuireadh stíleanna poitín in áiteanna iargúlta faoi tuath ceilte ó na póilíní, talamh ard, foraoisí, oileáin agus portaigh, mar shampla.

Dhéantaí poitín mídhleathach trí uisce, eorna brachta, grán nó prátaí a mheascadh le chéile chun brúitín a dhéanamh. Dhriogtaí an brúitín coipthe go dtí go mbaintí amach an leibhéal alcóil a bhí ag teastáil (40%-90%).

Bhíodh deatach ón tine mhóna lena dtéití an pota brúitín ina chomhartha ag na póilíní agus iad ar patról go raibh driogadh poitín idir lámha. Ba mhór an baol go ngabhfaí an té a bhíodh ag déanamh an phoitín mar mhaireadh an próiseas driogtha roinnt laethanta.

POITÍN

Poitín is an illegally distilled spirit with a very high alcoholic content. Both the high alcoholic content and potential impurities present because of how it is produced can make it a serious health hazard. The loss to the state of duty normally paid on the production of spirits meant the authorities were keen to clampdown on poitín making.



Stíl poitín i mbun oibre, Bá Dhún na nGall, c.1900
Poitín still at work, Donegal Bay, c.1900

Though the production of poitín in Ireland was made illegal in 1661, poitín continued to be made in secret. Portable poitín stills were hidden from police in remote rural locations such as inaccessible uplands, forests, islands and bogs.

To produce illegal poitín, a mash was created from mixing water and malted barley, grain or potato. The fermented mash was distilled until the required alcoholic volume (40%-90%) was achieved.

Smoke from the turf fire that heated the mash pot was a tell-tale sign for patrolling police that distillation was in progress. As the entire process could take days, the risk of capture was high.