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Brief history of Jamaican Rum

- Rum production dates to 17th century
- Appleton Estate founded in 1749
- By 1900 Jamaica had 148 distilleries
- Today there are under ten main distilleries on the island
- 50 million liters produced annually

A photograph of the Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum sign, which is a large archway with the text "APPLETON ESTATE" and "JAMAICA RUM" and "SINCE 1749". The sign is set against a background of a building and trees.

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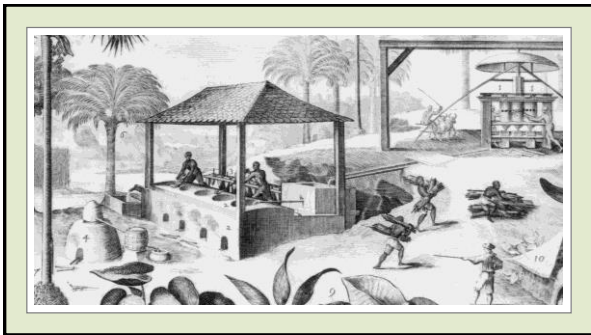
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But what about the funk?

What is it? Where does it come from? What does it do?

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How do we define the presence of funk in Rum?

Funk is intense flavors and aromas. In Jamaica, this is referred to as "hogo" derived from the French phrase "haut gout."

Aromatically it can be described as overripe or even rotten fruit, intense nuttiness, and almost overwhelming flavors.

Joy Spence, Appleton's Master Blender, defined it as "one of powerful ester notes intertwined with funky nutty and fatty acid flavors."

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## What makes up the funk?

Funk is caused by the presence of a high volume of **congeners** in the final spirit.

**Congeners** are chemicals created during fermentation and distillation. These include esters, aldehydes, tannins, and fatty acids. These provide more "flavors" to spirits.

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## How do we measure the funk?

The presence of esters and congeners is measured in a few ways:

- PP/M** (parts per million)
- gr/hlca** – grams per hectoliter of pure alcohol.

A typical Spanish-style rum like Havana Club Silver contains esters under 200ppm. Rum Fire, from Hampden Estates, contains esters over 500ppm.

Certain Jamaican rums go as high as 1500-1700ppm.

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## How do we brew up the funk?

- Fermentation times and yeast contribute to the creation of congeners and flavor components. Throughout the Caribbean, wild yeast and open top fermentation are standard.
- Fermentation times vary from a few days to a few months. White rum may have a 48 hour fermentation. High funk rums go much longer. Worthy Park's Forsyth's WP 151 has a three-month long fermentation. The longer the fermentation, the higher concentration of flavor compounds.



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**How do we distill the funk?**

The use of copper pot stills helps create a higher amount of congeners in the final product. The swan neck and shape of the still limits the chances of congeners to condense back into the bottom of the pot. Instead they vaporize with the alcohol into the neck where they condense into the retort or thumper.

With column or coffee stills, those elements are more likely to not continue into the final spirit.



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**How do we supplement the funk?**

**Dunder** is the leftover liquid in the still after a run has occurred. This is a highly concentrated sludge of compounds that did not make it into the spirit. As with "sour mash" and **stillage** with bourbon, a rum distiller will add a portion of this into a new batch.

**Dunder** is sometimes kept in a "**muck pit**" or "**muck hole**," these can be pits or cisterns where the past yeast cells might be supplemented with the addition of fruit or sugar. These pits act as a growing ground for acids and compounds that will increase the ester content of future rums.



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**Who's bringing the funk in 2021?**

While every Jamaican rum distillery makes high ester rums, many are only marketed within Jamaica.

There are a few producers dedicated to exporting the funk around the world.

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**How should we smell and taste the the funk ?**

For maximum flavor and aroma:

- Neat or slightly diluted with lukewarm water
- No ice – this can tamp down aromatics

For nosing and tasting:

- Glencairn or similar shape glass

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## How does the funk smell and taste?

### Typical aromatics and flavors:

- Rotten fruit
- Rich banana/pineapple
- Intense sweetness
- Macadamia nuts

### Typical chemicals:

- Caproic/Acetic/Butyric Acid (banana/green banana/pineapple)
- 2-Methyl Butyraldehyde (nuts/cocoa)
- Acetaldehyde (green apples)

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## What do you smell and taste in the funk?

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## How do we use the funk?

The funky and intense aromas of these rums make them the perfect partner for blending into exotic drinks or other cocktails. Their flavors stand up to juice and citrus, sweeteners, and bitter elements.

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