

Was Russian Vodka Invented on This Day?

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

The story of vodka's origin is as fuzzy as the effect that Russia's national drink has on one's memory — but at least one theory traces its roots to Oct. 10, 1503.

That's when Kremlin monks were said to have distilled an exclusively Russian-made spirit using a Russian-built apparatus. Instead of drinking it to get inebriated, though, the monks used the product as a [disinfectant](#).

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Before that date, what is now called vodka had been brought to Russia by Genoese merchants.

Vodka's origins in Russia have also been traced to the 1440s — when a Greek monk was said to have [inebriated](#) his captors to escape the Kremlin — and Jan. 31, 1865, when Russian chemist Dmitry Mendeleyev found the ideal ratio of alcohol to water.

Both theories, however, have been [dismissed](#) as the stuff of [legend](#).

Whichever vodka origin story rings true, one hardly needs a reason to raise a toast for Russia's nectar of the gods.

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