



The Guide to the Good Life

Best Rums You'll Love to Drink

Blame it on Blackbeard and Prohibition-era bootleggers for rum's decades-long snub by high society. Thankfully, things have changed considerably over the years. Rum, mainly produced in the Caribbean, is enjoying a renaissance as forward-thinking distilleries release increasingly high-quality versions that are smooth and palatable enough for sipping. Sure, you can still blend rum into a luscious piña colada or refreshing mojito, but today's best rums can also be enjoyed neat.

The taste-tested bottles featured on **GAYOT's list of the Best Rums** span a variety of price points, flavor profiles and ages (because older doesn't necessarily mean better).

” > *While any of these options for Best Rums are great for [cocktails](#), we also highly recommend them straight up or on the rocks.*

For even more rum ruminations, be sure to check out GAYOT's [complete guide to rum](#).

1. Appleton Estate 21 Year Old



Origin: Nassau Valley, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica

Price: \$115 for 750 ml.

ABV: 43%

By: [Appleton Estate](#)

When sipping the Appleton Estate 21 Year Old rum, one can't help but notice the serendipitous scent of green apple on the nose.

Honeysuckle and molasses envelop the palate, creating an unusually dry mouthfeel for a rum this old. Its complexity is a testament to master blender Joy Spence's knack for nuance — and it doesn't hurt that Appleton Estate has been making rums in Jamaica's Nassau Valley since 1749.

2. Copalli Barrel Rested Rum

Origin: Belize

Price: \$36.00

ABV: 44%

By: [Copal Tree Distillery](#)

Copalli Rum is a single estate rum made from only three ingredients (organic sugar cane, pure water collected from the rainforest canopy, and yeast), crafted to protect the rainforest of Belize in a distillery designed to have as small a carbon footprint as possible. Unlike most commercial rum operations, the cane fields aren't burnt before harvest. The sugar cane is harvested and juiced within two hours. Remaining cane stock is dried and used to fuel the boiler which runs the still and the cooling system. Leftover ash is returned to the fields as fertilizer. There is no added color, sugar, preservatives or flavors. The only water used to proof the rum comes from rain water collected from the canopy. And, because sustainability is about economic development and environmental stewardship working together, profits from the sale of the rum are returned to the community as infrastructure improvements, education grants and support for cultural organizations.

This rum shows a deep gold color. The nose reveals aromas of pineapple, coconut, freshly crushed mint, caramel and vanilla, coming from toasted oak bourbon barrels this rum was aged in. The flavor profile is marked by candied orange zest, licorice, vanilla and a lingering impression of cane.

3. Cruzan Single Barrel Rum



Origin: Frederiksted, U.S. Virgin Islands

Price: \$30 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: Cruzan Rum

Based in St. Croix, the largest of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Cruzan Rum has a deep history dating back over 200 years.

The Single Barrel Rum is a Cruzan classic created from a variety of vintage rums aged for up to 12 years, then held for an additional year in a new oak barrel. This rum shows its age with initial aromas of oak, spice and leather. The predominantly sweet flavor is accented with notes of vanilla and an overall fruitiness that leaves little burn. Light-bodied and well-balanced, Single Barrel Rum can be enjoyed neat or mixed in a cocktail.

4. FACUNDO Paraíso



Origin: Nassau, Bahamas

Price: \$250 for 750 ml

ABV: 40%

By: [Bacardi](#)

Named after Don Facundo Bacardí Masso (yes, *that* Bacardí), the FACUNDO Rum Collection is meant for sipping and dates back to 1862 when its namesake purchased a small distillery in Santiago de Cuba.

Because of the political uncertainty in Cuba, BACARDÍ eventually moved its operations to the Bahamas, Puerto Rico and other locales. However, the Art Deco design of the collection's glass bottles pays homage to the "Golden Cocktail Age" of 1930s Cuba.

The four rums in the FACUNDO collection come from the Bacardí family's private reserves. Each rum — FACUNDO Neo, FACUNDO Eximo, FACUNDO Exquisito, FACUNDO Paraíso — is handcrafted by master blenders and then aged in highly toasted and unmoved white oak barrels.

While each one is worthy of sipping, if you have to choose just one, make it Paraíso. This rum is finished in casks used for Sherry and French XO Brandy — some of the casks are more than 60 years old.

As its name promises, the deep amber liquid, a blend of rums of which some are aged up to 23 years, is "paradise" in a glass. Wafts of oaky vanilla and almond caress the nose, leading to a smooth palate with a long, mellow finish tinged with a hint of sweet fruit and caramel.

5. Phraya Deep Matured Gold



Origin: Nakhom Pathom, Thailand

Price: \$40 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: [Phraya](#)

Distilled, matured, blended and bottled in Thailand, Phraya Deep Matured Gold is the only Asian rum to grace GAYOT's list.

Made with sugarcane grown in the fertile soil of Thailand's Nakhon Pathom region, the rum has a distinctly beachy taste, with strong coconut and citrus flavors complementing a rich hazelnut aroma. The sweet flavor profile makes it ideal for sipping alongside coconut pie or mixing in a daiquiri. Presented in a chic and modern bottle, this rum is a worthy gift for the sun- and sand- worshipper in your life.

6. Plantation Rum Old Reserve 2001



Price: \$40 for 750 ml.

ABV: 42%

By: Plantation Rum

Plantation incorporates both column and pot distillation methods to create a rum with enough depth for even the most discerning drinker.

The 2001 Old Reserve from Barbados exhibits light pineapple and pear notes on the roof of the mouth, followed by lingering hints of cooked banana on the tongue. Sweet gingerbread flavors are airy but velvety in the finish, making this rum the perfect complement to desserts such as crème brûlée or vanilla pudding.

7. Pusser's Navy Rum Aged 15 Years



Price: \$65 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: Pusser's Rum Ltd.

From 1655 to 1970, Pusser's was the rum of choice for the British Royal Navy — it wasn't even publicly available until 1979.

Every British sailor was given a daily “tot,” and we recommend that you try a dose as well — though not necessarily every day. This handcrafted 15-year single malt variety is aged and distilled in wooden barrels. It's smooth and sophisticated, with a deep burnt amber color, giving off aromas of sherry and cedarwood. This classically made rum tastes of Brazil nuts, vanilla, oak and toffee, with a balsamic and cinnamon finish.

8. Pyrat Cask 1623



Price: \$267 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: Pyrat Rum

Blended and hand-bottled in the Caribbean by Patrón, best known for its tequila, the spirit makes a great gift even without the over-the-top packaging.

We learned in grade school that many pirates suffered from scurvy, as their less-than-nutritious diets at sea did not contain enough Vitamin C. (That nutrient is usually found in perishable fruits and vegetables that were rarely stocked on pirate vessels on long journeys.) Perhaps it's coincidence, but Pyrat Cask 1623, named for the Old English word for "pirate," seems like a citrus blast that can cure whatever ails you. We're not suggesting that you take an 80-proof shot in the morning in lieu of your Flintstones chewables, but this oh-so-smooth, honeyed, syrupy rum is delightful on the nose, palate and the brain. Blended and hand-bottled in the Caribbean by Patrón, best known for its tequila, the spirit makes a great gift even without the over-the-top packaging: a handmade decanter, wood display case and an ornament bearing the image of Hoti, the patron saint of fortune-tellers and bartenders.

9. Rhum Barbancourt Special Reserve Five Star



Origin: Port au Prince, Haiti

Price: \$25 for 750 ml.

ABV: 43%

By: [Rhum Barbancourt](#)

Established in the mid-19th century, Rhum Barbancourt lost an extraordinary amount of its aged stock to an earthquake in 2010.

Thankfully, the family-run distillery pressed on. This rhum agricole, a French-style rum, is Haiti's pride and joy. It's easy to understand why: Distilled from fresh sugarcane juice rather

than molasses, it's light in body yet offers a velvety mouthfeel that gently coats the palate with a balanced array of vanilla, dark fruit and bright orange flavors.

10. Rhum J.M X.O



Origin: Habitation Bellevue, Martinique

Price: \$120 for 750 ml.

ABV: 45%

By: [Rhum J.M](#)

The finish is dry and long, making it best suited for an after-dinner digestif.

Martinique's oldest rum distillery, Rhum J.M began production in 1790 and continues to follow the French government's regulations for producing spirits in the agricole style. Aged at least six years in re-charred oak barrels, it offers subtle grassy and citrus flavors, with toasted nut aromas that unveil themselves more with each full sip. The finish is dry and long, making it best suited for an after-dinner digestif.

11. Ron Cartavio XO



Origin: Cartavio Peru

Price: \$45 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: Cartavio

Peru may not be known for its rum, but Ron Cartavio is looking to change that.

In production since 1929, the distillery uses Peruvian sugarcane molasses and produces its rum using continuous column stills and copper pots. After distillation, the rum undergoes the unique solera aging process, in which it's matured in three different barrels: American, French and Slovenian oak casks. Ron Carvatio XO is a blend of rums between 10 and 30 years old. On the nose, it has an overall creamy and sweet aroma, with strong notes of caramel, vanilla and oak spice. The spice notes continue on the tongue, along with flavors of ginger, leather and tobacco, rounded out by a smooth and rich finish. Ron Cartavio XO is a complex and flavorful rum that should be appreciated neat.

12. Santa Teresa 1796



Origin: El Consejo, Venezuela

Price: \$34 for 750 ml.

ABV: 40%

By: Ron Santa Teresa

Santa Teresa 1796 is the first rum in the world to utilize the solera method of aging, a process popular with Spanish Sherry makers.

Made with blends between four and 35 years old, this Venezuelan rum is on the drier side and perfect for sipping straight. Even without the confectionary qualities found in many other brands, this bottle still manages to entice with its complex aromas of vanilla, caramel, cherry and banana. Making things even more authentic, Hacienda Santa Teresa is the original Venezuelan rum producer, which first began distilling spirits in 1796.