

## What is alcohol?

Pure alcohol is colourless liquid and has no taste. Alcoholic drinks vary in appearance and taste due to the other ingredients added within them and as a result of their method of manufacture.

The alcohol in alcoholic beverages is ethanol. Beer, wine and spirits all contain ethanol that has been produced using fermentation. In spirits, the alcohol is further concentrated by distillation.

Fermentation is the process by which yeast breaks down sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Distillation relies on ethanol having a lower boiling point than water. When the fermented drink is heated the ethanol vaporises and the water is left behind. The ethanol gas is cooled and condenses into a strong concentration of ethanol liquid.

### DrinkWise

<http://drinkwise.org.au/you-alcohol/alcohol-facts/what-is-alcohol/>

