

# Chasing The White Dog: Unveiling the Mysteries of Moonshine

Moonshine has always carried an air of secrecy and intrigue. The allure of this potent, homemade spirit has captured the imaginations of many, leading to tales of hidden stills, dangerous run-ins with the law, and the enduring pursuit of the perfect homemade hooch. In this article, we will dive deep into the world of moonshine and explore its origins, production processes, and the modern fascination surrounding it.

## The Origins of Moonshine

The term "moonshine" originally referred to illegally distilled spirits, typically made under the moonlight to avoid detection by authorities. The practice of illicit distilling traces back to the early days of American history, with legends of outlaws like Al Capone and bootleggers during Prohibition adding a layer of myth to the drink's lore. However, the production of homemade spirits predates the United States, dating back to ancient civilizations like China and Egypt.

In its early days, moonshine was made out of necessity rather than purely for pleasure. The lack of regulations and access to legal alcoholic beverages pushed individuals to create their own spirits using readily available ingredients such as grains, fruits, or even potatoes. Thus, the art of distillation was born.

### Chasing the White Dog: An Amateur Outlaw's

**Adventures in Moonshine** by Max Watman(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported



Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 308 pages



## Production Process and Techniques

The process of creating moonshine involves several crucial steps, each contributing to the quality and flavor of the final product. Raw materials, fermentation, distillation, and aging play significant roles in the moonshine production process.

Raw materials typically consist of grains like corn, rye, or barley, which are ground and mixed with water to create a mash. Yeast is then added to initiate the fermentation process, converting the sugars present in the mash into alcohol. Once the fermentation is complete, distillation takes place, separating the alcohol from other impurities through heating and cooling. The resulting spirit, also known as "white dog" or "shine," is often clear and highly potent.

Aging moonshine is an optional step that can greatly enhance its flavor profile. Traditionally, moonshine was consumed shortly after distillation, but in recent years, connoisseurs have adopted whiskey aging techniques to create a smoother, more nuanced product. Oak barrels are commonly used for aging, imparting flavors and colors as the spirit matures. However, many moonshine enthusiasts argue that the essence of moonshine lies in its unaged, raw form.

## **The Modern Moonshine Craze**

While the production of moonshine may have an illicit background, recent years have seen a surge of legal, craft distilleries specializing in this once-underground spirit. The appeal of small-batch, handcrafted moonshine has captivated a new generation of spirit enthusiasts seeking authentic and unique flavors.

Craft distillers experiment with different ingredients, showcasing the versatility of moonshine beyond its traditional corn-based roots. Fruit-infused varieties, spiced flavors, and even botanical blends have emerged, enticing even those who were previously skeptical of this potent spirit.

Moreover, the rise of cocktail culture has influenced the popularity of moonshine. Mixologists are now incorporating the distinct flavors of moonshine into innovative and enticing drinks, earning the spirit a newfound appreciation among consumers.

### **Chasing the White Dog: An Adventure Worth Pursuing**

The world of moonshine is shrouded in mystery, but by seeking out the stories, traditions, and craft behind this clandestine spirit, we embark on a journey of exploration and appreciation. Chasing the white dog, be it through visiting distilleries, learning about the history, or even attempting to make your own, allows us to connect with a deeply rooted part of American culture.

, moonshine's fascinating past, intricate production processes, and modern resurgence have transformed it from a once illicit drink to a revered and respected spirit. Whether you choose to enjoy it straight or savor it in a unique cocktail creation, chasing the white dog promises an authentic taste of history and a truly memorable experience.



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In *Chasing the White Dog*, journalist Max Watman traces the historical roots and contemporary story of hooch. He takes us to the backwoods of Appalachia and the gritty nip joints of Philadelphia, from a federal courthouse to Pocono Speedway, profiling the colorful characters who make up white whiskey's lore. Along the way, Watman chronicles his hilarious attempts to distill his own moonshine -- the essential ingredients and the many ways it can all go wrong -- from his initial ill-fated batch to his first successful jar of 'shine.

It begins in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, where drunk and armed outlaws gathered in the summer of 1794. George Washington mustered 13,000 troops to quell the rebellion, but by the time they arrived, the rebels had vanished; America's first moonshiners had packed up their stills and moved on.

From these moonshiners who protested the Whiskey Tax of 1791, to the bathtub gin runners of the 1920s, to today's booming bootleg businessmen, white lightning has played a surprisingly large role in American history. It touched the election of Thomas Jefferson, the invention of the IRS, and the origins of

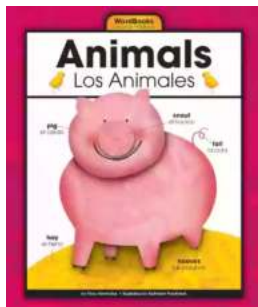
NASCAR. It is a story of tommy guns, hot rods, and shot houses, and the story is far from over.

Infiltrating every aspect of small-scale distilling in America, from the backyard hobbyists to the growing popularity of microdistilleries, Chasing the White Dog provides a fascinating, centuries-long history of illicit booze from an unrepentant lover of moonshine.



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