



LIQUOR RUN

4 WHISKEYS THAT TASTE JUST LIKE CHRISTMAS

BY LAWRENCE MARCUS | DEC 12 2014



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If you like brown liquor, you're probably quite familiar with bourbon whiskey. And its sibling, rye whiskey. And of course its fatherly forebear, Scotch whisky. You might have also come across Canadian whiskey, Japanese whiskey and perhaps even [Tasmanian whiskey](#).

But you may not be aware of a small, intercontinental subgroup that we're going to call Christmas whiskey. Not only do these bottles make great gifts, their flavors and scents also evoke indisputably festive taste memories like mulled wine and fruitcake. Here, four great bottles that are perfect for getting crazy cozy this winter.

1. Alberta Premium Dark Horse (\$30)

You might not know it, but you've probably tasted whiskey from Alberta Distilling. The American brands Jefferson's and WhistlePig have sourced rye from this Canadian producer for years. This version, which incorporates some corn whiskey and a splash of sherry, is a bit like sticky toffee pudding with its caramel-inflected nose, salty palate and buttery texture. It's also quite affordable, but there's a catch: You're not likely to find it outside of Canada. If someone up north owes you a present this year, you might consider dropping a hint.

2. GlenDronach 12-Year-Old (\$42)

A "sherried" Scotch means the hooch has spent part of its aging life in barrels that once held sherry, and GlenDronach's basic bottling is a super-satisfying intro to the style. Aged in not one but two kinds of ex-sherry barrels (oloroso and sweet Pedro Ximénez), it's creamy and spicy and raisin-y in the best possible way.

3. Aberlour A'Bunadh (\$60)

As sherried Scotches go, A'Bunadh (ah-BOON-arrrrr) is among the most extreme. It's rosy in color and tastes like nuts, spices and all kinds of dried fruits. Of the three bottles on this list, this is the easiest to find. And though it isn't particularly cheap, this blend of 10- to 15-year-old barrels is actually a solid value. Because it's sold at cask strength (around 120 proof), a single bottle will fuel a *lot* of merrymaking.

4. High West A Midwinter Night's Dram (\$75)

OK, let's be honest: This is the most Christmas-y whiskey ever, and it's unlikely to lose that title unless Santa himself decides to jump on the craft-distilling bandwagon and turn his workshop into a rickhouse. The base spirit here is spicy rye (a blend of 6- and 16-year-old purchased stocks), which picks up red fruit from time spent in used port barrels and vanilla from French oak barrels. The result? A ruddy dram that smells like a gingerbread house and tastes like some impossibly delicious fruitcake. That it comes from the world's only ski-in distillery is just a bonus.