

You Can Thank Bootleggers For Nascar



Every June 5th National Moonshine Day recognizes a beverage with a notorious record of blurring the lines of history and the law, turning ordinary men (and women) into criminals and common criminals into legends.

- Moonshine traditionally is an illegally distilled spirit. Mostly made from a corn mash, moonshine is a distilled whiskey that is typically produced by an individual illegally without a permit.
- Also known as white lightning, mountain dew, homebrew, hillbilly pop, rotgut, and too many more to list here.
- Distilling skills first came to the United States with the Scotch-Irish as they settled in Virginia.
- By the time the 18th Amendment was ratified early in 1919, over half the country was dry.
- Prohibition lasted 13 years. It created a demand for moonshine, unlike any that may have existed before.

Moonshine became big business overnight.

- Shepherd was Uncle Jesse's CB handle on the Dukes of Hazzard. Sweet Tillie was the name of his Ford LTD/Galaxie in the first episode - his moonshine runner.
- The X's on the moonshine jugs symbol represents the number of times a batch was run through the still. If marked XXX, the moonshine is pure alcohol.
- What do Esther Clark, Edna Giard, Stella Beloumant, Mary Wazeniak all have in common? They were all bootleggers. Bootlegging was an equal opportunity profession.
- Lavinia Gilman was a bootlegger, too. At 80 years old, she ran a 300 gallon still in Montana. The judge suspected her son was the real culprit, though.
- During prohibition, there were many ways to transport bootlegged moonshine. Faking a funeral was a convenient ruse to move the product. Out of respect for the dead, of course, those with the badge were reluctant to stop a funeral procession.
- The most likely origin of the term Moonshine is actually from Wiltshire County in England, which at one time held smuggling as one of its most important industries.
- The name moonshine was brought to America by early British settlers who used the word to describe illicit tasks that needed to be done under the dark of night.
- Stock car racing began because bootleggers needed cars fast enough to outrun the cops. So, they modified their cars for speed. The boys who were bootlegging in Georgia started racing their cars against one another and eventually, it turned into NASCAR.
- America's first legal moonshine distillery was in North Carolina.

Sources:

National Day Calendar

Days of the Year

The Oklahoman