

The origin of the word 'grappa' has many variants but the term likely stems from 'grappulus' in Medieval Latin, which means a bunch of grapes.

Grappa is exclusively an Italian grape brandy and is obtained by distilling grape pomace, which is the solid part of grapes- skin and grape seeds- separated from the wine. Differing from other brandies obtained from liquid raw materials, grappa is the only type of brandy directly obtained from a solid raw material.

The use of grape pomace developed from the typical rural spirit of hard work and effort to thoroughly master the primary goods nature affords. Initially, the scarcity of technical knowhow meant that the grappa obtained from these distillation processes was rather unrefined. The rural roots of the product also explain the lack of written evidence regarding its provenance and origins.

The first documents that explicitly mention grape pomace brandy date back to the first apparatuses used to purify brandy. From 1800 until today, both a remarkable technological evolution and a progressive refining of taste have contributed to improve the production of grappa, changing the perception of the drink from a primitive 'warming bowel' to a refined and refreshing alcoholic beverage.

The quality of grappa chiefly derives from the freshness, wholesomeness and quality of grapes. The grape pomace is a very delicate raw material as soon as it is separated from the wine. It oxidizes in contact with air, losing its perfume, fragrance and primary aroma. It is subject to bacteria deterioration. The large quantities of fresh grapes and the brief period of grape harvest require a storage system. A prolonged preservation can be defective for fresh grapes and it is therefore necessary to reduce the period of storage as much as possible, considering that the best grappa is obtained from unstored grapes. There are five different categories of grappa- Giovane (young), Aromatica (aromatic), Vecchia or Invecchiata (old or aged), Stravecchia or Riserva (very old or reserve) and Aromatizzata (flavoured) grappa.

The principal characteristic of young grappa is the primary aroma of fresh grape pomace; aromatic grappa is obtained from fruited aromatic wine pomace such as Moscato or Traminer. The Vecchia

or Invecchiata grappa is seasoned in oak casks for at least 12 months and the Stravecchia or Reserva grappa for about one and a half years; the flavoured grappa is a young grappa with fruit or plant infusions such as rue, liquorice and blueberries.

Another important classification of grappa refers to its geographical provenance from the Veneto, Piemonte, Lombardy, Trentino, Alto Adige, Friuli and Barolo regions. These Italian regions have exclusively been granted by Italian regulations the possibility to use the name 'grappa' to indicate a distillation of grape pomace.

An excellent quality grappa is obtained by a very high selective criteria of grape pomace coming from specific distinctive vines with favourable climatic and soil conditions and by a soft pressing process.

The fresh and wholesome grape pomace reaches the distillery dripping with wine and is immediately distilled by means of a slow and soft continuous still. The distillatory generously eliminates the 'head and tail cuts' helping the core of the grappa enclose the primary aromatic flavour of the grape pomace. The grappa is then bottled only after a minimum six-month process of refining.

Grappa is highly appreciated and served at a right temperature – young and aromatic grappa is served at 10-12 degrees Celsius (not cold but cool), whilst the ideal tasting temperature of aged grappa is about 16-18 degrees Celsius.

Grappa is served in a little, fine crystal tulip shaped tasting chalice with a long stem so as not to warm the distillate.