

# SAVEUR

*Sharing the Best of the Web*

## Whiskey Travel Destinations

There are more than 220 distilleries across the United States. Here are four that offer whiskey tours to the public, a can't-miss experience for any true whiskey lover.

### St. George Spirits

*Alameda, California*

The main attraction at the Alameda Naval Air Station is the St. George Spirits Distillery. Instead of its thick steel rafters protecting fighter jets, the 65,000-square-foot former Navy hanger houses Arnold Holstein copper stills and several hundred former bourbon, port, new French and American oak casks. Using barley from Wisconsin, owner Lance Winters wants the grains to express themselves in the whiskey. And that they do.

In St. George's tasting room, one can taste this excellent single malt whiskey, which gives bourbon- and scotch-like notes, while enjoying the stunning view of the San Francisco skyline. Winters and his team are the cowboys of distillation, willing to take on any challenge. They once distilled a cow's heart for a charity event and have experimented with foie gras and crab brandies. Their dry, sometimes dark, humor-filled tours cause more than a few laughs. Visit [stgeorgespirits.com](http://www.stgeorgespirits.com) (<http://www.stgeorgespirits.com>).



Photo courtesy Buffalo Trace

### Buffalo Trace Distillery

*Frankfort, Kentucky*

During Prohibition, 30 armed revenue agents guarded the George T. Stagg Distillery, which made whiskey for "medicinal purposes." Now, a lone guard mans the 130-acre Buffalo Trace distillery, renamed in 1999 after the buffalo that swam across the bordering Kentucky River. Established in 1787, it's the country's longest continuously working distillery.

Visitors see a glimpse of Old Kentucky, with Buffalo Trace's limestone rick warehouses aging 300,000 barrels of Buffalo

Trace, Pappy Van Winkle and other bourbon brands. Sweet smells of bourbon and the mash cooking fill the air. A meander through the pristine grounds finds workers rolling barrels and an old Paulownia tree between warehouses C and H. This very tree's seeds were used as packaging material to ship bourbon in the 1800s. Visit [buffalotrace.com](http://www.buffalotrace.com) (<http://www.buffalotrace.com>).



Photo courtesy Templeton Rye Whiskey

## Templeton Rye Whiskey

### *Templeton, Iowa*

Like most businesses in the countryside of Iowa, the Templeton Rye distillery is bordered by countless rows of corn. But this is not your ordinary Iowa town: Templeton was infamous during Prohibition for its illicit whiskey making. Townspeople hid hooch all over the area, even in the tombstone of the Reverend Bernard Al Schulte. Legend has it that Al Capone himself preferred the "good stuff" from Iowa.

Today, this small town of 300 people has its own distillery. Started in 2001 by Iowa natives Scott Bush and Keith Kerkhoff, whose grandfather's recipe is used to make the whiskey, Templeton Rye is mostly made in Indiana. But, the Iowa distillery ages about 300 barrels and Alphonse Kerkhoff's original still is on display. The smooth rye whiskey is currently only in four states, but the town's place in history makes this one of the most unique American whiskey sites. Visit [templetonrye.com](http://www.templetonrye.com) (<http://www.templetonrye.com>).



Photo: Ben Stechschulte for Tuthilltown

## Tuthilltown Spirits

### *Gardiner, New York*

When Tuthilltown Spirits opened in 2001, it became New York's first legal whiskey distillery since Prohibition. The owners turned the Tuthilltown Gristmill, an historic landmark built in 1788, into a microdistillery that makes the popular Hudson

whiskey line. Instead of the typical 60-gallon barrels, Tuthilltown ages whiskeys in 3- to 14-gallon casks, which in theory gives the whiskey more surface contact with the wood. Tuthilltown stores the barrels in a climate-controlled block warehouse that employs sonic aging, which uses bass vibrations to help the wood breathe.

Visitors see the distillery's bright copper column-pot stills and a tasting room that bumps up to hundreds of small barrels aging whiskey. What makes Tuthilltown special is that it's truly a local distillery: they acquire 90 percent of their grains within a 10-mile radius of the distillery itself. Visit [tuthilltown.com](http://www.tuthilltown.com) (<http://www.tuthilltown.com>).

*Fred Minnick is an international wine and spirits writer and photographer who works with several publications. View his work at [FredWrite.com](http://www.FredWrite.com) (<http://www.FredWrite.com>).*