



The SAGE Encyclopedia of Alcohol: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives

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Alcohol consumption goes to the very roots of nearly all human societies. Different countries and regions have become associated with different sorts of alcohol, for instance, the “beer culture” of Germany, the “wine culture” of France, Japan and saki, Russia and vodka, the Caribbean and rum, or the “moonshine culture” of Appalachia. Wine is used in religious rituals, and toasts are used to seal business deals or to celebrate marriages and state dinners. However, our relation with alcohol is one of love/hate. We also regulate it and tax it, we pass laws about when and where it’s appropriate, we crack down severely on drunk driving, and the United States and other countries tried the failed “Noble Experiment” of Prohibition.

While there are many encyclopedias on alcohol, nearly all approach it as a substance of abuse, taking a clinical, medical perspective (alcohol, alcoholism, and treatment). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Alcohol* examines the history of alcohol worldwide and goes beyond the historical lens to examine alcohol as a cultural and social phenomenon, as well—both for good and for ill—from the earliest days of humankind.

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