

# Irish Whiskey

Working across our shared island



# Our all-island industry

## Distilleries

The number of Irish whiskey distilleries on the island of Ireland grew from four to over 40 since 2010

## Exports

The all-island value of Irish whiskey exports exceeded one billion euros (approximately £900 million) in 2022 for the first time

## Sustainability

Our industry's vision is to make the island of Ireland the home of the world's most sustainable whiskey distilleries and brands

Ireland is the home of whiskey and where whiskey got its name. From the heyday of the 1800's when there were distilleries scattered across all parts of the island; to the dogdays of the 1980's when there were only two distilleries left, one in the north and one in the south; Irish whiskey has always been an all-island industry – the embodiment of our shared economy

There has never been a Republic of Ireland whiskey industry; or a Northern Ireland whiskey industry. There is a only single, coherent all-island Irish whiskey industry.

The past 25 years has seen Irish whiskey re-emerge as one of the world's leading spirits categories.

In 2023, the island of Ireland is home to over 40 distilleries distilling over 110 million LPA of whiskey spirit every year with global sales having exceeded an 15 million cases – over 180 million bottles – in 2022.

Irish whiskey is now one of the largest export industries in Northern Ireland.

In 2022, the all-island export value of Irish whiskey exceeded one billion euros (over 900 million pounds) for the first time. This confirms the importance of our unique all-island industry to our shared economy, north and south. Across the island of Ireland, the growth in Irish whiskey exports has created more quality jobs, brought more investment into regional and rural communities, and led to more purchasing from Irish farmers.

The gross value added (GVA) per employee in the Irish whiskey industry was estimated to be over €400,000/£360,000 in 2019, six times higher than the average GVA per employee across the remainder of the Irish food and drink industry.

In 2022, the Irish Whiskey Association launched 'Sustainable Together', the sectoral sustainability roadmap for the Irish whiskey industry. This roadmap sets out our industry's shared vision to work together to make Ireland the home of the world's most sustainable distilleries and whiskey brands.



## Our all-island geographic indication

Irish Whiskey is a protected geographic indication (GI), equally recognised and protected by both the European Union and United Kingdom, and in laws of many countries around the world. This means a product can only be labelled and sold as Irish whiskey if it has been fully distilled and matured in wooden casks on the island of Ireland.

It is critically important that our all-island GI remains subject to seamless consistency in the legislative and regulatory underpinning across both Ireland and Northern Ireland, in both EU and UK law. In reality, this means keeping the GI in Northern Ireland aligned with future changes to EU law.

If there was regulatory divergence then it would undermine the global legal protection for the Irish whiskey GI, which the Irish Whiskey Association relies on to deter and crack-down on fake Irish whiskeys. This is essential to protect the integrity, reputation and sustainable growth of Irish whiskey.



## Our cross-border supply chains

The Irish whiskey industry depends on seamless cross-border supply chains. Every year, millions of litres of Irish whiskey spirit cross the border to be matured or blended or bottled by distilleries or businesses on the other part of the island.

Malt, barley and other grains produced on the island also cross the border every year in substantial volumes.

One consequence of Brexit is that Ireland and Northern Ireland now fall within different customs territories, including for the purposes of rules-of-origin in EU and UK free trade agreements. The Irish Whiskey Association continues to work to avoid any divergence or disruption to our all-island industry. This includes engaging with the EU Commission and UK Government on their trade negotiations with Australia, India, etc, to lobby for rules-of-origin which protect and facilitate our long-standing supply chains across the island of Ireland.



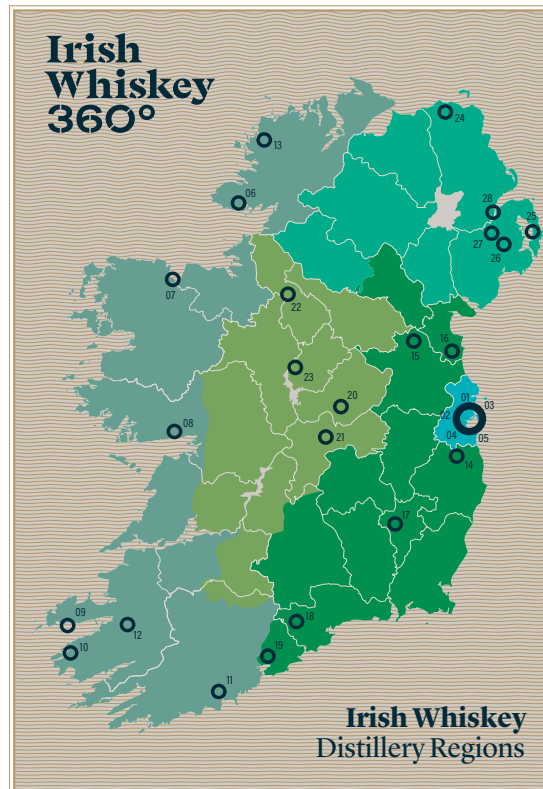
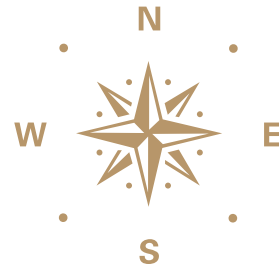
# Irish Whiskey 360°

Across the island, Irish whiskey distilleries attracted over one million visitors in 2019, with 677,000 visitors in 2022 representing a strong post-Covid rebound.

Irish whiskey tourism is delivering substantial multiplier gains for local economies, with visitors to Irish whiskey distilleries spending €63 million in local communities in 2019.

In 2020, the Irish Whiskey Association launched IrishWhiskey360°, a unique all-island distillery trail. Visit [www.IrishWhiskey360.ie](http://www.IrishWhiskey360.ie) for more details.

The Belfast Good Friday Agreement led to the establishment of Tourism Ireland as an all-island body to promote Ireland as an international tourist destination. The Irish Whiskey Association has worked closely with Tourism Ireland and the tourism industry across the island to promote IrishWhiskey360° and Irish whiskey tourism generally.



## Irish Whiskey Association

The Irish Whiskey Association is an all-island trade association representing 49 companies across the island of Ireland.

The Irish Whiskey Association represents the Irish whiskey industry in engagements with the Irish and UK governments, the Northern Ireland Executive, other institutions of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, and the EU Commission. The Irish Whiskey Association engages with Ministers, Commissioners and officials in Dublin, Belfast, London and Brussels.



### Policy Priorities to protect and support our all-island industry

1. Maintain a seamless consistency in the legislative and regulatory underpinning of the Irish Whiskey Geographic Indication across both Ireland and Northern Ireland.
2. Ensure consistent implementation of the rules and regulations governing Irish whiskey production, labelling and verification across the island of Ireland.
3. Protect cross-border supply chains from all future tariffs and checks.
4. Continue to reform rules of origin in EU and UK free trade agreements to protect cross-border supply chains.
5. Deepen Ireland's all-island tourism offering, including increased support for all-island food and drink tourism and promotion of the IrishWhiskey360°.



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## Irish Whiskey 360°

[www.irishwhiskey360.com](http://www.irishwhiskey360.com)

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### for Peace + Prosperity

**Ibec is marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement with a new campaign 'For Peace and Prosperity'.**

The campaign illustrates the pivotal role that business has played in perpetuating peace and prosperity on the island.

Learn more:

[ibecforpeaceandprosperity.ie/](http://ibecforpeaceandprosperity.ie/)