

CHAPTER 6: PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Brandy and Fruit Spirits - 100 Questions

1. What is brandy primarily distilled from?
 - A. Grain mash
 - B. Sugar cane
 - C. Fermented fruit, typically grapes
 - D. Potatoes

2. The term "brandy" derives from which word meaning "burnt wine"?
 - A. Dutch "brandewijn"
 - B. French "vin brûlé"
 - C. Spanish "vino quemado"
 - D. German "brennwein"

3. Cognac must be produced in which country?
 - A. Spain
 - B. Italy
 - C. Germany
 - D. France

4. What type of still is required for Cognac production by law?

- A. Column still
- B. Copper pot still (alembic charentais)
- C. Hybrid still
- D. Coffey still

5. The primary grape variety used in Cognac production is:

- A. Chardonnay
- B. Folle Blanche
- C. Ugni Blanc (Trebbiano)
- D. Colombard

6. VS (Very Special) Cognac must be aged for a minimum of:

- A. 2 years
- B. 4 years
- C. 6 years
- D. 10 years

7. VSOP stands for:

- A. Very Special Old Product
- B. Very Superior Original Premium
- C. Vintage Special Oak Process
- D. Very Superior Old Pale

8. The "Grande Champagne" designation in Cognac refers to:

- A. Sparkling wine region
- B. A premier cru growing region
- C. The oldest Cognac category
- D. A grape variety

9. XO Cognac must be aged for a minimum of:

- A. 6 years
- B. 8 years
- C. 10 years
- D. 15 years

10. The "bonne chauffe" in Cognac production refers to:

- A. The second distillation that produces the final spirit
- B. The heating of barrels
- C. The blending process
- D. The first distillation

11. Armagnac is produced in which region of France?

- A. Charente
- B. Burgundy
- C. Normandy
- D. Gascony

12. What is the main difference in distillation between Cognac and Armagnac?

- A. Cognac uses column stills; Armagnac uses pot stills
- B. Armagnac traditionally uses continuous column stills; Cognac uses double pot distillation
- C. They use identical methods
- D. Armagnac is triple distilled

13. The traditional Armagnac still is called:

- A. Alembic charentais
- B. Coffey still
- C. Alembic armagnacais (continuous column still)
- D. Holstein still

14. Which statement about Armagnac aging is TRUE?

- A. Armagnac can be sold unaged (blanche)
- B. Armagnac must be aged minimum 10 years
- C. Armagnac cannot be aged in oak
- D. Armagnac uses only new oak barrels

15. Pisco is a grape brandy originating from:

- A. Mexico
- B. Argentina
- C. Brazil
- D. Peru and Chile

16. The main difference between Peruvian and Chilean Pisco is:

- A. Peruvian uses only aromatic grapes
- B. Peruvian Pisco cannot be diluted after distillation; Chilean can be
- C. Chilean Pisco must be aged longer
- D. They are identical by law

17. "Pisco Puro" refers to:

- A. Aged Pisco
- B. Blended Pisco
- C. Pisco made from a single grape variety
- D. Unfiltered Pisco

18. The classic Pisco Sour cocktail includes which distinctive ingredient?

- A. Egg white
- B. Cream
- C. Ginger
- D. Mint

19. Grappa is a pomace brandy from which country?

- A. France
- B. Spain
- C. Portugal
- D. Italy

20. Pomace brandy is made from:

- A. Whole grapes
- B. The leftover grape skins, seeds, and stems after winemaking
- C. Grape juice concentrate
- D. Dried grapes

21. What distinguishes "grappa di monovitigno"?

- A. It is aged in oak
- B. It is made from a single grape variety
- C. It is double distilled
- D. It is unfiltered

22. Marc is the French equivalent of:

- A. Cognac
- B. Armagnac
- C. Calvados
- D. Grappa (pomace brandy)

23. Calvados is an apple brandy from which French region?

- A. Normandy
- B. Burgundy
- C. Provence
- D. Alsace

24. Calvados AOC requires the spirit to be made from:

- A. Only Granny Smith apples
- B. Any fruit
- C. Cider apples (and sometimes pears)
- D. Grape and apple blend

25. The designation "Calvados Pays d'Auge" indicates:

- A. Single distillation
- B. Double distillation in pot stills and specific terroir
- C. Column still production
- D. Minimum 10-year aging

26. American apple brandy is commonly known as:

- A. Calvados
- B. Pommeau
- C. Marc de Pomme
- D. Applejack

27. The traditional American method of making applejack involved:

- A. Freeze concentration ("jacking")
- B. Triple distillation
- C. Grape blending
- D. Sugar addition

28. Eau-de-vie literally translates to:

- A. Fire water
- B. Spirit of fruit
- C. Water of life
- D. Burnt wine

29. Kirsch (Kirschwasser) is an eau-de-vie made from:

- A. Plums
- B. Cherries
- C. Pears
- D. Apricots

30. Poire Williams is an eau-de-vie made from:

- A. Apples
- B. Plums
- C. Cherries
- D. Williams pears

31. Slivovitz is a traditional Eastern European brandy made from:

- A. Plums
- B. Cherries
- C. Apricots
- D. Grapes

32. What is distinctive about most fruit eaux-de-vie production?

- A. They require extensive oak aging
- B. They must be sweetened
- C. They are typically unaged to preserve fruit character
- D. They are always blended

33. Framboise is an eau-de-vie made from:

- A. Strawberries
- B. Raspberries
- C. Blackberries
- D. Blueberries

34. The "brouillis" in Cognac production is:

- A. The final aged product
- B. The blending vessel
- C. The grape must
- D. The product of the first distillation (about 30% ABV)

35. What is "rancio" in aged brandy?

- A. A desirable oxidative, nutty flavor that develops with extended aging
- B. A fault indicating spoilage
- C. A type of barrel
- D. A grape variety

36. Spanish brandy (Brandy de Jerez) must be aged using which system?

- A. Single barrel aging
- B. No aging required
- C. Solera system
- D. Continuous rotation

37. The "criadera" in the solera system refers to:

- A. The oldest barrels
- B. The tiers of barrels above the solera containing younger brandy
- C. The blending room
- D. New make spirit

38. Metaxa is a Greek spirit that is technically:

- A. A pure grape brandy
- B. A whiskey
- C. A rum
- D. A blend of brandy with wine and botanicals

39. What gives Metaxa its distinctive character compared to other brandies?

- A. The addition of Muscat wine and Mediterranean botanicals
- B. Triple distillation
- C. Corn-based production
- D. Peat smoking

40. The "paradis" in a Cognac house refers to:

- A. The newest spirits
- B. The distillation room
- C. The cellar storing the oldest and most precious reserves
- D. The tasting room

41. Brandy de Jerez Solera Gran Reserva must be aged for a minimum of:

- A. 1 year
- B. 6 months
- C. 5 years
- D. 3 years

42. What role does the "maître de chai" play in Cognac production?

- A. Grape harvesting
- B. Cellar master responsible for blending and aging
- C. Distillation only
- D. Marketing

43. "Fine Champagne" Cognac indicates:

- A. Made with sparkling wine
- B. Single vineyard production
- C. A blend of Grande and Petite Champagne, with at least 50% Grande
- D. The youngest age category

44. The "tête" (head) in brandy distillation contains:

- A. Volatile compounds separated at the start of distillation
- B. The best quality spirit
- C. Water
- D. Aged brandy

45. Lees brandy is made from:

- A. Pomace
- B. Whole grapes
- C. Grape juice
- D. The sediment (dead yeast cells) from winemaking

46. What is "aguardiente" in Spanish-speaking countries?

- A. A specific brand
- B. A general term for distilled spirits, often grape or sugar cane based
- C. Only grape brandy
- D. A cocktail

47. The French term "Fine" when applied to brandy indicates:

- A. The highest quality
- B. Filtered brandy
- C. A regional grape brandy (e.g., Fine de Bourgogne)
- D. Unaged brandy

48. What must happen for a spirit to legally be called "Cognac"?

- A. It must be made in the Cognac region from specific grapes and follow strict production rules
- B. It must be aged 20 years
- C. It must be made anywhere in France
- D. It must use only Colombard grapes

49. Peruvian Pisco is distilled to what final proof without water addition?

- A. Exactly 40% ABV
- B. No more than 95% ABV
- C. Between 50-60% ABV
- D. Between 38-48% ABV (bottling strength from the still)

50. The "queue" (tail) in brandy distillation contains:

- A. The best spirit
- B. Heavier alcohols and compounds separated at the end of distillation
- C. Only water
- D. The first runnings

51. Obstler is a German/Austrian fruit brandy made from:

- A. Grapes only
- B. Plums only
- C. A mix of apples and pears
- D. Cherries only

52. What distinguishes a "vintage" Armagnac?

- A. It is from a single harvest year
- B. It is blended from multiple years
- C. It is unaged
- D. It uses only Ugni Blanc grapes

53. "Hors d'Age" for Cognac and Armagnac typically indicates:

- A. Young spirit
- B. Unaged brandy
- C. NAS (no age statement)
- D. Very old spirit, beyond standard age classifications

54. The minimum aging for Armagnac VS is:

- A. 5 years
- B. 1 year in oak
- C. 3 years
- D. No minimum

55. What is "Pineau des Charentes"?

- A. A Cognac age designation
- B. A grape variety
- C. A fortified wine made by blending grape must with Cognac
- D. An unaged brandy

56. The traditional Cognac aging barrel is made from:

- A. Limousin or Tronçais oak
- B. American oak only
- C. Cherry wood
- D. Chestnut

57. "Angels' share" in brandy production refers to:

- A. The first distillation
- B. The blender's portion
- C. The oldest reserves
- D. Evaporation loss during aging

58. Bas-Armagnac is considered:

- A. The lowest quality region
- B. The premier cru region, producing the finest Armagnacs
- C. An age designation
- D. A grape variety

59. What is unique about "Blanche" Armagnac?

- A. It is aged in charred barrels
- B. It is blended
- C. It is unaged or minimally aged, clear in color
- D. It uses white grapes only

60. The "coeur" (heart) in brandy distillation is:

- A. The middle cut, the desirable portion collected for aging
- B. The first runnings
- C. The last runnings
- D. The waste product

61. Brandy must be distilled from fruit at less than what proof to retain flavor?

- A. 95% ABV (190 proof) in most regulations
- B. 80% ABV
- C. 70% ABV
- D. 60% ABV

62. "Réserve" on an Armagnac label typically indicates:

- A. The youngest category
- B. Unaged spirit
- C. Minimum aging of about 2-3 years
- D. Single vintage

63. What is "mutage" in the production of Pineau des Charentes?

- A. Barrel toasting
- B. The process of stopping fermentation by adding Cognac to grape must
- C. Distillation
- D. Blending

64. Asbach is a famous brandy from which country?

- A. France
- B. Spain
- C. Italy
- D. Germany

65. The term "aguardente" in Portugal refers to:

- A. Grape brandy, similar to the Spanish aguardiente
- B. Rum only
- C. Whiskey
- D. Vodka

66. What does "AOC" or "AOP" guarantee for French brandies?

- A. Organic production
- B. Price standards
- C. Geographic origin and production standards
- D. Age only

67. In Cognac production, the "secondes" refers to:

- A. The final product
- B. The feints/tails recycled into the next distillation
- C. The aging barrels
- D. The grape harvest

68. Chilean Pisco differs from Peruvian in that Chilean Pisco:

- A. Cannot be aged
- B. Must use only one grape
- C. Is always unfiltered
- D. Can be diluted with water after distillation to reach bottling strength

69. The Cognac age designation "Napoléon" typically indicates:

- A. Minimum 6 years aging, between VSOP and XO
- B. 2 years aging
- C. Unaged
- D. 20+ years

70. What is "assemblage" in Cognac production?

- A. Distillation
- B. Grape crushing
- C. The art of blending different eaux-de-vie to create the final product
- D. Barrel making

71. Mirabelle is an eau-de-vie made from:

- A. Cherries
- B. Small yellow plums
- C. Apricots
- D. Peaches

72. "Single cask" or "single barrel" brandy indicates:

- A. Blended from multiple barrels
- B. Young spirit
- C. Unaged spirit
- D. Bottled from one individual barrel

73. The "compte" system in Cognac tracks:

- A. Sales figures
- B. Distillery size
- C. Grape varieties
- D. The age of the eau-de-vie from April 1st following harvest

74. What distinguishes "pot still brandy" from other brandies?

- A. It is unaged
- B. It is made from pomace
- C. It is batch-distilled in pot stills rather than column stills
- D. It contains no fruit

75. Cognac's "Borderies" region is known for producing brandies with:

- A. Heavy, robust character
- B. Delicate, violet-scented, rounded character
- C. Harsh, young flavors
- D. No distinctive character

76. The legal minimum alcohol content for most brandies at bottling is:

- A. 30% ABV
- B. 35% ABV
- C. 45% ABV
- D. 40% ABV

77. "Lambig" is a Breton apple brandy similar to:

- A. Calvados
- B. Cognac
- C. Grappa
- D. Pisco

78. What is the purpose of "boisé" in some brandy production?

- A. A grape variety
- B. A distillation technique
- C. A legal additive of oak extract to accelerate aging character
- D. A type of barrel

79. South African brandy production primarily uses which distillation method?

- A. Single pot still only
- B. A combination of pot still and column still brandies, often blended
- C. Column still only
- D. Triple distillation

80. The "prune" note in aged Cognac comes from:

- A. Added flavoring
- B. Grape variety
- C. Fermentation only
- D. Extended oxidative aging in oak barrels

81. What is "touriga nacional" in relation to brandy

- A. A Cognac region
- B. An aging designation
- C. A Portuguese grape variety used in some brandies
- D. A distillation method

82. Weinbrand is the German term for:

- A. Grape brandy (wine brandy)
- B. Fruit brandy
- C. Pomace brandy
- D. Apple brandy

83. The "chai" in Cognac production refers to:

- A. The vineyard
- B. The distillation room
- C. The grape press
- D. The above-ground aging warehouse

84. Armagnac's "Ténaresze" region produces brandies known for:

- A. Light, delicate character
- B. Full-bodied character requiring longer aging
- C. Unaged styles only
- D. Pomace-based production

85. What is "vielle réserve" on a brandy label?

- A. The youngest category
- B. Unaged spirit
- C. An older reserve, typically indicating extended aging
- D. Single grape variety

86. The Charente River's influence on Cognac includes:

- A. Providing humidity that moderates evaporation and aging
- B. No significant influence
- C. Providing water for dilution
- D. Transportation only in modern times

87. "Pommeau" is:

- A. A dry cider
- B. A brandy
- C. An apple wine
- D. An aperitif made by blending apple juice with Calvados

88. What distinguishes "Calvados Domfrontais"?

- A. Made only from apples
- B. Must contain at least 30% pear
- C. Uses only pot stills
- D. Is unaged

89. The term "Fine Bois" in Cognac refers to:

- A. High-quality wood
- B. An age designation
- C. One of the six Cognac crus (growing regions)
- D. A blending technique

90. "Tresterbrand" is the German term for:

- A. Pomace brandy (equivalent to grappa or marc)
- B. Grape brandy
- C. Apple brandy
- D. Pear brandy

91. What role does "humidity" play in brandy aging?

- A. No significant role
- B. It speeds up aging
- C. It only affects color
- D. High humidity reduces alcohol evaporation; low humidity reduces water evaporation

92. "Brandy de Jerez Solera Reserva" must be aged for:

- A. 3 years
- B. Minimum 1 year in the solera system
- C. 6 months
- D. 5 years

93. The "Folle Blanche" grape was historically important to Cognac because:

- A. It was the dominant variety before phylloxera
- B. It produces the highest yields
- C. It is disease resistant
- D. It is used today as the primary grape

94. What is "reducing" in brandy production?

- A. Gradually adding distilled water to lower alcohol content to bottling strength
- B. Removing color
- C. Concentrating the spirit
- D. Filtering out sediment

95. "Acquavite" in Italian refers to:

- A. Water
- B. Wine
- C. A specific brand
- D. Brandy or distilled spirits (literally "water of life")

96. The "Petite Champagne" region in Cognac:

- A. Produces the lowest quality
- B. Is the second-ranked cru after Grande Champagne
- C. Is the largest region
- D. Uses different grapes

97. What is "millésime" on an Armagnac or Cognac label?

- A. A blend of multiple years
- B. The youngest spirit in the blend
- C. A vintage year, indicating all spirit is from that single harvest
- D. An age category

98. Fruit brandies are typically clear because:

- A. They are unaged in oak to preserve the pure fruit character
- B. They are filtered to remove color
- C. They use white fruit only
- D. Color is bleached out

99. The town of Cognac is located in which French department?

- A. Gironde
- B. Dordogne
- C. Gers
- D. Charente

100. What distinguishes "alambic" distillation?

- A. Continuous distillation
- B. Batch distillation in a pot still
- C. Column still only
- D. No copper contact

CHAPTER 6: ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Brandy and Fruit Spirits

1. C. Fermented fruit, typically grapes - Brandy is a spirit distilled from fermented fruit, most commonly grapes. The term encompasses a wide range of spirits including Cognac, Armagnac, Pisco, and fruit brandies. While grape brandy is most common, brandies can be made from any fruit including apples (Calvados), pears, plums, and cherries. The fruit's sugars are fermented into wine or cider, then distilled.
2. A. Dutch "brandewijn" - The word "brandy" derives from the Dutch "brandewijn," meaning "burnt wine," referring to the heating (distillation) process. Dutch traders were instrumental in spreading brandy throughout Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. They originally distilled wine to reduce shipping volume and preserve it, intending to add water back later—but discovered the distilled product was enjoyable on its own.
3. D. France - Cognac must be produced in the Cognac region of southwestern France, centered around the town of Cognac in the Charente and Charente-Maritime departments. This geographic restriction is protected by AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) regulations. The region's chalky soil, maritime climate, and traditional expertise combine to create Cognac's distinctive character.
4. B. Copper pot still (alembic charentais) - Cognac must be double-distilled in traditional copper pot stills called "alembic charentais." These onion-shaped stills are specifically designed for Cognac production, with a maximum capacity of 30 hectoliters (though the charge cannot exceed 25 hectoliters). The copper removes sulfur compounds and contributes to Cognac's refined character.
5. C. Ugni Blanc (Trebiano) - Ugni Blanc (known as Trebbiano in Italy) is the dominant grape in Cognac production, accounting for approximately 98% of plantings. This high-acid, low-alcohol grape produces thin wines ideal for distillation. Its disease resistance made it popular after phylloxera devastated the region. Folle Blanche and Colombard are also permitted but rarely used.
6. A. 2 years - VS (Very Special) Cognac, also called "Three Star," must be aged for a minimum of two years in oak barrels. The age is counted from April 1st following the harvest (the "compte" system). While this is the legal minimum, many producers age their VS expressions longer. VS represents the entry-level Cognac category.
7. D. Very Superior Old Pale - VSOP stands for "Very Superior Old Pale," indicating Cognac aged at least four years in oak. The "pale" originally referred to Cognacs without added caramel coloring,

though today most Cognacs may contain small amounts of caramel for color consistency. VSOP represents a significant step up from VS in complexity and smoothness.

8. B. A premier cru growing region - Grande Champagne is the most prestigious of Cognac's six crus (growing regions), located in the heart of the appellation. The chalky soil produces grapes that yield particularly elegant, floral eaux-de-vie with exceptional aging potential. The name refers to the open, chalky fields ("campagne"), not to sparkling wine. Grande Champagne Cognacs command premium prices.
9. C. 10 years - XO (Extra Old) Cognac must be aged a minimum of 10 years in oak barrels. This requirement was increased from 6 years in 2018. In practice, many XO Cognacs contain much older eaux-de-vie, sometimes 20-30 years or more. XO represents the premium category, showcasing the full development of aged Cognac's complexity.
10. A. The second distillation that produces the final spirit - The "bonne chauffe" (good heating) is the crucial second distillation in Cognac production. The first distillation produces "brouillis" at about 30% ABV; the bonne chauffe redistills this to create the final eau-de-vie at around 70% ABV. During the bonne chauffe, the distiller carefully separates heads, hearts, and tails to capture only the finest spirit.
11. D. Gascony - Armagnac is produced in the Gascony region of southwestern France, about 100 miles south of Bordeaux. The appellation covers parts of three departments: Gers, Landes, and Lot-et-Garonne. Armagnac is France's oldest brandy, predating Cognac by about 150 years, with records of distillation dating to the early 15th century.
12. B. Armagnac traditionally uses continuous column stills; Cognac uses double pot distillation - The fundamental difference is distillation method. Cognac requires double distillation in pot stills, while Armagnac traditionally uses a single continuous distillation in the "alembic armagnacais" column still. This produces a more robust, characterful spirit at lower proof (52-60% ABV). However, some Armagnac producers now also use double pot distillation.
13. C. Alembic armagnacais (continuous column still) - The traditional Armagnac still is the "alembic armagnacais," a unique continuous column still that produces spirit in a single pass at relatively low proof. This retains more congeners and flavor compounds than Cognac's double distillation. The still's design, with its series of plates, is specific to Armagnac and contributes to its distinctive rustic character.
14. A. Armagnac can be sold unaged (blanche) - Unlike Cognac, Armagnac can legally be sold unaged as "Blanche Armagnac" or "Armagnac Blanc." This clear spirit showcases the pure distillate's character before oak influence. Blanche Armagnac was officially recognized in 2005 and has gained popularity for cocktails and as a category highlighting terroir and grape variety.
15. D. Peru and Chile - Pisco is a grape brandy with protected designations in both Peru and Chile, and both countries claim to have originated the spirit. The rivalry is intense and ongoing. Peruvian

Pisco has strict regulations about grape varieties and production methods, while Chilean Pisco allows more flexibility. Both are made in specific designated regions.

16. B. Peruvian Pisco cannot be diluted after distillation; Chilean can be - The key regulatory difference is that Peruvian Pisco must be bottled at the proof it comes off the still (38-48% ABV), with no water addition permitted. Chilean Pisco may be diluted with water after distillation to reach desired bottling strength. This fundamental difference affects production philosophy and final character.
17. C. Pisco made from a single grape variety - "Pisco Puro" (pure Pisco) is made from a single grape variety, either aromatic or non-aromatic. Peru recognizes eight Pisco grape varieties: four aromatic (Italia, Moscatel, Torontel, Albilla) and four non-aromatic (Quebranta, Negra Criolla, Mollar, Uvina). Single-variety Piscos showcase the distinct character of each grape.
18. A. Egg white - The classic Pisco Sour includes Pisco, lime juice, simple syrup, egg white, and Angostura bitters. The egg white creates the cocktail's signature frothy texture and silky mouthfeel when shaken vigorously. The bitters are traditionally dotted on top of the foam. Both Peru and Chile claim the cocktail, though Lima's Morris Bar is often credited.
19. D. Italy - Grappa is an Italian pomace brandy with protected geographical indication status in the European Union. It must be produced in Italy (or Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland) from pomace of grapes grown and vinified in Italy. Grappa has transformed from a rustic peasant drink to a refined spirit, with premium producers creating elegant, aromatic expressions.
20. B. The leftover grape skins, seeds, and stems after winemaking - Pomace is the solid residue remaining after grapes are pressed for winemaking—the skins, seeds, stems, and pulp. Pomace brandies (grappa, marc, orujo, bagaceira) distill this material to extract residual alcohol and create distinctive spirits. Fresh pomace produces better results than dried or fermented pomace.
21. B. It is made from a single grape variety - "Grappa di monovitigno" (single-variety grappa) is made from the pomace of one grape variety, such as Moscato, Nebbiolo, or Prosecco. This allows the grape's distinctive character to shine through. Premium producers often specify the grape variety, vineyard, and vintage, elevating grappa to a terroir-driven spirit.
22. D. Grappa (pomace brandy) - Marc is the French equivalent of grappa—a pomace brandy made from grape pressing residue. Famous examples include Marc de Bourgogne and Marc de Champagne. Like grappa, marc ranges from rustic to refined. The name "marc" refers to both the pomace itself and the brandy distilled from it.
23. A. Normandy - Calvados is an apple brandy produced in the Normandy region of northwestern France. The AOC covers specific areas within Normandy, with Calvados Pays d'Auge being the most prestigious sub-region. Normandy's cool, wet climate is ideal for apple orchards, and the region has centuries of cider and brandy-making tradition.

24. C. Cider apples (and sometimes pears) - Calvados is made from cider apples—small, tannic, aromatic varieties quite different from eating apples. Over 200 apple varieties are approved, categorized as bitter, bittersweet, sweet, or acidic. Some Calvados appellations (like Domfrontais) also include pears. The apples are fermented into cider before distillation.
25. B. Double distillation in pot stills and specific terroir - Calvados Pays d'Auge is the most prestigious Calvados designation, requiring double distillation in pot stills (like Cognac) and production within the specific Pays d'Auge terroir. Other Calvados appellations may use single column distillation. Pays d'Auge Calvados is considered more refined and complex.
26. D. Applejack - Applejack is the traditional American apple brandy, with history dating to colonial times. Laird's, founded in 1698, is America's oldest licensed distillery and the most famous applejack producer. Modern applejack is typically blended apple brandy, while "bonded applejack" is straight apple brandy aged at least four years.
27. A. Freeze concentration ("jacking") - Traditional applejack was made by "jacking"—leaving hard cider outside in winter to partially freeze, then removing the ice to concentrate the alcohol. This dangerous method concentrated not just alcohol but also toxic congeners (methanol, fusel oils), leading to "apple palsy." Modern applejack is properly distilled rather than freeze-concentrated.
28. C. Water of life - "Eau-de-vie" literally translates from French as "water of life," the same meaning as "whiskey" (from Gaelic "uisce beatha"), "aquavit," and many other spirit names. The term typically refers to clear, unaged fruit brandies that capture the pure essence of the fruit. Eaux-de-vie are popular throughout Europe, especially in France, Germany, and Switzerland.
29. B. Cherries - Kirsch (or Kirschwasser, German for "cherry water") is a clear eau-de-vie made from fermented cherries, including the pits, which contribute subtle almond notes from their prussic acid content. Kirsch originated in the Black Forest region of Germany and Switzerland. It's used in cooking (cherries jubilee, fondue) and as a digestif.
30. D. Williams pears - Poire Williams is an eau-de-vie made from Williams pears (known as Bartlett pears in North America). The spirit captures the aromatic, floral character of ripe Williams pears. Some bottles famously contain a whole pear grown inside the bottle by placing bottles over young fruit on the tree. Poire Williams is particularly popular in Switzerland and Alsace.
31. A. Plums - Slivovitz (or šljivovica) is a plum brandy traditional to Eastern and Central Europe, particularly Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. Often double-distilled and sometimes aged in oak, slivovitz ranges from clear to golden. It holds cultural significance in Slavic countries and is often homemade for family celebrations.
32. C. They are typically unaged to preserve fruit character - Most fruit eaux-de-vie are bottled unaged (clear) to preserve the pure, fresh character of the fruit. Oak aging would add color and flavors that would mask the delicate fruit aromatics. This distinguishes eaux-de-vie from aged brandies like Cognac or Calvados. The goal is crystal-clear spirits that smell and taste of the fruit.

33. B. Raspberries - Framboise is an eau-de-vie made from raspberries. It takes enormous quantities of raspberries to produce a small amount of spirit, making it expensive. True framboise should smell intensely of fresh raspberries without sweetness. Note: "Framboise" can also refer to raspberry-flavored lambic beer in Belgian brewing.
34. D. The product of the first distillation (about 30% ABV) - The "brouillis" is the product of Cognac's first distillation, a cloudy liquid of approximately 28-32% ABV. The brouillis is then redistilled in the "bonne chauffe" (second distillation) to produce the final eau-de-vie at about 70% ABV. The brouillis is too low in alcohol and too harsh to age directly.
35. A. A desirable oxidative, nutty flavor that develops with extended aging - "Rancio" is a prized characteristic in very old brandies (and some wines), describing complex oxidative notes of walnuts, mushrooms, leather, and dried fruits. It develops after decades of aging through slow oxidation and esterification. Rancio indicates exceptional age and is sought after by connoisseurs of old Cognac and Armagnac.
36. C. Solera system - Brandy de Jerez (Spanish brandy from Jerez) must be aged using the traditional solera system, the same fractional blending method used for sherry. Young brandy enters the top tier (criaderas) and gradually moves down through the system, blending with progressively older brandy. This creates consistency while incorporating aged complexity.
37. B. The tiers of barrels above the solera containing younger brandy - In the solera system, the "criaderas" are the tiers of barrels stacked above the bottom-level "solera" barrels. Young brandy enters the top criadera and is periodically moved down through successive levels, blending with older brandy at each stage. The solera (floor level) contains the oldest blend, from which product is drawn for bottling.
38. D. A blend of brandy with wine and botanicals - Metaxa, created in 1888, is technically not a pure brandy but a Greek spirit combining aged grape brandy (distilled from Savatiano, Sultanina, and Black Corinth grapes) with Muscat wine from Samos and a secret recipe of Mediterranean botanicals. This unique blend creates Metaxa's smooth, aromatic, slightly sweet character.
39. A. The addition of Muscat wine and Mediterranean botanicals - Metaxa's distinctive character comes from blending aged brandy with Muscat wine from Samos and rose petals and other Mediterranean botanicals. This creates a smoother, more aromatic spirit than pure brandy. The Muscat adds floral, honeyed sweetness while the botanicals contribute complexity.
40. C. The cellar storing the oldest and most precious reserves - The "paradis" (paradise) in a Cognac house is the secure cellar area where the oldest and most valuable eaux-de-vie are stored, some dating back centuries. These precious reserves are used sparingly in top-tier blends. The term reflects the reverence Cognac houses have for their aged stocks—the "paradise" of the cellar master.

41. D. 3 years - Brandy de Jerez Solera Gran Reserva must be aged for a minimum of three years in the solera system. This is the top tier of Spanish brandy classification. Below it are Solera Reserva (minimum one year) and Solera (minimum six months). Gran Reserva brandies develop rich, complex characters from extended contact with seasoned sherry casks.
42. B. Cellar master responsible for blending and aging - The "maître de chai" (cellar master) is the person responsible for overseeing the aging and blending of Cognac. This role requires decades of experience and a refined palate to create consistent house styles from hundreds of different eaux-de-vie. The maître de chai is among the most prestigious positions in a Cognac house.
43. C. A blend of Grande and Petite Champagne, with at least 50% Grande - "Fine Champagne" is a Cognac designation indicating a blend of eaux-de-vie from Grande Champagne and Petite Champagne crus only, with at least 50% from Grande Champagne. This combines the elegance of Grande Champagne with the fruitiness of Petite Champagne. It's one step below Grande Champagne in prestige.
44. A. Volatile compounds separated at the start of distillation - The "tête" (head) contains the first vapors in distillation—highly volatile compounds including methanol, acetone, and aldehydes. These harsh, potentially dangerous compounds are separated and discarded (or redistilled). Only after the heads pass does the distiller begin collecting the desirable "coeur" (heart).
45. D. The sediment (dead yeast cells) from winemaking - Lees brandy is made from the sediment (primarily dead yeast cells, or "lies" in French) that settles at the bottom of wine vessels after fermentation. This fine sediment is distilled separately from pomace. Lees brandy has a distinctive creamy, yeasty character. Italian "grappa di vinaccia" sometimes includes lees.
46. B. A general term for distilled spirits, often grape or sugar cane based - "Aguardiente" (literally "burning water" or "fire water") is a general Spanish term for distilled spirits. It encompasses grape brandies, sugar cane spirits (in Colombia and other countries), and anise-flavored spirits. The term's meaning varies by country—in Colombia it's anise-flavored; in Spain and Peru, it often means grape brandy.
47. C. A regional grape brandy (e.g., Fine de Bourgogne) - In French brandy terminology, "Fine" indicates a regional grape brandy from a specific wine area, such as Fine de Bourgogne (Burgundy) or Fine de Bordeaux. These are controlled appellations for grape brandies produced in wine regions outside Cognac and Armagnac. They offer regional character at often lower prices.
48. A. It must be made in the Cognac region from specific grapes and follow strict production rules - "Cognac" is a protected appellation requiring: production in the delimited Cognac region; use of approved grape varieties (primarily Ugni Blanc); double distillation in copper pot stills by March 31st following harvest; and minimum two years aging in French oak. Strict regulations ensure quality and authenticity.

49. D. Between 38-48% ABV (bottling strength from the still) - Peruvian Pisco must be distilled to bottling strength (38-48% ABV) and cannot be diluted with water afterward. This "distilled to proof" requirement means the distiller must achieve the desired final strength through careful distillation technique. It's one of the strictest brandy regulations in the world and differentiates Peruvian from Chilean Pisco.
50. B. Heavier alcohols and compounds separated at the end of distillation - The "queue" (tail) or "feints" contains heavier alcohols, fusel oils, and other compounds that come over at the end of distillation. These can add harshness and unpleasant flavors if included. The tails are separated from the heart and may be redistilled with the next batch to recover usable alcohol.
51. C. A mix of apples and pears - Obstler (from German "Obst" meaning fruit) is a German/Austrian clear fruit brandy made from a combination of apples and pears. It's a popular digestif in alpine regions. Unlike single-fruit eaux-de-vie, obstler blends the characters of both fruits. Quality obstler showcases the orchard character of regional fruits.
52. A. It is from a single harvest year - A "vintage" Armagnac (or Cognac) is from a single harvest year, with the vintage date displayed on the bottle. Unlike blended expressions that combine multiple years for consistency, vintage Armagnacs showcase the character of a specific year. Vintage-dated spirits are particularly prized in Armagnac, which has a strong tradition of single-vintage releases.
53. D. Very old spirit, beyond standard age classifications - "Hors d'Age" (beyond age) indicates brandy older than the standard XO category—typically the oldest and most prestigious offering from a producer. For Cognac, it officially equals XO (10-year minimum), but in practice suggests exceptional age. For Armagnac, Hors d'Age indicates 10+ years aging.
54. B. 1 year in oak - Armagnac VS must be aged for a minimum of one year in oak, shorter than Cognac's two-year minimum for VS. This reflects Armagnac's traditionally younger release style, though many producers age far longer. Armagnac's single distillation produces a more robust spirit that can be enjoyable at younger ages.
55. C. A fortified wine made by blending grape must with Cognac - Pineau des Charentes is a regional fortified wine (vin de liqueur) made by blending fresh, unfermented grape must with Cognac. The Cognac stops fermentation, preserving natural grape sweetness. White, rosé, and red versions exist. Pineau is served chilled as an aperitif and is produced only in the Cognac region.
56. A. Limousin or Tronçais oak - Cognac is traditionally aged in barrels made from French oak, specifically Limousin (loose-grained, contributing tannin and structure) or Tronçais (tight-grained, more delicate and subtle) from central France. New barrels are used initially for strong extraction, then spirit moves to older barrels for gentle maturation. Oak selection significantly influences Cognac's character.

57. D. Evaporation loss during aging - The "angel's share" is the brandy (or whiskey) lost to evaporation through the barrel's pores during aging. In Cognac's humid climate, the angel's share averages about 2% per year. Over decades, significant volume is lost—the humid cellars of Cognac are blackened by the "Torula" fungus that feeds on evaporated alcohol vapors.
58. B. The premier cru region, producing the finest Armagnacs - Bas-Armagnac (Lower Armagnac) is considered the premier region, producing the most refined and elegant Armagnacs. Despite "bas" meaning "lower" (referring to geography, not quality), its sandy, acidic soils yield brandies with fruit-forward character and excellent aging potential. Many top single-estate Armagnacs come from Bas-Armagnac.
59. C. It is unaged or minimally aged, clear in color - Blanche Armagnac (white Armagnac) is unaged or aged very briefly (less than three months) in oak, resulting in a clear spirit. This style was officially recognized in 2005, allowing producers to showcase the pure character of their distillate without oak influence. Blanche is popular for cocktails and as a fresh alternative to aged expressions.
60. A. The middle cut, the desirable portion collected for aging - The "coeur" (heart) is the middle portion of distillation—after the heads (tête) and before the tails (queue). This is the cleanest, most desirable spirit, containing the best balance of flavor compounds without the harsh elements of heads or the heavy oils of tails. Only the heart is collected for aging into fine brandy.
61. A. 95% ABV (190 proof) in most regulations - Most regulations require brandy to be distilled at less than 95% ABV (190 proof) to retain fruit character. Higher distillation would strip too many congeners, producing neutral spirit. Cognac must be distilled at no more than 72% ABV; Armagnac typically comes off at 52-60% ABV. Lower distillation proof means more flavor retention.
62. C. Minimum aging of about 2-3 years - "Réserve" on Armagnac typically indicates aging beyond VS (1 year) but below VSOP (4 years)—roughly 2-3 years. It's not a strictly defined legal term in Armagnac (unlike VSOP or XO), so actual age may vary by producer. Réserve suggests a step up in complexity from entry-level expressions.
63. B. The process of stopping fermentation by adding Cognac to grape must - "Mutage" is the process of halting grape must fermentation by adding Cognac, creating Pineau des Charentes. The high-alcohol Cognac kills the yeast, stopping fermentation and preserving the must's natural grape sugars. This same technique (with different spirits) is used to make port, vin doux naturel, and other fortified wines.
64. D. Germany - Asbach is Germany's most famous brandy, produced since 1892 in Rudesheim am Rhein. Asbach Uralt (meaning "very old" or "original") is aged in Limousin oak and known for its smooth, accessible character. German brandy (Weinbrand) has a long tradition, though it's less internationally known than French brandies.

65. A. Grape brandy, similar to the Spanish aguardiente - "Aguardente" is the Portuguese term for grape brandy, cognate with Spanish "aguardiente." Aguardente is used to fortify port wine, stopping fermentation and preserving sweetness. Portuguese aguardente also includes bagaceira (pomace brandy, like grappa) and other regional styles. Aguardente de Vinho refers specifically to wine-based brandy.
66. C. Geographic origin and production standards - AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) or AOP (Appellation d'Origine Protégée, the EU equivalent) certification guarantees that a brandy comes from a specific geographic region and meets strict production standards. For Cognac, Armagnac, and Calvados, this includes grape/apple varieties, distillation methods, aging requirements, and geographic boundaries.
67. B. The feints/tails recycled into the next distillation - The "secondes" (seconds) are the feints or tails from Cognac distillation—the later portions separated from the heart. Rather than discarding them, the secondes are added to the next batch of wine or brouillis for redistillation, recovering their usable alcohol. This economical practice is standard in Cognac production.
68. D. Can be diluted with water after distillation to reach bottling strength - Chilean Pisco regulations allow water addition after distillation to adjust alcohol content to bottling strength (30-50% ABV). This contrasts with Peruvian Pisco, which must be bottled at distillation strength without water addition. Chilean Pisco can also be aged and may use additional grape varieties.
69. A. Minimum 6 years aging, between VSOP and XO - "Napoléon" (also "Napoléon" or "Très Vieille Réserve") indicates Cognac aged at least 6 years, filling the gap between VSOP (4 years) and XO (10 years). This designation predates the XO category's increase from 6 to 10 years in 2018. Napoléon Cognacs offer excellent value with complexity approaching XO.
70. C. The art of blending different eaux-de-vie to create the final product - "Assemblage" (blending) is the crucial art of combining different eaux-de-vie of various ages, crus, and characteristics to create a consistent house style. The maître de chai oversees assemblage, selecting from hundreds of barrels to achieve the desired flavor profile. Most Cognac (except single-vintage) is blended.
71. B. Small yellow plums - Mirabelle is an eau-de-vie made from mirabelle plums—small, sweet, golden-yellow plums. Mirabelle plum cultivation and distillation are particularly associated with Lorraine in northeastern France, which has AOC protection. The spirit has a delicate, honeyed, floral character distinct from darker plum brandies like slivovitz.
72. D. Bottled from one individual barrel - "Single cask" or "single barrel" brandy comes from one specific barrel, not blended with other barrels. Each barrel develops unique characteristics based on wood variations and warehouse position. Single cask releases are prized for their individuality. This is more common in Armagnac than Cognac, which emphasizes blending consistency.
73. A. The age of the eau-de-vie from April 1st following harvest - The "compte" (count) system tracks Cognac age starting from April 1st following the harvest. Compte 0 runs from distillation until

March 31st; Compte 1 begins April 1st. VS requires Compte 2 (2 years from April 1st), VSOP requires Compte 4, XO requires Compte 10. This standardized system ensures aging claims are accurate.

74. C. It is batch-distilled in pot stills rather than column stills - "Pot still brandy" specifically refers to brandy distilled in batch pot stills rather than continuous column stills. Pot still distillation produces more flavorful, characterful spirits by retaining more congeners. Cognac, Calvados Pays d'Auge, and South African pot still brandy all require this traditional method.
75. B. Delicate, violet-scented, rounded character - Borderies is Cognac's smallest cru, producing distinctively delicate, rounded eaux-de-vie with characteristic violet and iris floral notes. Borderies Cognacs mature relatively quickly and contribute softness and perfume to blends. Single-cru Borderies bottlings are sought after for their unique character.
76. D. 40% ABV - Most brandy regulations require a minimum bottling strength of 40% ABV (80 proof). This is standard across EU regulations for most spirits and ensures adequate flavor intensity. Some brandies are bottled at higher proofs (cask strength), particularly single-barrel releases. Peruvian Pisco's 38% ABV minimum is a notable exception.
77. A. Calvados - Lambig (or Lambic) is a traditional Breton apple/pear brandy similar to Calvados but produced in Brittany rather than Normandy. It's made from cider and follows similar production methods. Lambig lacks the AOC protection of Calvados but maintains traditional Breton character. Some Breton producers also make "Fine Bretagne."
78. C. A legal additive of oak extract to accelerate aging character - "Boisé" is an oak extract additive legally permitted in some brandies to accelerate wood character development or enhance color and flavor consistency. While allowed in certain categories and regions, its use is controversial among purists who prefer naturally aged spirits. Cognac regulations permit limited boisé use.
79. B. A combination of pot still and column still brandies, often blended - South African brandy production typically uses both pot stills and column stills, with the final product often blending both styles. South Africa has strict quality regulations and a strong brandy tradition dating to the 17th century. "Pot Still Brandy" designation requires 100% pot still distillation.
80. D. Extended oxidative aging in oak barrels - The "prune" or dried fruit note in aged Cognac develops naturally through extended oxidative aging in oak barrels—typically requiring 20+ years. It's not added but results from complex chemical reactions during maturation. This characteristic, along with rancio, indicates exceptional age and is prized in old Cognacs.
81. C. A Portuguese grape variety used in some brandies - Touriga Nacional is Portugal's premier red grape variety, famous for port wine and increasingly table wines. It's also used in some Portuguese brandies (aguardente), contributing rich, aromatic character. Touriga Nacional is characterized by deep color, intense aromatics, and firm structure.

82. A. Grape brandy (wine brandy) - "Weinbrand" is the German term for grape brandy (literally "wine-burn" or "wine-brand"). German Weinbrand has a protected designation requiring minimum aging. Famous German brands include Asbach and Chantré. The term distinguishes grape brandy from fruit brandies (Obstbrand) and pomace brandies (Tresterbrand).
83. D. The above-ground aging warehouse - The "chai" is the above-ground warehouse where Cognac (and other brandies) age in barrels. Unlike underground wine cellars, chais are at ground level and experience more temperature variation, which can influence aging. The chai's microclimate—humidity, temperature, and air quality—significantly affects the brandy's development.
84. B. Full-bodied character requiring longer aging - Ténarèze is the middle Armagnac region, producing full-bodied, robust brandies that require longer aging to reach their potential. The soil is heavier with more clay than Bas-Armagnac's sandy soils. Ténarèze Armagnacs are often blended with more delicate Bas-Armagnac spirits or aged extensively as single-region expressions.
85. C. An older reserve, typically indicating extended aging - "Vieille Réserve" (old reserve) on a brandy label indicates extended aging beyond standard categories. The term isn't always legally defined but suggests premium quality and considerable age. It may indicate aging similar to Hors d'Age or simply the producer's high-end offering.
86. A. Providing humidity that moderates evaporation and aging - The Charente River and its maritime influence create the humid climate that characterizes Cognac's aging environment. High humidity moderates evaporation (the angel's share), allowing Cognac to age gracefully over decades. The humid cellars support the *Torula* fungus that blackens buildings throughout the region.
87. D. An aperitif made by blending apple juice with Calvados - Pommeau (or Pommeau de Normandie) is an aperitif made by blending fresh, unfermented apple juice with Calvados, similar to how Pineau des Charentes combines grape must with Cognac. The Calvados stops fermentation, preserving natural apple sweetness. Pommeau is aged in oak and served chilled as an aperitif.
88. B. Must contain at least 30% pear - Calvados Domfrontais is an AOC requiring that at least 30% of the fruit used be pears (the remainder being apples). This distinguishes it from Calvados and Calvados Pays d'Auge, which are apple-only or apple-dominant. Domfrontais must be distilled in a column still (not pot still) and aged at least three years.
89. C. One of the six Cognac crus (growing regions) - Fine Bois is one of Cognac's six crus (growing regions), forming a ring around the four premier central crus. Fine Bois produces good-quality Cognac that matures relatively quickly, often used in VS and VSOP blends. The six crus in order of prestige are: Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies, Fins Bois, Bons Bois, and Bois Ordinaires.
90. A. Pomace brandy (equivalent to grappa or marc) - "Tresterbrand" is the German/Austrian term for pomace brandy—spirits distilled from grape pressing residue (trester). It's equivalent to Italian

grappa and French marc. Austrian and German Tresterbrand can be excellent, particularly from quality wine regions using single-variety pomace.

91. D. High humidity reduces alcohol evaporation; low humidity reduces water evaporation - Humidity dramatically affects brandy aging. In humid environments (like Cognac), water evaporates slower than alcohol, so strength decreases over time. In dry environments (like parts of Kentucky or Spain), water evaporates faster, so strength can increase. This affects both aging speed and final character.
92. B. Minimum 1 year in the solera system - Brandy de Jerez Solera Reserva requires minimum one year aging in the solera system. This is the middle category between Solera (6 months) and Solera Gran Reserva (3 years). The solera system ensures even Reserva-level brandies contain some component of older spirit blended in.
93. C. It was the dominant variety before phylloxera - Folle Blanche was Cognac's primary grape before phylloxera devastated the region in the late 1800s. It produced exceptional eaux-de-vie but proved difficult to graft onto phylloxera-resistant American rootstocks. The hardier, disease-resistant Ugni Blanc replaced it. Some producers still use small amounts of Folle Blanche for character.
94. A. Gradually adding distilled water to lower alcohol content to bottling strength - "Reducing" (réduction) is the process of gradually lowering brandy's alcohol content by adding distilled or demineralized water to reach bottling strength (typically 40% ABV). This is done slowly over months or years to integrate smoothly. Rapid reduction can cause harsh, disjointed flavors.
95. D. Brandy or distilled spirits (literally "water of life") - "Acquavite" is the Italian term for brandy or distilled spirits, literally meaning "water of life"—the same etymology as French eau-de-vie, Irish/Scottish uisce beatha (whiskey), and Scandinavian akvavit. In Italy, acquavite encompasses both grape brandy and fruit eaux-de-vie.
96. B. Is the second-ranked cru after Grande Champagne - Petite Champagne is Cognac's second most prestigious cru after Grande Champagne. Its chalky soil produces elegant, floral eaux-de-vie with excellent aging potential, slightly less refined than Grande Champagne. "Fine Champagne" Cognac combines both crus with at least 50% Grande Champagne.
97. C. A vintage year, indicating all spirit is from that single harvest - "Millésime" (vintage) on a Cognac or Armagnac label indicates that all the spirit comes from a single harvest year. Vintage-dated brandies showcase the character of a specific year rather than the consistency of blending. Millésime releases are particularly valued in Armagnac, which has a strong single-vintage tradition.
98. A. They are unaged in oak to preserve the pure fruit character - Fruit brandies (eaux-de-vie) are typically clear because they're bottled without oak aging. Wood aging would add color (golden to

amber) and flavors that would mask the delicate fruit aromatics. The goal is capturing the essence of the fresh fruit in a clear, pure spirit. Some fruit brandies are aged, but most are not.

99. D. Charente - The town of Cognac is located in the Charente department of southwestern France. The Cognac appellation covers parts of Charente and the neighboring Charente-Maritime department. The town, situated on the Charente River, has been the center of brandy production and trade for centuries, giving its name to the famous spirit.

100. B. Batch distillation in a pot still - "Alambic" refers to pot still distillation—the traditional batch distillation method using copper pot stills. The word derives from Arabic "al-anbiq." Alambic distillation is required for Cognac (alembic charentais), Calvados Pays d'Auge, and many other premium brandies. It produces more flavorful spirits than continuous column distillation.