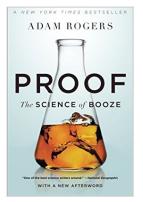
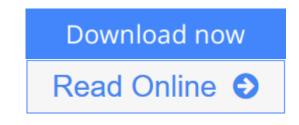
Proof: The Science of Booze



By Adam Rogers



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Named a Best Science Book of 2014 by Amazon, *Wired*, the *Guardian*, and NBC Winner of the 2014 Gourmand Award for Best Spirits Book in the United States Finalist for the 2015 PEN/E. O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award

"Lively . . . [Rogers's] descriptions of the science behind familiar drinks exert a seductive pull." — *New York Times*

Humans have been perfecting alcohol production for ten thousand years, but scientists are just starting to distill the chemical reactions behind the perfect buzz. In a spirited tour across continents and cultures, Adam Rogers takes us from bourbon country to the world's top gene-sequencing labs, introducing us to the bars, barflies, and evolving science at the heart of boozy technology. He chases the physics, biology, chemistry, and metallurgy that produce alcohol, and the psychology and neurobiology that make us want it. If you've ever wondered how your drink arrived in your glass, or what it will do to you, *Proof* makes an unparalleled drinking companion.

"Rogers's book has much the same effect as a good drink. You get a warm sensation, you want to engage with the wider world, and you feel smarter than you probably are. Above all, it makes you understand how deeply human it is to take a drink." — *Wall Street Journal*

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Editorial Review

Review

"Lively . . . [Rogers's] descriptions of the science behind familiar drinks exert a seductive pull." — *New York Times* "One of the best science writers around." — *National Geographic*

"Rogers's book has much the same effect as a good drink. You get a warm sensation, you want to engage with the wider world, and you feel smarter than you probably are. Above all, it makes you understand how deeply human it is to take a drink." — *Wall Street Journal*

"A great read for barflies and know-it-alls—or the grad student who is likely both." — *New York Times Magazine*

"In this brisk dive into the history and geekery of our favorite social lubricant, *Wired* editor Adam Rogers gets under the cap and between the molecules to show what makes our favorite firewaters so irresistible and hard to replicate—and how a good stiff drink often doubles as a miracle of human ingenuity." — *Mother Jones*

"A comprehensive, funny look at booze . . . Like the best of its subject matter *Proof* 's blend of disparate ingredients goes down smooth, and makes you feel like an expert on the topic." — *Discover*

"A romp through the world of alcohol." — New York Post

"This science-steeped tale of humanity's ten-thousand-year love affair with alcohol is an engaging trawl through fermentation, distillation, perception of taste and smell, and the biological responses of humans to booze . . . *Proof* is an entertaining, well researched piece of popular-science writing." — *Nature*

"A whiskey nerd's delight . . . Full of tasty asides and surprising science, this is entertaining even if you're the type who always drinks what the other guy is having." — *Chicago Tribune*

"Written in the same approachable yet science-savvy tone of other geeky tomes (think Amy Stewart's *The Drunken Botanist* and Brian Greene's *The Fabric of the Cosmos*), Rogers's book sheds light on everything from barrels to bacteria strains." — *Imbibe Magazine*

"This paean to booze is a thought-provoking scientific accompaniment to your next cup of good cheer." — *Scientist*

"Follow a single, microscopic yeast cell down a rabbit hole, and Alice, aka Adam, will take you on a fascinating romp through the Wonderland of ethyl alcohol, from Nature's own fermentation to today's best Scotch whiskies—and worst hangovers. This book is a delightful marriage of scholarship and fun." — Robert L. Wolke, author of *What Einstein Kept Under His Hat* and *What Einstein Told His Cook*

"*Proof*, this irresistible book from Adam Rogers, shines like the deep gold of good whiskey. By which I mean it's smart in its science, fascinating in its complicated and very human history, and entertaining on all counts. And that it will make that drink in your hand a lot more interesting than you expected." — Deborah

Blum, author of *The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York*

"Absolutely compelling. *Proof* sits next to Wayne Curtis's *And a Bottle of Rum* and Tom Standage's *A History of the World in Six Glasses* as a must-read." — Jeffrey Morgenthaler, bar manager at Clyde Common and author of *TheBar Book*

"*Proof* is science writing at its best—witty, elegant, and abrim with engrossing reporting that takes you to the frontiers of booze, and the people who craft it." — Clive Thompson, author of *Smarter Than You Think*

"Rogers distills history, archaeology, biology, sociology, and physics into something clear and powerful, like spirits themselves." — Jim Meehan, author of *The PDT Cocktail Book*

"A page-turner for science-thirsty geeks and drink connoisseurs alike, *Proof* is overflowing with fun facts and quirky details. I'm drunk—on knowledge!" — Jeff Potter, author of *Cooking for Geeks*

"Adam Rogers writes masterfully and gracefully about all the sciences that swirl around spirits, from the biology of a hangover to the paleontology of microbes that transform plant juices into alcohol. A book to be savored and revisited." — Carl Zimmer, author of *Parasite Rex* and *A Planet of Viruses*

"Reading *Proof* feels just like you're having a drink with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic friend. Rogers's deep affinity for getting to the bottom of his subject shines through on every page." — Adam Savage, TV host and producer of *MythBusters*

"As a distiller I find most books on booze to be diluted. The science and history here are sure to satisfy the geekiest of drinkers. While the chapters, carried by stories, told through the lens of a rocks glass do not lose the casual. To get this kind of in-depth overview of how spirits are produced, consumed, and studied, you'd have to read twenty books." — Vince Oleson, Head Distiller/Barrel Thief, Widow Jane Distillery

"An entertaining read . . . Rogers elegantly charges through what took me more than five years of research to learn . . . *Proof* will inspire and educate the oncoming hordes who intend to make their own booze and tear down the once solid regulatory walls of the reigning royal houses of liquor." — Dan Garrison, Garrison Brothers Distillery

"From the action of the yeast to the blear of the hangover, via the witchery of fermentation, distillation and aging, *Wired* articles editor Rogers takes readers on a splendid tour of the booze-making process." — *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"Impressively reported and entertaining . . . Rogers's cheeky and accessible writing style goes down smoothly, capturing the essence of this enigmatic, ancient social lubricant." — *Publishers Weekly*

From the Inside Flap

"Follow a single, microscopic yeast cell down a rabbit hole, and Alice, aka Adam, will take you on a fascinating romp through the Wonderland of ethyl alcohol, from Nature's own fermentation to today's best Scotch whiskies—and worst hangovers. This book is a delightful marriage of scholarship and fun." — **Robert Wolke, author of** *What Einstein Told His Cook*

Humans have been perfecting the science of alcohol production for ten thousand years, but modern scientists are only just beginning to distill the complex reactions behind the perfect buzz. In a spirited tour across

continents and cultures, Adam Rogers puts our alcoholic history under the microscope, from our ancestors' accidental discovery of fermented drinks to the cutting-edge laboratory research that proves why—or even if—people actually like the stuff.

From fermentation to distillation to aging, *Proof* offers a unique glimpse inside the barrels, stills, tanks, and casks that produce iconic drinks. Rogers ventures from the whisky-making mecca of the Scottish Highlands to the most sophisticated gene-sequencing labs in the world—and to more than one bar—introducing us to the motley characters and evolving science behind the latest developments in boozy technology. He uncovers alcohol's deepest mysteries, chasing the physics, molecular biology, organic chemistry, and even metallurgy that power alcohol production, and the subtle mixture of psychology and neurobiology that fuels our taste for those products.

With intoxicating enthusiasm, Rogers reveals alcohol as a miracle of science. If you've ever wondered exactly how your drink of choice arrived in your glass, or exactly what will happen to you once you empty it, *Proof* makes an unparalleled drinking companion.

From the Back Cover

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Adam Rogers is the articles editor at *Wired*, where his feature story "The Angels' Share" won the 2011 AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Award. Before *Wired*, he was a Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT and a writer covering science and technology for *Newsweek*. He lives in Berkeley, California.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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