

# Magically delicious

## Drinking Guinness among rules to make St. Patrick's Day delightful



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Celebrating one's heritage is a wonderful thing. Unless, of course, you happen to be of the same lineage as myself.

Let's see, in reality I'm equal parts Austrian, Czech, Norwegian and cocker spaniel - oops - I meant Swedish. When compared to the rest of the cultures of the world, these are probably the four lamest to hail from, except the Vikings who come from Norway.

Austria is famous for sausage and the Vienna Boy's Choir, a Freudian country if there ever was one.

Czechoslovakia? What the hell kind of heritage is that? The only culture gained from this country is that I know the word for butt, because my grandma always threatened to kick my little dupa. Don't even get me started on the name itself. I wasted half an hour trying to figure out how to spell the darn thing.

Then there's the goofiest country

of all - Sweden. Perhaps the strangest Swedish ritual is the Midsummer's Eve (not to be confused with the feminine hygiene product). The Midsummer's Eve just overflows with excitement. The women pick flowers, and the men erect a giant fertility pole. Once erected, the men and women merrily dance around it eating raw fish and drinking spiced moonshine. Now do you see why Sweden is home to ABBA and Ace of Base?

It's these ludicrous traditions that make me envy other cultures.

The aura of May Day is still intriguing. Four days later, Cinco de Mayo has me sipping a Corona and munching on nachos. But the ethnic-type holiday that reigns supreme comes from the land o' Lucky Charms.

It's the magically delicious holiday known as St. Patrick's Day, the only holiday where the Supreme Court takes the day off. Justice O'Connor, with a lot of help from Justice Kennedy, rounds up Justices Rehnquist, Stevens, Scalia, Souter, Thomas, Ginsburg and Breyer and parties like it's on sale for \$19.99 (check it out, Dr. Combs: I know all nine justices).

Next week you, yes you, are allowed to become Irish (Italians need not apply) for one day only. With St. Patty's Day a mere seven days away, I've compiled as much of a comprehensive guide that a person who is Irish for only one day a year can put together.

First, here's a quick background on the land and the holiday so you

won't look foolish if a true Irishman questions your Irish heritage.

St. Patrick's Day stems from St. Patrick, the man, the myth, the legend. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, wasn't actually Irish. He was thought to be born in Britain, but nobody knows for sure. Legend has it he was stolen from his dad's farm in Britain by pirates and kept as a slave for six years as a shepherd in Ulster, Ireland.

After escaping back to Britain, St. Patrick devoted his life to God. He was a deeply religious man and dreamed of returning to Ireland to bring Christianity to the Irish savages. As the saying goes, when in doubt, convert 'em. As a monk, he is said to have established more than 300 churches and baptized more than 120,000 people. To this day his most remarkable achievement is when he drove all the snakes out of Ireland into the sea.

As a nation, Ireland is a figurative red-headed stepchild. Going to war is a staple of Irish tradition. They've won a few but lost many, many more. The brunt of their torment came from merry old England. Rich, thuggish landlords seized control in the 18th century and passed a series of laws that oppressed the peasant population.

During the middle 19th century, as things began to look better - pow, the great potato famine struck the green island. The sick thing is, most of the food actually produced was just shipped to England. In just a few years, and more than a million dead later, an entire generation

immigrated to America, and the displaced leprechauns began to celebrate the holiday in the states.

You think this is why they're called the "Fighting Irish"?

Anyhoo, about the holiday, if you don't harbor any joy for sado-masochism, wear green or you'll get pinched a lot.

Step two: If you have the means, don't celebrate here. Go to Boston (unless you're gay) or Chicago, home of the largest population of citizens of Irish descent. The Windy City gets so happy about St. Patrick that the backward-flowing Chicago River is dyed green. In years past, the late Harry Caray's liver juices were squeezed into the river for the dye, so this year should be interesting.

Step three: Get good and drunk. Don't even think of putting green coloring in Fludweiser or some other American swill. It's an Irish holiday so drink the finest beverage the island offers - Guinness. It isn't beer, it's a separate food group. It's as black as death, made by who knows what and as thick as Amy Rager. It will work you over worse than what the University of Nebraska-Lincoln forensics team does to their competition.

The coolest part is that drinking Guinness makes you stronger. At first taste, Guinness might be a little gross, but after a couple pints your taste buds will be so warped you'll never taste anything again.

The best place for a Guinness is O'Rourke's Tavern, which opens every day at 10:30 a.m. If you're

feeling adventurous, go to the Dubliner in Omaha's Old Market. I don't know the exact address, but it's on the same street as the 7-Eleven with six different Slurpee flavors. Just look for the big green Blarney stone. A word of caution: Rumor has it that members of the Irish Republican Army hang out there, so be careful.

The IRA brings step four: Senseless violence. Once you're good and loaded on Guinness, get really angry and threaten anyone who invades your personal space. If the Husker soccer team is practicing, round up some mates to go watch and start a good old-fashioned soccer riot. Just remember the gentlemen's conduct rule and watch out for the team during the fight; they're a lot tougher than you'd think.

If you really want to go all out, make some car bombs. I don't know how to make them, but I've seen the damage they inflict, and they're better than anything for sale in Missouri. Just remember, I didn't tell you to do it.

Step five: As the night winds down, join hands with your chaps, sing a final drinking song ("House of Pain" will do) and, as a Guinness-induced hallucination sets in, chase imaginary snakes around until you pass out.

(QUICK ELECTION UPDATE: Vote tomorrow. I'd prefer it was for me, but I'd really like to see everyone out voting. I promise to rule with an iron fist and bring sun-shiny days and lollipops to UNL.)

# Rome, if you want to

## Overseas travel opens eyes to a whole new world of experience



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I never really understood the world until I left the country.

I mean, I thought I knew all about it, but until I actually left the country, I really knew very little about the world. Sure, you know it's out there and you know it's different, but you don't really understand that until you've seen what it's like.

I was 17 when I left the country to see the world. I took a school trip with my Latin Class. We went overseas to Rome, Athens and Turkey.

It was the first time I had been out of the country that I could remember. I recall from the start taking passport photos, filling out paperwork and walking past a team of government officials who were cheering as they saw my name on the passport application. Heck, the U.S. government had wanted to deport me for years anyway, so this was a great opportunity falling in their lap.

As I sat in JFK Airport, I wrote a few words that were to ever haunt me: "And so begins my first adventure - let it not be the last."

Overseas is nothing like you can imagine, if you haven't been. The first place we went to was Rome, and Rome, well, I don't think I would have left unless I absolutely had to. We touched down in Rome,

and I could tell it was different just by the airport.

Sure, there weren't people trying to sell me hot dogs every 6 feet like there had been in JFK, but there was more to it than that. Rome felt like home. I had been up nearly 28 hours by the time we were really settled into the town, but my eyes were open with a sense of wonder not seen since.

The sky was a color of blue I thought existed only in storybooks, the buildings so old yet so strong. At about 2:30 in the morning, one of the guys I was rooming with joined me in deciding we wanted a soft drink. You'd have thought it an easy quest, but the hostel we were staying at had no vending machine.

"That's kind of primitive," my colleague said to me.

It's all a matter of perspective, I suppose. See, we were really thirsty (and you're told exhaustively not to drink the water - it turns people into newts, so we were told) and so we were going to get us a drink even if it killed us.

So we went for a walk. At 2:30 a.m. On the streets of Rome. Without an escort. Two guys, neither of us older than 17. Suicidal, right?

What I'm going to tell you might just change the way you see things.

Not only were we not attacked, not mugged, not drugged and had our kidneys stolen (wait, that's Mardi Gras), not kidnapped and sold into slavery, we were actually helped to find where we were going by a couple of people who didn't speak English.

At 2:30 in the morning, a couple of people on the streets stopped to help some foreigners find a damn can of pop!

If I wanted a pop in New York at 2:30 in the morning, you certainly wouldn't catch me venturing onto the city streets for one. In Rome, I never felt safer. It was almost alien

to me that I felt safe.

I love big cities, but I'm paranoid by nature. There's too much out there that can hurt you, too many things that want to harm you for their own reasons. I never felt paranoid in Rome.

I want to go back more than I can tell you. I stood on top of the Oracle in Delphi, Greece. I walked around the Pantheon in Rome and the Parthenon in Greece. I looked up and saw the Sistene Chapel.

Perhaps, during those times, I opened my eyes to everything. I don't think I saw as clearly before as I did after. Maybe I had a third eye open for the first time in my life. It did change my life.

I could spend page after page telling you all about my experiences, piece by piece, day by day, until I had covered all 15 days in glorious detail, but even if I talked for longer than the time I was actually there, I couldn't capture the experience of being overseas.

Most of the people I know who have been overseas feel the same way. It's something that really makes you look at our own country very differently. It's like your eyes have been open for years, but you've never really looked. Our country's like a stereogram, and foreign countries are like those two dots at the top they tell you to detune your eyes with. Everything comes into focus.

It made me grow up as a person, made me change into a new me. I went from a cynical 17-year-old to a 17-year-old who was ready to really take a long look at the world around him and was prepared to accept what he saw.

I can't give you this revelation, though; it's one you have to make for yourself. I can't tell you where it lies, because it's different for everyone else, but I found my answers on the streets of Rome.

If you go out and take a look at the world yourself, you

might just gain insight. There's a whole world out there, and we're only one country.



AMY MARTIN/DN