

Guinness.

Ah Guinness! We have lots of it in our house at the moment. My brother loves it. I'm not unfamiliar with it either. Back in London, I used to drink it mixed with 7Up. I found it too bitter to drink neat. If you've never tried it, you should. It is a black, thick, creamy alcoholic drink that is served by the pint. It has a rich, cream colored head of bubbles that is one of its main features. The head is produced by the use of nitrogen when the beer is poured. It's actually considered a dry stout. A stout isn't a regular, cold beer. It is a strong, dark beer that is made from roasted barley. 'Stout' as you might know, is another word for strong, or proud. Guinness, in particular, is known for its slight burnt taste, or what we call its 'bite'. You might have noticed that I spelled burnt b-u-r-n-t. This word isn't used in the U.S. They use the past participle 'burned'. Anyway, Guinness is produced in Dublin, Ireland, but is sold all over the world to stout-lovers. It is actually quite nutritious as well. My ex-stepfather's mother drinks half a pint of Guinness every night to get her daily dose of iron. That was recommended to her by her doctor. So there! When I was researching Guinness, I came across a very interesting fact about it. One of its ingredients is the collagen from fishes' swim bladders. Yuck! Apparently, it helps to clarify the beer, and is also used in some wines. I'll think of that the next time I have a glass....Mind you, it's not as bad as some drinks. There is a famous cider from the south of England called Scrumpy. Traditionally, when it is being made, or so they say, a *sheeps head* is thrown into the mix. The fermentation process kills anything harmful, and, I suppose, the quite scary ingredient adds a special flavor. I don't know who the genius was who came up with that idea, or what inspired him to do it. It's not the usual thing to do when you are making up a drink. If I'm making a punch for a special occasion, it doesn't occur to me to throw in an animal's head. But, there you go; maybe I'm not a *natural* drinks mixer.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: neat, stout, collagen, to occur to someone.

1. I cannot drink neat alcohol. I have to have it mixed with something else.
2. That farmer is really stout. He is big, and strong, and impressive in stature.
3. They say that collagen is the protein that keeps skin smooth.
4. I turned on the vacuum cleaner, but it never occurred to me to plug it in!

