

## **How to prepare an oak barrel for use**

Prior to filling a barrel with whiskey, wine or other distillates, the barrel should be swelled with clean water to seal itself. There are two methods to seal a barrel:

### **Soaking barrel with cold water**

Rinse the barrel out with clean and cool water 3-4 times to get any wood debris out. Insert a spigot (tap) on the front of the barrel and tighten by hand properly to secure it. Then lightly knock the front of the spigot with a hammer to firmly fix it.

Fill the barrel 1/3 full with cool and clean water and let it stand for 3-4 hours. Then you fill it to 2/3 full and let it stand for another 3-4 hours. Finally, fill it to the top and keep it full of water until the barrel stops leaking and seals itself. Normally it takes from 1 to 5 days to seal a barrel. It depends on how much a barrel is dried up.

When the leakage stops, drain water out of bunghole, rinse it once again and let the barrel stand for an hour then fill it with wine, whiskey or other distillates.

Do not drain the barrel through the tap itself to avoid clogging the tap.

### **Soaking barrel with hot water**

#### **Step 1**

Rinse the barrel out with clean and cool water 3-4 times to get any wood debris out.

#### **Step 2**

Insert a spigot on the front of the barrel and tighten by hand properly to secure it. Then lightly hit it the front of the spigot with a hammer to firmly fix it. Place the barrel on its stand and fill it with 25% of its volume (i.e.: 2,5 liters for a 10 liter barrel) with clean hot water (steaming hot) through the bunghole. Insert the bung in the bung hole, tighten it by hand and rotate barrel on its stand carefully from one side to another to slosh barrel interior surface. Keep sloshing until the barrel is sealed and there is no more leakage.

Put the barrel vertically to soak the head area (tap hole area), do the same with the area opposite of the head.

Pull the bung out, turn the barrel bung-side down, drain it out and let it cool. Do not drain the barrels through the tap itself to avoid clogging the tap.

Please, be careful with hot water and protect yourself from possible skin scalding during sloshing of the barrel. There is a slight chance that the bung and tap can be pressed out with hot steam, which could lead to scalding if you are not prepared and protected.

#### **Step 3**

To make sure that the barrel is not seeping and ready to use, fill it to the top with clean and cool water and leave it for hours. If leakages are not detected, the barrel is ready to use. If the barrel is

still seeping, let it soak adding water to keep the barrel full of water until the seeping stops. The soak period might be from 1 to 5 days. It depends on how much the barrel is dried up. When the leakage stops, drain water out of bunghole rinse it once again and let the barrel stand for an hour then fill it with wine, whiskey or other distillates.

Don't allow the same water to be in the barrel more than two days. You should drain the barrel and fill it with clean water every two days to prevent mold developing and penetrating the wood.

### **Storage of oak barrels with distillates**

1. Store barrels in a place with approximately 70-80% of humidity. Ideally a quiet place with minimal draft and an ambient temperature of 13-15 C.
2. Store it in low light conditions, and avoid direct contact with sunlight.