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# A PERSONAL TALE OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY

## My Irish Heritage

Growing up, St. Patrick's Day was a day to celebrate a connection to our family's heritage. My grandparents emigrated from Ireland in the 1930s, and they made sure my four brothers and I understood the traditions and culture of the Emerald Isle.

As soon as we could walk, my father would take us to the NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade. We carried flags and banners and proudly marched in the parade with Division 35 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). My brothers and I had lots of fun, including missing school whenever the parade landed on a weekday. Still, they are treasured memories with my brothers and our dad.

The AOH in America was founded in 1836 with the motto, "Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity." The AOH sponsors many programs associated with Irish heritage and provides educational opportunities in Irish culture. I was personally lucky enough to get a scholarship to attend a five-week summer program in Ireland when I was in high school through the Irish Cultural Institute's Irish Way Program. I still keep in touch with friends I met so many years ago.

As a father, I've continued the tradition and take my kids to the Staten Island St. Patrick's Day parade every year. It is typically held around noon the Sunday prior and marches down Forest Avenue. My children and I don't march in the parade, but we immerse ourselves in the spirit and fellowship of the event. We enjoyed being part of a community that extends far beyond the parade route.

In reflecting on my Irish heritage and preparing this article, I wondered where the phrase "luck of the Irish" came from. I was surprised to discover that it originated during the Gold Rush era in the United States.

Initially, the term was a subtle, passive jab at the Irish. When Irish individuals struck gold, others referred to their success as simply being "lucky." The implication was that their success was due to chance, not skill or intelligence. Thankfully, this connotation has significantly transformed over the years.



Today, the phrase "luck of the Irish" is mostly a marketing slogan without the pejorative connotation. Some people say that luck is the intersection of when opportunity meets preparedness. We can achieve great things with the right preparation and the ability to seize opportunities.

Today's connotation of "luck of the Irish" more aptly mirrors the journey of many Irish immigrants who made significant contributions to American society. Irish Americans have made a difference in safe working conditions and have fought for children's rights and equality.

Reflecting on my own Irish upbringing and traditions, I realize how these experiences have shaped my perspective. Success is a mix of preparedness, opportunity, and a connection to our community and roots. Our upbringing becomes an integral part of who we are as adults and the values we act on in our personal and business lives. I wanted to share my upbringing with you to show how much I value community and family.

Sláinte,

*-Brian O'Connor*





# WHEN MINORS ARE ALLOWED TO IMBIBE

## HOW SOMEONE UNDER 21 CAN LEGALLY CONSUME ALCOHOL

When it comes to drinking age requirements, the U.S. is strict for a Western country. The National Minimum Drinking Age Act was enacted in 1984, which raised the minimum age for alcohol consumption from 18 to 21. It also set a precedent for the age requirement for other substances. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned tobacco purchase for anyone under 21, and recreational cannabis is similarly age-restricted.

While the law dictates that people under 21 can't consume alcohol, that's not the whole story. There are many exemptions nationwide, with every state having unique age requirement laws. Even counties can have special restrictions. American Indian reservations have independent sovereignty, so they don't follow American laws at all.

### Religious Ceremonies and Services

Currently, 26 states allow for religious exemptions for underage alcohol consumption. Alcohol is commonly used in many religious services; for example, Christian communion often involves a sip of wine. These legal loopholes are why priests aren't arrested every Sunday. States that don't have laws for religious exemptions never generally enforce the alcohol requirement on religious organizations, so they are practically legal.

### Medicinal Purposes

People use alcohol for more than just recreation: it's often used for medicinal purposes, too. For example, cough syrup uses it to break down ingredients. It is thus legal for medicinal purposes in 16 states, including Wyoming and Utah. Isopropyl and rubbing alcohol are distinct from the ethyl alcohol used in spirits, so they aren't regulated similarly.

### Drinking for Education

Alcohol is a culinary mainstay for many cultures, and many dishes include alcohol as an essential component — tiramisu, coq au vin, and flambé, to name a few. For minors interested in pursuing a culinary career, preventing them from accessing alcohol can be detrimental to their education. So, many states allow students enrolled in the culinary arts — including brewing, enology (the study of wines), and hospitality — to consume alcohol for educational purposes. For example, in Florida, students can drink as much as they want as long they're on campus and have specific curriculums.

### Undercover Imbibing

Minors can work for law enforcement. If they're going undercover to expose illegal activities, there's a good chance they'll be offered

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alcohol or put into situations where drinking is advisable. In Hawaii and Michigan, undercover agents are allowed to purchase or consume alcohol so long as it pertains to their assignment.

### With Family

Some parents prefer that their children drink at home for various reasons. A few argue it discourages drunk driving and other risky behavior. Others just like to share a beverage with their children at dinner. Regardless of the reasons, several states allow underage drinking in the presence of a family member or guardian.

The details of this exception vary widely. For example, some stipulate that a family member must provide the alcohol, like in New Mexico. Many states restrict alcohol to home use only, such as in Nebraska. Texas and other states allow the exemption in any location, such as restaurants.

Drinking is distinct from possession, in case things weren't complicated enough. In 19 states, minors can possess alcohol with parental consent. Other states, like Utah, prohibit alcohol possession at all times.

### Other Complexities

The law is always nuanced, but few are as complex as the tangled web of alcohol restrictions. States like Pennsylvania restrict the drinking age and require sellers to fulfill strict requirements, like only selling beer and wine under 5.7% alcohol. Meanwhile, Louisianians sell daiquiris from drive-thrus (so long as they don't have straws).

The bottom line is that the U.S. has so much variety because it allows the states to set their own guidelines, and the differing cultures within states and counties affect their drinking laws.



# TAKE A *BREAK*



## Chipotle-Inspired Chicken Burrito Bowl

Inspired by [EasyChickenRecipes.com](http://EasyChickenRecipes.com)

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp chili pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 cup white or brown rice, cooked
- 2 cups shredded romaine lettuce
- 1 cup canned corn
- 1 cup canned black beans
- 1 avocado, cubed
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese

#### For Salsa

- 1 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 1/2 tomato, chopped
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp white vinegar
- 4 tbsp lime juice
- Salt, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. Cut chicken into bite-size pieces. In a medium-size bowl, add chicken, olive oil, paprika, cumin, chili pepper, salt, and pepper. Mix until chicken is evenly coated.
2. In a skillet over medium heat, cook chicken for 7 minutes or until cooked through. Set aside on a plate.
3. In a large bowl, layer the rice, lettuce, corn, beans, and cooked chicken.
4. In a separate bowl, mix together salsa ingredients, then pour over the chicken mixture.
5. Top with avocado, sour cream, and cheddar cheese. Enjoy!

# BIGFOOT IS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES!?

## A WASHINGTON COUNTY'S UNIQUE HUNTING BAN

Most people don't consider the legality of Bigfoot hunting, but in Washington state, it's part of the law. In Skamania County, it's illegal to kill the mythological ape. Should someone murder the creature, they'd face a stiff penalty.

Bigfoot — sometimes called Sasquatch — is an elusive ape-like cryptid said to roam the forests of North America. It allegedly has reddish-brown fur, a gorilla-like body, and its namesake big feet. Some claim Bigfoot is the "missing link" between walking apes and our ancestors, who walked on all fours. Most scientists dispute the claim, saying that any ancestor this old likely would've adapted or gone extinct.

Bigfoot was first spotted in California in 1958, and most sightings since occur in Washington state. Per every 100,000 people, 9.12 sightings are in the Evergreen State. That's a third more often than its neighbor Oregon, the runner-up at 6.06. If there were a Bigfoot capital of the world, it'd be in Washington.

On April 1, 1969, the Skamania County legislature enacted Ordinance 1969-01, the first law prohibiting the killing of Bigfoot. Anyone convicted of murdering the cryptid would be classified as a felon and imprisoned for five years. While modified decades later, it set an important precedent: Bigfoot is a protected species.

Tourism picked up shortly after that. Bigfoot mania officially hit the U.S. in the 1970s as directors released films like "Sasquatch, the Legend of Bigfoot." New Bigfoot enthusiasts started to visit Washington in droves, hoping to be the first to find proof of its existence. While locals appreciated the influx of cash from tourism, they didn't appreciate the influx of guns from Bigfoot hunters.

County legislatures enacted a new ordinance in 1984. It further clarified the regulations on Bigfoot and designated the ape as an endangered species. As such, hunting Bigfoot with the intent to kill is illegal. However, the ordinance softened the penalty for hunting Bigfoot, lowering the penalty for poachers to a year in prison or a fine of up to \$1,000.

Every law has some logic; no matter how frivolous it may seem, there's a reason why lawmakers went through the trouble. While this law may seem unnecessary, it protects "Bigfoot" and the Skamania County citizens alike.





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The Marketing Campaign That Cost Red Bull  
Over \$6 Million

## RED BULL DOESN'T GIVE YOU WINGS MARKETING CAMPAIGN DISPROVED IN COURT

For decades, Red Bull has run the marketing campaign that its energy drink gives people wings. Most assume it's a joke, an exaggeration of the beverage's stimulating effects.

The courts disagreed. A group of Red Bull drinkers in 2014 filed a class action lawsuit against the Austrian company, accusing them of false advertising. Despite the company's claims, they alleged that the drink does not give you wings.

To be more specific, the suit alleged that the ad campaign uses flying imagery to convey that the beverage is better than other caffeinated drinks. While the brand's messaging claims it improves response times and concentration, the suit alleges the beverage isn't much more effective than a cup of coffee.

Red Bull settled for over \$6 million. They also agreed to compensate customers who were disappointed about the drink's wingless results. Such claimants could receive \$10 or

a voucher for \$15 of Red Bull products. But before you go writing a letter to Red Bull for your voucher, know that customers are no longer eligible for this compensation.

In Red Bull's words, they settled to "avoid the cost and distraction of litigation," noting that their ad campaigns and can labels "have always been truthful and accurate." Red Bull denied any wrongdoing.

What Red Bull did was tread the line between false advertising and "puffery," the legal term for extravagant claims about a product. The law allows for some lofty claims — such as "World's Best Coffee" — so long as they are opinions. "Red Bull gives you wings" sounds like a factual statement, so it doesn't fall under puffery.

The energy drink company has continued using the slogan in its marketing in event sponsorship and TV ads. So, while Red Bull may not *actually* give you wings, it did pay out a lot of money in a court settlement over the claim.

