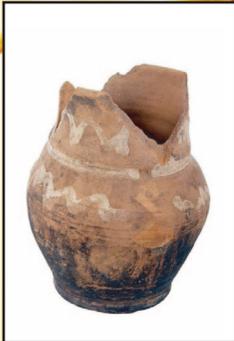


10,000 BC



Prehistoric

It is impossible to be precise, but the origin of fermented beverages probably dates back to the origin of man himself. The consumption of purposely fermented alcohol has been shown to date as far back as Stone Age times. We know this from the discovery of late Stone Age beer jugs, circa 10,000 BC.

43 - 410 AD



Roman

The Romans favorite alcohol was wine. Beer, although available, was considered 'vulgar' and for those who could not afford the finer things. Wine was usually mixed with water before consumption as the fermentation process was uncontrolled and produced extremely potent wines with a high alcohol content.

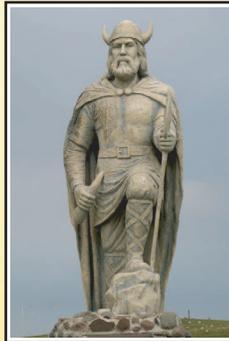
450 – 799 AD



Anglo Saxon

The Anglo Saxons drank Mead, a strong alcoholic drink made with honey, water and yeast and flavoured with wild meadow plants like 'meadowsweet'. They also drank beer, brewed with barley, water and yeast. They may also have flavoured it with wild hops.

793 – 1055 AD



Viking

The following is a translation of the great Viking King Ooinn: "Less good they say for the sons of men is the drinking of ale. For the more they drink, the less they can think and keep watch over their wits". So you see, alcohol awareness is almost as ancient as the substance itself.

There is a fascinating history related to the preparation and drinking of alcoholic beverages dating back to the very beginnings of man himself. Archaeological finds and ancient texts have been found and studied from all over the world, in cultures as diverse as The Indus Valley (Modern day India) and pre Columbian native American civilizations like the Inca.

Alcoholic drinks were produced from any available local source of foodstuffs such as rice, wheat and other grains, sugar cane, grapes, bananas and other fruits, indeed almost anything with a natural sugar content.

Different cultures had different attitudes towards alcohol, but there are common themes running throughout many cultures. Alcoholic beverages were considered to be a food, medicines, religious offerings, even a "gift from the gods". Most alcoholic drinks were produced in the home, for daily consumption and were in most cases considered to be a necessity. Workers were often paid in part of full, in beer. In many cultures there was a thriving export industry revolving around alcoholic beverages.

Whilst it seems that habitual drunkenness was rare in ancient cultures there is evidence of binge drinking connected to religious and social rituals. In some cultures active controls were placed on the production of alcohol in an attempt to limit the social damage caused by excessive drinking, however it was also believed that the lower classes would cease to work if alcoholic drink was withdrawn from them, it was considered to be "beyond the power of the most powerful sages to obtain total abstinence". Although some religions like that of the Indian Jainist and Buddhists promoted Abstinence in their teachings.

So, considered as a food, a medicine, a right of man, a gift from the gods, alcohol began to be made and consumed by man from the very beginnings of history and continued through every historic period right up to the present day. The big difference between now and all those thousands of years ago is modern man's ability to produce food on a massive scale, his ability to manufacture those food stuffs in enormous quantities with relative ease, his power and creativity at marketing the resulting product to a population that is very much larger and in most cases richer than ever before. So any problems that alcohol previously was associated with are now magnified on a massive scale.