

THE ART OF POURING VODKA

UEvery culture seems to have its own nuances that require a native's touch to be perfected. For instance, did you know that in Ireland there are six steps to pouring a proper pint of Guinness? [Hint: it takes 119.53 seconds.] In Italy, you can get a Masters certificate for learning the craft of pouring a proper glass of wine. Or in Canada, you could easily offend a Whiskey drinker by adding too much water (even one ice cube) or not enough. [Ideally it's one small splash of soft still spring water]. These things seem natural for a local, who can be easily offended when an outsider 'sins' when performing the art form. In Ukraine, there is an art to pouring vodka.



For visitors to Ukraine, here is a quick twelve-step guide to pouring vodka. [Here's a freebie – make sure the bottle is cold.]

1. If you pour, you're in for more. That's right, if you pour the first shot you will be pouring the rest of the night, regardless of how many bottles or how many locations are visited.
2. To make it right, make sure it's light. Yes, you are responsible for ensuring that nobody has a hangover the next day. Be sure to pour with a "light hand". And good luck with that.
3. If you spill, you might get killed. Well, probably not. But if you want to keep your friends, don't make a habit out of it.
4. One hand to pour or you're out the door. This adds a degree of difficulty to all of the following rules.
5. If it's in the air, stay in your chair. Never. I repeat never pour a shot into a glass being held in the air. This may be the cardinal sin for outsiders.
6. Leave it in its place; you find some space. This is where the real 'art' comes from. I've had easier times navigating Lviv's outrageous traffic than trying to manoeuvre a bottle through mazes of dishes, glasses and bottles. Remember Point #3.
7. You may be banned, if you use your backhand. So to recap, the glass must be on the table, it shouldn't be moved, you pour one-handed and you mustn't spill. Oh yeah, for the artistic score, you can't pour backhanded either.

8. If it's in the glass, it shouldn't last. So you've mastered the fine art of the pour and you think you've got it covered. Not at all! Now it's time to work on your timing. Begin by ensuring that vodka in the glass doesn't last. You don't want it to breathe now, do you?
9. Unless agreed, the same for you and me. So you're near the bottom of the bottle. Be sure that everyone gets the same amount. If there are 12 drops left and four of you drinking, you do the math. But you wouldn't be an artist if you left 12 drops left after your last pour...
10. Don't be a fraud, keep the shots odd. And this one's important. Even-numbered shots are for funerals.
 - a. You'll look like a dweeb if you pour less than three. Unless you're at a funeral. Than two is acceptable.
11. It goes on the floor, when there's no more. No empty bottles on the table. You don't want to remind the guests just how light your hand is, do you?
12. No one can run, until it's all done. Make sure everyone finishes their shots before they leave. If you've perfected the art of the light hand, this one should be easy.

You'll notice the finest artists of the craft. They're the ones that always pour at all of your big events. So until you're there, schaslyvo miy druh (best of luck my friend) i nazdrovya (cheers)!