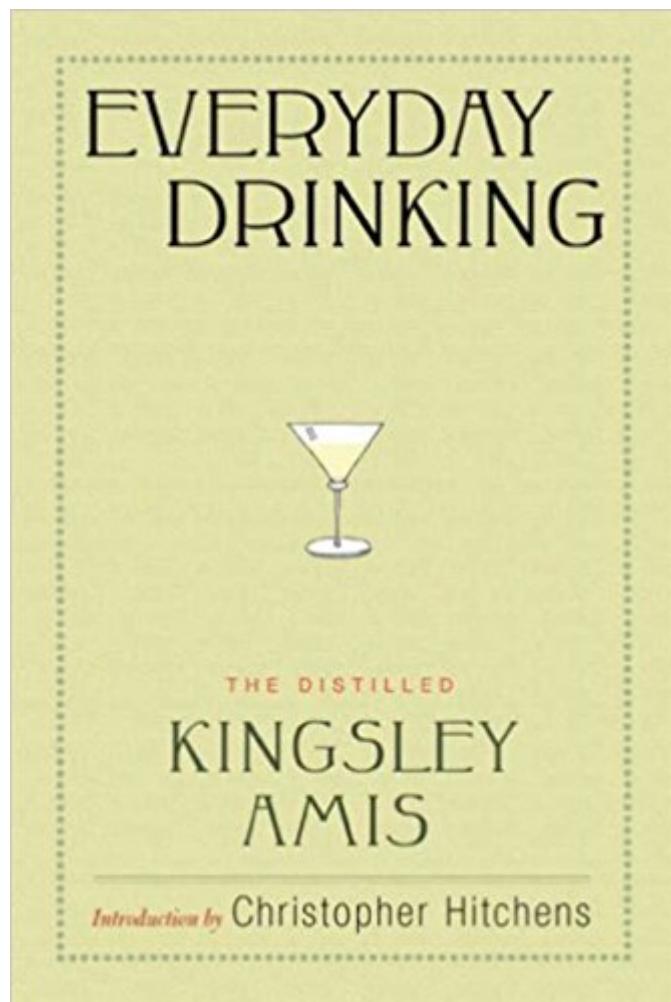


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Everyday Drinking: The Distilled Kingsley Amis



Synopsis

Kingsley Amis was one of the great masters of comic prose, and no subject was dearer to him than the art and practice of imbibing. This new volume brings together the best of his three out-of-print works on the subject: Kingsley Amis on Drink, Everyday Drinking, and How's Your Glass? In one handsome package, the book covers a full shelf of the master's riotous and erudite thoughts on the drinking arts: Along with a series of well-tested recipes (including a cocktail called the Lucky Jim) are Amis's musings on The Hangover, The Boozing Man's Diet, The Mean Sod's Guide, and (presumably as a matter of speculation) How Not to Get Drunk-all leavened with fun quizzes on the making and drinking of alcohol all over the world. Mixing practical know-how and hilarious opinionation, this is a delightful cocktail of wry humor and distilled knowledge, served by one of our great gimlet wits.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're interested in reading about the drinking life, where better to start than with a collection of writings on drink by Kingsley Amis, introduced by Christopher Hitchens? Though it weighs in at a mere 3.2 ounces, "Everyday Drinking" offers up enough drinking experience to float an aircraft carrier. The book comprises three Amis titles. "On Drink" (1972) is a kind of informal treatise on drinking. "Every Day Drinking" (1983) is a collection of columns. "How's Your Glass?" (1984) is a set of drinking quizzes. Though Amis provides a good bit of technical information and asks readers to produce no end of less-than-necessary information in the quizzes (he asks us to name a liqueur

made with naartjies, for example), the main pleasures of "Everyday Drinking" are to be found in Amis's description of the drinking *life* and in his sublimely crotchety sense of humor. Some people will object that Amis's repeated grousing about music in pubs is quaint, reactionary, and ridiculous. Such people are entitled to their opinions, of course, just as the rest of us are entitled to point out that such people are either drug-addled hipsters or ill-bred morons. For those of you out there who are neither drug-addled hipsters nor ill-bred morons, here are a few choice sips of Amis:^{*} On the necessity of having a refrigerator to oneself: "Wives and such are constantly filling up any refrigerator they have a claim on, even its ice compartment, with irrelevant rubbish like food.

In a strange sort of way, Kingsley Amis does for drink what Anthony Bourdain does for food: with enormous humor and joy in life, both authors just say "go for it." It is probably no coincidence that they both loathe vegetarians, especially vegans. I am not particularly sure that Amis is utterly scientific on the topic of drink (who is?), but he is utterly funny. And, for my two cents, he is funniest when he returns (again and again) to "The Wine Problem." As he mutters in his curmudgeonly way, there is no actual problem with wine itself: the problem is with inviting guests for dinner, who all arrive expecting wine AS A MATTER OF COURSE. If you don't serve them wine (even "plonk," British English for "rotgut"), you instantly lose social status. And Amis offers other examples: having dinner at an Indian restaurant featuring fiery curries, or at a Thai restaurant -- is this really the time to play the Wine-Snob Card? Or would you enjoy your dinner much much more if it were accompanied by beer? (M.F.K. Fisher would be nodding her head from *A Better World*.) My own sainted mother once worked her own way around "The Wine Problem," when she realized that one of her guests (A Wine Snob) would drink only red wines -- and, thirty minutes before dinner -- she had only white wines. Well, she put red food-coloring into the white wine, and the great Wine Snob praised his delicious drink! Just as perceptive: Amis divides the world into those who prefer cocktails, and those who prefer wine. He places himself emphatically in the first group, although he freely admits to chugging that da**ed wine from time to time ("particularly when dinner looks to be a long way off, and there is nothing else available.

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