



## desperate times

OUR FOREFATHERS LIKED A TIPPLE AS MUCH AS WE DO. HERE ARE THEIR HISTORIC HANGOVER CURES.

WORDS NICOLE THOMAS

**SWALLOWS' BEAKS: ANCIENT ASSYRIA** What better way for a fearsome civilisation to celebrate the devastation of their latest foe than chucking down a few bevies? Unfortunately for them there's nothing like a hangover to make that sword hand a little shaky. Their solution? Imbibe an unholy mix of ground-up swallows' beaks and myrrh, get back on that horse and unleash those homicidal tendencies.

**CABBAGE WATER: ANCIENT EGYPT** Cabbages were the Berocca of Ancient Egypt. The pyramid builders' favourite pre-drinking preventative against throbbing heads, churning stomachs and pasty mouths was a double hit of cabbage and vinegar. On the morning after, they'd slug down boiled cabbage juice to get their hydration levels back up, too. Maybe epic bouts of gas were preferable to feeling seedy.

**DEEP FRIED CANARY: ANCIENT ROME** Philosopher, author, naturalist and naval commander Pliny the Elder had many notches on his belt, but we're not sure hangover cures should be one of them. Instead of hair of the dog, Pliny recommended feather of the canary. And innards of the canary. And everything else of the canary. Deep fried. Romans did eat some nasty stuff, though, so maybe this was just a regular breakfast.

**SHEEP'S EYEBALLS: MONGOLIA, 13TH CENTURY** All that oppression, war and bloodshed can take its toll on a warlord. Pop a hangover on top and you have a ticking time bomb of genocidal proportions. So to cure the bane of the booze, Genghis Khan was said to chow down on pickled sheep's eyeballs in brine. Modern Mongolians apparently chug something similar in tomato juice when they've had a few too many.

**EEL AND BITTER ALMONDS: ENGLAND, MIDDLE AGES** Sure, medieval folk were an earnest lot with a penchant for bubonic plague and burning people at the stake, but they certainly weren't short of booze. Ale, mead, wine, mulled wine – you name it, they ingested it. The next morning they looked to dried eel and bitter almond paste to heal their mortal aches and pains. Prayer was probably attempted, too.

**SEX: ENGLAND, 17TH CENTURY** John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester – poet and potty-mouthed courtier – had a rep for smashing it up in Charles II's Restoration Court. Little wonder, then, that he had his own hangover cure. The earl's favourite recovery technique was apparently sweating it out between the sheets. The fact that he died at 33 from venereal disease does bring up some questions as to the practicality of this claim.

**RABBIT POO TEA: AMERICA, 19TH CENTURY** Think of the Wild West and images abound of spur-booted cowboys kicking drunken reprobates out of swinging saloon doors while the smashed sheriff sighs at the lawlessness of it all. What you don't think of is rabbit poo tea as a means to cure the inevitable whisky hangover. Cowboys were even more hardcore than we thought. More desperate, too.

**SOOT AND MILK: ENGLAND, 19TH CENTURY** After a night in the pub singing "Chim Chim Cher-ee" and downing their body weight in gin, Victorian chimney sweeps would guzzle warm milk mixed with a few drops of soot. It was meant to calm their raging bellies, which were feeling the post-booze burn and churn. Guess there's nothing like a carcinogen to take the edge off that pesky hangover. ❁