

# Peat – the fossil fuel



## Peat:

For many centuries, people living near marshes have been using peat as heating material. For the Scots of the Highlands and the Islands, a „turf bank“ was like a real bank as it constituted an important part of a clan's wealth. Peat is a product of herbal decomposition and is primarily formed in damp, swampy regions with a lot of rainfall.

Naturally, peat from deep layers has another consistence than new peat from upper layers. A peat cutter has to know about the herbal composition because many distilleries use peat of a particular mixture. “Highland Park” for example prefers a composition of all three layers, which are rich in heather and small roots.

The geographical position also has its influence on the consistence of the peat. For instance, peat from the Scottish Highlands (as Speyside peat) shows a higher proportion of broad-leafed plants giving it a rather compact texture.

So the dried peat is the traditional heating material of the Islands and the Highlands. Therefore, when producing malt, the peat was nothing more than cheap fuel to stop the germinating process at first. However, the early distillers quickly discovered that the peat smoke emits aromas to the malt, which can be very well tasted in the final product.