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Great Northern Distillery halted whiskey production after gas prices doubled

The Irish producer cut jobs after suspending operations through December, with the pause possibly lasting until February

Sunday, November 15, 2026



Great Northern Distillery said on Sunday, November 15, that it has halted whiskey production and cut jobs after gas prices doubled, a sign of how sharply energy costs are hitting large distilling operations in Ireland.

The distillery, based in Dundalk, said the production stoppage is expected to last through November and December. Chairman John Teeling said the pause could extend until February if energy prices do not ease, according to the Irish Independent.

The decision affects one of the larger players in Irish whiskey production at a time when distillers are still dealing with high input costs. Distilling is energy intensive, particularly at the stage where grain is processed and spirit is produced, and a steep rise in gas prices can quickly alter the economics of running stills. In this case, the increase was severe enough for Great Northern to stop production rather than continue operating at a higher cost base.

Teeling said he remained confident about the distillery’s output once operations resume. He told the newspaper that Great Northern expects to distill between four million and six million liters in 2027 after the current shutdown ends.

The company did not publicly detail how many jobs were cut, but the reduction in staff alongside the production halt points to the pressure that energy costs are putting on the business. The move also highlights a wider risk for the drinks industry, especially for whiskey brands that rely on third-party distillers for supply. If elevated energy prices force contract producers to slow or suspend production, some brands could face tighter availability, higher costs or delays in building inventory.

That pressure matters beyond Irish whiskey alone. Breweries, wineries and spirits producers across Europe have faced rising costs for fuel, glass, packaging and transport in recent years, but distilling is especially exposed to swings in energy prices because of its heavy reliance on heat during production. A prolonged period of expensive gas can weigh on output decisions, hiring and expansion plans even when consumer demand remains intact.

Great Northern’s pause suggests that cost volatility is now shaping production schedules in a direct way. For smaller whiskey brands without their own stills, any disruption at a major independent producer can have effects that stretch well beyond one site in Dundalk, particularly in a category where aged stocks must be planned years in advance.