

A Pint Sized Guide to Beer

BY TUCKER MULCAHY

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A Brief History of Beer

THE BEGINNINGS

Beer brewing and drinking are activities that have been part of the human experience seemingly since the dawn of civilization. No one is exactly sure how the process of beer making was discovered or who first discovered it, but it is thought that some bread or grain got wet, fermenting into an inebriating pile of mush thanks to yeast in the air. One has to wonder at the thought process of the person tasting the result for the first time. What we do know is that the oldest written documentation pertaining to beer making can be traced back at least six thousand years, to the ancient civilization of Sumeria.

Back then, the beer wasn't well filtered, giving it a cloudy appearance due to the residue it contained. To try to avoid the horribly bitter solids, Sumerians would drink their beer through a straw. The ghastly bitterness did nothing to stem the popularity of beer. The Egyptians carried on the beer brewing tradition, altering the taste with the addition of dates. The Greeks and Romans also made beer, but as wine grew in popularity the Romans began to consider beer the drink of Barbarians, eventually beer was only commonly seen on the very edges of the Roman Empire.

MEANWHILE IN GERMANY

Beer is known to have been brewed by certain Germanic groups as early as 800 B.C., and the ancient historian Tacitus reported that to drink, the Teutons have a horrible brew fermented from barley or wheat, a brew which has only a very far removed similarity to wine.

Much later, the Catholic Church also got involved in beer making, and the abbeys were instrumental in refining the methods used for brewing. In time, many religious communities owed their very existence to beer, as the profits from its sale kept many a monastery. Beer was not only prized for its ability to intoxicate, which was a small comfort not to be underestimated considering the tough times your average person in medieval Europe would encounter. During the Middle Ages, and even beyond, drinking beer was a much safer proposition than drinking water. The water supply of the time was rife with disease-causing bacteria thanks to extremely poor sanitation. As a result, beer was consumed by people of all ages and classes, and along with bread, was a staple of most people's daily diets for centuries, much like the Egyptian people had done.

BIRTH OF TRULY MODERN BEER

Germany decided to introduce hops (as early as the 9th century in some areas, slowly spreading from there over the next few centuries), brewers came up with a set of standards for German beer and began commonly mass-brewing it. These mass production methods and guidelines quickly spread throughout Europe.

When you're not making your own beer anymore, you might question what's in the beer. As a result of this, German brewers came up with the Beer Purity Law, or the Reinheitsgebot, which was devised in 1516. The law also indicated that all German beer must consist of only a few base ingredients: water, hops, malted barley and malted wheat, along with yeast, which to this day remains a law in the U.S.

The 1800's brought significant advancement in the art of beer brewing, including Louis Pasteur's discovery of yeast's role in the fermentation process, and the invention of pasteurization. The advent of automatic bottling, commercial refrigeration and the rise of the railroads made mass production and distribution possible across huge, sparsely populated areas like the United States. By 1880, there were an estimated 3,200 breweries in operation across the United States, many of which employed German immigrants to help with their recipes.

THE RISE AND FALL OF PROHIBITION

Then came very dark days for American beer drinkers, and all who enjoyed alcohol in any form. As a response to rampant alcohol abuse that was blamed for most of the problems in the U.S. (sometimes fairly, often not), the 18th Amendment ushered in the era of Prohibition.

Prohibition involving beer came to an end in 1933, but not before such atrocious acts as the U.S. government intentionally poisoning certain alcohol supplies that they knew people would drink- killing at least 10,000 American citizens. By 1935, a mere five decades after the U.S. had boasted over three thousand breweries, only about 160 breweries were still in operation.

During World War II, breweries brewed a lighter beer, which was supposedly more appealing to the Rosie the Riveters than the heartier beers favored by the men off fighting the war. After the war, both kinds of beer remained popular, and the surviving breweries were quick to exploit this new market.

Today's beer drinker is most undoubtedly spoiled for choice, with almost limitless options when it comes to what kind of beer they prefer, micro breweries are popping up more than ever and are pushing the envelope to bring consumers better beers to enjoy.

The Basics

A photograph showing a series of large, shiny copper brewing kettles (vats) lined up in a brewery. The kettles have a distinctive bell-shaped profile and are mounted on green cylindrical supports. They are connected by a network of copper pipes. The background features a curved wall with several arched windows, through which bright light is streaming into the dimly lit room. The floor is made of red brick.

SOME TERMS TO KNOW

SRM - Standard Reference Method is used to rank and determine the color of beer. The lower the number the lighter the beer, the scale starts at 2 and goes up to 40, it's important to note that color doesn't always have a direct correlation to flavor.

IBU - International Bittering Units is a way to rank how bitter a beer is, with higher values having a more bitter taste to them, top beers tend to be IPA's. The scale goes from 0-120, this rating is only a guideline for consumers since the detectable bitterness will be determined by how much or the type of malts used as well.

ABV - Alcohol by Volume, it is a measurement of the amount of alcohol a beverage has, this is measured in a percentage of the liquid. The higher the percentage the more alcohol the beverage has, beer normally hovers between 4%-13% but can get as high as 25%, higher than most wines.

TASTING BEER

APPEARANCE - Take pause and marvel at its greatness before you partake of it. Raise the beer in front of you, but don't hold your beer to direct light as this will dilute its true color. Describe its color, its head and its consistency.

SMELL - 90-95% of what you experience is through your sense of smell. Breathe thru your nose with two quick sniffs, then with your mouth open, then thru your mouth only (nose and mouth are connected in the experience). Let olfaction guide you. Agitate if need be, and ensure that you are in an area that has no overpowering aromas. Enjoy its bouquet.

TASTE - Now sip the beer. Resist swallowing immediately. Let it wander and explore your entire palate. Let your taste buds speak, and breathe out during the process of tasting. This process of exhaling is called "retro-olfaction" and will release retained stimulations at the mucus and mouthfeel level, but at a higher temperature. At times this will be the same as the olfactory process if not different and complimentary.

Try to detect any sweetness, salty flavors, acids and general bitterness. Explain what they are, or what they are similar to. Also, try tasting the beer after it warms a bit (just a bit mind you). Really cold beer tends to mask some of the flavors. As a beer warms, its true flavors will pull through, become more pronounced.

MOUTHFEEL - Note the consistency of the liquid's body, how thick does it feel, how much carbonation is there, and how does it leave your mouth feeling after you've swallowed the beer? This may seem easy but take a few sips to really decide on each of these properties.



THE GLASSES

Beers grew from many different cultures and location from around the world, and with each culture and style came a type of glass that these styles were associated with. Keeping in mind that there are many more different styles of glasses, this book will cover the eight most common glass types and what beers are traditionally served in

each. Glasses do not just serve as a visual or cultural statement, each glass type has a specific benefit to it. It should also be noted that within each beer style there is a wide array of sub-categories and styles, some of which we touch on the major differences, therefore there are multiple glasses that are associated with the overall style.



AMERICAN
PINT GLASS



IMPERIAL
PINT GLASS



OVER-SIZED
WINE GLASS



PILSNER
GLASS

The workhorse of the American bars, used mainly for its thick walls and durability. This glass is iconic but not always ideal. This glass hold 16oz.

Imperial pint glass has a wide mouth that tapers down to a smaller base. The small surface area where you hold it helps keep the beer cooler for longer and holds 20oz.

Its size allows for headspace, while the open bowl creates an amazing nose. A lot of smart beer bars are now serving their Belgian Ales in these. It holds 22oz.

Typically a tall, slender and tapered, a 12-ounce glass that captures the sparkling effervesces and colors of a Pils while maintaining its head.



NONIC
PINT GLASS



SEIDEL
GLASS

Nonic glasses are 20oz, the bulge towards the top of the glass gives your hand a firm grip while you are drinking. This design also keeps the glasses from sticking to each other when they are stacked.

Heavy, sturdy, large and with handle. Seidel is a German mug, while a Stein is the stone equivalent that traditionally features a lid, the use of which dates back to the Black Plague to prevent flies from dropping in.



TULIP
GLASS

A tulip glass not only helps trap the aroma, but also aids in maintaining large heads, creating a visual and olfactory sensation. The body is bulbous, but the top flares out to form a lip.



WEIZEN
GLASS

These classy glasses, with their thin walls and length, showcase the beer's color and allows for much headspace to contain the fluffy, sexy heads association with the style.

Light Beers

Light beers normally have more adjuncts than the traditional barley, the most popular adjuncts in this category are rice and corn. These lighter beers also normally are quite clear which is mostly due to an ingredient known as Irish Moss which helps in the clarity of the beer, as well as less dry hopping.





“He was a wise man who invented beer.”

-Plato



American Lager

originated in the United States

SRM 2–4

IBU 8–15

ABV 4.2–5.3%

5 Lagers to try

1 *1811 Pre-Prohibition Lager*

2 *Batch 19*

3 *Narragansett Lager*

4 *Lakemaid Beer*

5 *Throwback Lager*

Food Pairing

Bring these brews beyond the tailgate: They make for light, refreshing snacks alongside fresh melon, grapes, shortbread cookies and berry sorbets. They double as heavy-duty refreshers for spicy pulled-pork sandwiches, Thai dishes and enchiladas.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Clear golden color, with a small white head that dissipates quickly leaving very fine to no lacing on the edge of the glass.

SMELL: Little to no aroma typically sweet, slight maltiness in some cases, with little to no bitter or floral scents.

TASTE: Light and faint sweetness, if rice was used it would be tough to notice them, however corn notes should be easier to pick up on, malt flavors accompany the sweetness, certain brews may express hops more than others.

MOUTHFEEL: Crisp, highly carbonated, flavors linger for a minute but nothing lasting. Light mouthfeel, almost a water like consistency ending with a dry finish.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

These light bodied, pale, fizzy lagers were made popular by the large macro-breweries (large breweries) of America after prohibition. During World War II since most men were off to war the breweries tried to adapt to the new market and make lighter beer and things never changed back. This new lighter style was based off the German style lager that many immigrants brewed here in the states. Say what you will about these so-called bland lawn-mower beers, but there's no denying this style's role in the brewing industry—it's the biggest-selling beer style in the world. Intended to appeal to and refresh the masses. Corn or rice adjuncts sub in for a



healthy portion of the grain bill, but these lagers are the lowest-calorie beers crafted. Very balanced and highly carbonated, this style's thirst-quenching qualities have made this U.S. style indisputably iconic.

ADJUNCT GRAINS

Despite rice being mainly a food product it has recently found a new niche to fill. Anheuser-Busch is the largest single buyer of rice in the United States. Budweiser beer is brewed with rice making up a large portion of the grist. Many large breweries use it as a low cost way of producing beer. The pale coloration of rice also helps to keep the color of the end product very pale as well. Rice is currently the second most widely used adjunct material in the U.S. in the production of light-colored lager beers. Rice has almost no taste of its own, which is regarded as a positive characteristic since the rice will not interfere with the basic malt character of the beer. It promotes dry, crisp, and snappy flavors.

MICRO'S ADAPTATION

However recently micro breweries have been trying to take this style that is typically not seen as a flavorful beer and work their magic on it. Victory brewing known for beers like Golden Monkey (a Belgian style ale) as well as Hop Devil (a hoppy floral IPA) have taken a crack at it with their Throwback lager, and they aren't alone. Most of these newer American lager's are using corn rather than rice in their brews, or a lesser amount of these adjuncts to get more flavor from the malted barley rather than the filler materials. The adaptations by micro brewers of this normally overlooked style is a welcome change to many, bringing new options to those who consistently indulge in this style of brew.

STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Cloudy to hazy with a beige-gold color and a thick white head and white lace around the edges of the glass.

SMELL: Citrus zest and coriander dominate the aroma, however a soft malty and yeast smell is normally detectable.

TASTE: Characteristically spicy typically the traditional Belgian clover. Citrus from either lemon or orange zest and coriander, with an earthy taste coming from the yeast.

MOUTHFEEL: Crisp, with a good amount of carbonation, smooth with a light to medium-light body to it, finishing dry.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Hoegaarden's Pierre Celis recently revived this 400-year-old Belgian style that nearly went extinct in the mid-20th century. Despite their medium, creamy bodies, witbiers finish dry and a tad tart. ABV's can reach 5.5 percent, but witbiers' high carbonation makes for an incredibly refreshing drink.

Witbier style ales tend to be very pale and cloudy in appearance due to it being unfiltered and the high level of wheat. This is one style that many brewers in the US have taken a liking to and have done a very good job of staying true to the style. Sometimes served with a lemon, but if you truly want to enjoy the untainted subtleties of this style you'll ask



for yours without one. Often referred to as "white beers" (witbieren) due to the cloudiness / yeast in suspension.

The reason wheat makes Witbiers hazy/semi-opaque is due to yeast and protein that is suspended within, this is enhanced when the beer is colder. The yeast provides further fermentation while in the bottle.

NEW INGREDIENTS

Witbiers get their name from the inclusion of wheat in the brewing process which provides a cloudiness based on the unfiltered nature of this style. The wheat takes the place of a portion of the malts, most of the time hovering around 50% wheat and 50% barley malt.

Though like many other beers this is not the only ingredient that sets this style apart from the rest. Many witbiers use coriander to help give the beer a hint of citrus and spice to it, sometimes this is used in combination with orange peels or zest, known as Curaçao, to really pump up the citrus notes.

Brewers have also started to experiment with some less traditional spices to the style and can range from chamomile, cumin, cinnamon to grains of paradise.

TASTING NOTE



When tasting Witbiers some bars or restaurants will serve them with an orange slice, this is a nice idea, however this can detract from the actual flavors of the beer and make it more difficult to assess the brew.

Witbier

originated in the Belgium

SRM 2–4

IBU 10–20

ABV 4.5–5.5%

5 Witbiers to try

- 1 *Allagash White*
- 2 *St. Bernardus Witbier*
- 3 *Whiteout Wit*
- 4 *Positive Contact*
- 5 *Calabaza Blanca*

Food Pairing

Witbiers pair superbly with scallops and mussels; they adopt the beer's light spice nuances well. For dessert, match a witbier with orange sorbet or crepes Suzette, and notice how the beer's effervescence and coriander hints breathe new life into the sweet citrus tastes.

Glassware



Pilsner

originated in Czechoslovakia

SRM 3–6

IBU 25–40

ABV 4.5–6%

5 Pilsners to try

- 1** *Reality Czech*
- 2** *Pro-Am Pilsner*
- 3** *Danish Dream*
- 4** *Live Oak Pilz*
- 5** *Edel-Pils*

Food Pairing

Match these with whatever sausage is in your fridge; the pilsner's effervescence will wash down the meat's fattiness, while the hops perk up those heavy flavors.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Clear with a straw yellow color, with a small white fluffy head that settles quickly leaving little to no lacing.

SMELL: Slightly sweet from the malts, quickly followed by a floral/pine aroma from the light hops used. Some may also have a hint of funk.

TASTE: Typically start by showcasing the malts and some sweetness with a distinct grain flavor, almost bread-like. As one drinks more a slight spice from the hops and sometimes citrus flavors become more noticeable.

MOUTHFEEL: Light bodied, with average carbonation, crisp and smooth finishing with a dryness, making them very easy to drink.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

The birth of Pilsner beer can be traced back to its namesake, the ancient city of Plzen (or Pilsen) which is situated in the western half of the Czech Republic in what was once Czechoslovakia and previously part of the Bohemian Kingdom. The original Pilsner, born in 1842 Czechoslovakia, features Moravian malt and Saaz hops in a brew that's distinctively crisp. Floral, spicy hop scents stream from a brilliantly clear, pale-gold liquid topped by a persistent white head. Complex Saaz hops dominate the medium-bodied swallow. Pilsner beer was brewed by citizens, brewers and maltsters of Plzen who formed a brewer's guild and called it the People's Brewery of Pilsen.

CZECH PILSNERS

The Czech Pilsner, or sometimes known as the Bohemian Pilsner, is light straw to golden color and crystal clear. Hops are very prevalent usually with a spicy bitterness and or a spicy floral flavor and aroma, notably one of the defining characteristics of the Saaz hop. Smooth and crisp with a clean malty palate, many are grassy. Some of the originals will show some archaic yeast characteristics similar to very mild buttery or fusel (rose like alcohol) flavors and aromas.

AMERICAN PILSNERS

American grains put a yankee spin on the classic pilsner. Here, American malted barley plus corn or rice adjuncts replaces the traditional Pilsner malt, producing a sweet, grainy aroma and a moderate malt flavor. Hops, usually noble, bring the style back into pilsner territory; hop scents should dominate the aroma as well as the flavor. Very clear and mild to deep gold, these beers offer creamy mouthfeels and the highest ABVs of the pilsner bunch—some reach 6% ABV.

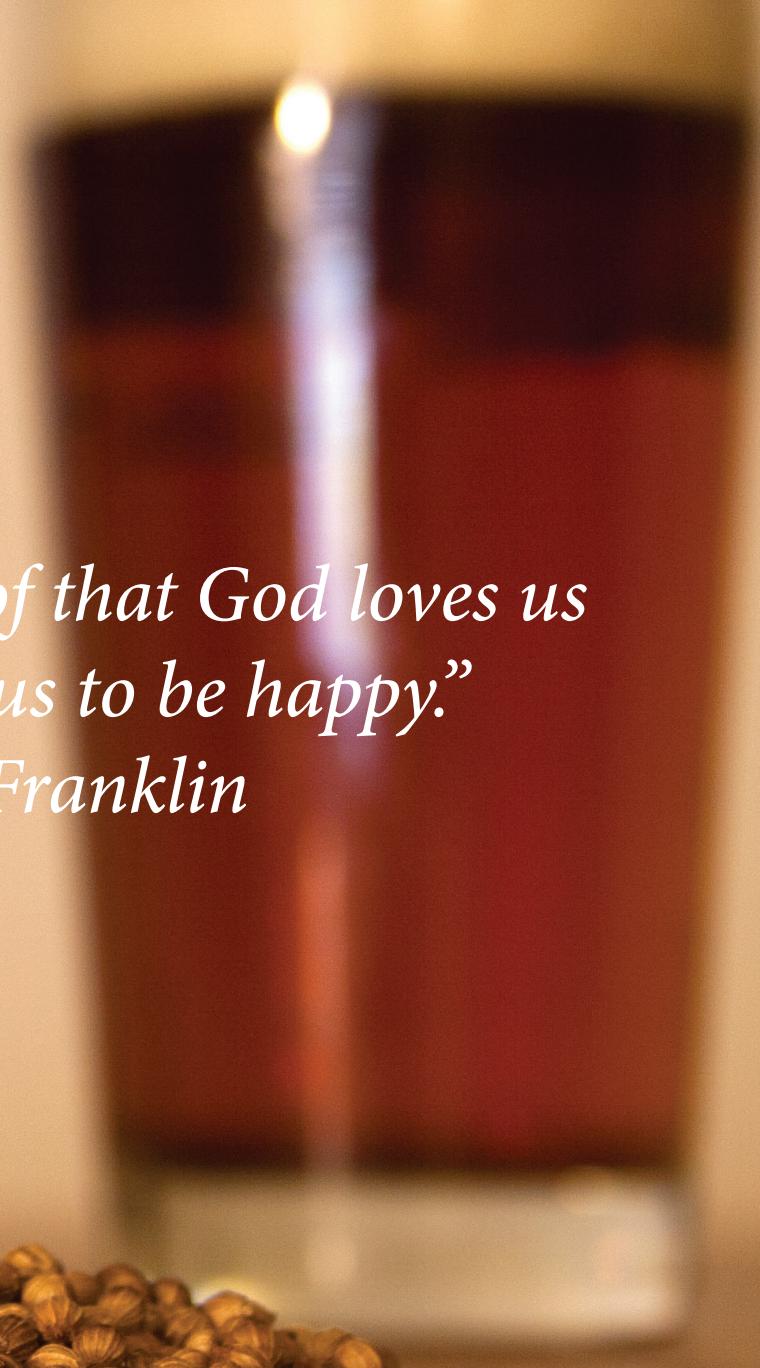
GERMAN PILSNERS

German Pilsners are crisper, more bitter adaptation of the original Bohemian pilsner and could simply be described as a hoppy lager. German hops, usually noble ones, should appear in the aroma and govern the taste. Pilsner malt should be perceptible, too, though much less so than the hops; a light grain note will likely appear in the nose, while low malt flavor and sweetness may crop up in the taste. Lighter in body and color and higher in carbonation than its Bohemian brethren, German-style pilsners are dry and clean, offering a refreshing quality that leaves behind just a hint of bitterness.

Medium Beers

Middle colored beers get their coloration from many different ingredients since this group runs the gamut from rye ales all the way to farmhouse and table beers. With such a variety the plants used in this category will be familiar but maybe not how you would normally picture them.





*“Beer is proof that God loves us
and wants us to be happy.”*

–Benjamin Franklin



Saison

originated in Belgium

SRM 5–14

IBU 20–30

ABV 5–7%

5 Saisons to try

- 1 *Saison-Brett*
- 2 *Saison Dupont*
- 3 *Hennepin*
- 4 *Allagash Interlude*
- 5 *Prairie Hop*

Food Pairing

These sparklers work well with spicy plates like Cajun shrimp and Tandoori chicken; the beer's effervescence washes away some of the heat, but leaves the flavor intact.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Duller gold color, mostly clear but has some haze, white head that stays for a little while and leaves small lacing on the walls of the glass.

SMELL: Spices are always prominent in the aromas of saison styles, most notably a peppery and clover scent, with a slight musty note in the grains.

TASTE: Tart and peppery with citrus zest being a common addition to the clover and pepper tastes. Hops are also present in most saisons though not over powering and some mild sweet notes.

MOUTHFEEL: Most are light bodied with some getting on the lighter side of medium, very crisp and with a average amount of carbonation and with a dry finish.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Saisons are sturdy farmhouse ales that were traditionally brewed in the winter, in the region of Belgium known as Wallonia, to be consumed throughout the summer months. Saisons were intended as not-too-strong refreshment for farmworkers; now, ABVs vary widely; some table versions clock in at 5 percent, while a few monsters top 9%. Not so long ago it was close to being an endangered style, but over recent years there's been a massive revival; especially in the US.

One can usually detect a saison just by looking; the style displays a characteristic yellow-orange hue and

that famous Belgian lace. However this is a very complex style; many are very fruity in the aroma and flavor. Look for earthy yeast tones, a mild to moderate tartness. Lots of spice and with a medium bitterness. The taste should be full of citrus esters, floral hops and spice. Some versions offer some bitterness and sourness, which generally increase along with alcohol levels. Light to medium in body and wildly carbonated, these beers finish quite dry, but a tickle of acidity balances the drink.

SPICE IT UP

One of the most popular spices to add in tends be coriander which gives a crisp almost citrus taste, and pairs well with the orange peel that often accompanies it, similar to the Witbier style. Another popular spice for saisons are peppercorns to give it an unexpected taste, which is normally paired up with oranges as well, which results in a surprisingly refreshing taste. Honey is another popular choice to give the brew a more complex flavor as well as help to thin out the batch.

BITTERNESS

Unlike most other Belgian styles saisons are more known to have a slight to sometimes high bitterness to them. To achieve the noted bitterness and floral aroma brews employ the use of a variety of hops, Noble hops, Styrian and East Kent Goldings are some of the more popular hops used. One of the reasons behind the bitterness and dry finish in this style is thought to be from the hard water that was so common in Wallonia, to try to replicate this the hops are added in while the brew ferments, known as dry hopping.



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Orange-ish brown to a deep brass color with some haze. Creates a decent sized white head that sticks to the sides of the glass creating noticeable lacing from the hops.

SMELL: Huge hops aroma that can also be described as floral. Grapefruit scents can be found, but from the citra hops. Followed up by a biscuity malt to support the bitter hops.

TASTE: Floral and citrus flavors accompanied by a bitterness from the hops, however much like the smell there should be a malty sweet backbone to support the bitterness.

MOUTHFEEL: Medium body with a creaminess to it, and a bitterness and sweetness that lingers after you have finished. Carbonation is average to high in this style.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Take an India Pale Ale and feed it steroids, ergo the term Double IPA. Although open to the same interpretation as its sister styles. The Imperial usage comes from Russian Imperial stout, a style of strong stout originally brewed in England for the Russian Imperial Court of the late 1700s; though Double IPA is often the preferred name.

Double IPA's are one of the newest beer styles on the map, these hoppy giants honor their English and American IPA kin yet satisfy palates that demand a more intense brew.



Hops are found in every single beer and in one of the oldest known ingredients, however some styles use less hops or hops that have a very low level of bitterness. IPA's are known for showcasing the bitter flavors and aromas that hops bring to beer, however double IPA's take it to a new level.

FLAVOR PROFILES OF HOPS

Brewers may use any number and variety of the herb, resulting in some versions that smell fruity, some grassy and some sweet. Flavors should go heavy on the hops with a commanding bitterness and, usually, dryness. A malt backbone should help to prop up the hops, but shouldn't have much grain flavor or sweetness.

PLAYING WITH INGREDIENTS

This style of beer is extremely complex and the differences in taste can be quite subtle at times, this is due to the combination and quantity of the hops that are selected by the brewer. The double IPA category is quite limited in ingredients since the taste is supposed to come mostly from the hops, however this style does have some brews that have more of a maltiness to backup the hops, though almost any malt can be used.

One of the only other ingredients that are commonly found within this particular style is rye, known by its pseudo name RyePA, which like wheat is used to replace a portion of the malts, sometimes getting as high as 30%. Rye lends a spice to the beer that compliments certain hop varieties very nicely.



TASTING NOTE

If trying multiple beers in a single sitting, such as a flight or sharing with friends, try to save double IPA's for last, the bitterness tends to linger and mask any subtleties that the other beers might have.

Double/Imperial IPA

originated in the United States

SRM 8–15

IBU 60–120

ABV 7.7–10%

5 DIPA's to try

- 1 *Heady Topper*
- 2 *Pliny the Younger*
- 3 *Double Sunshine IPA*
- 4 *Pliny the Elder*
- 5 *King Sue*

Food Pairing

Opt for rich foods that will stay on your palate as long as these beers' hops: Cheesecake, bacon cheeseburgers and creamy smoked cheeses are sure bets.

Glassware



Amber Ale

originated in Germany

SRM 10–17

IBU 25–40

ABV 4.5–6.2%

5 Ambers to try

- 1 *Tröegs Nugget Nectar*
- 2 *Zoe*
- 3 *Tocobaga Red Ale*
- 4 *Yulesmith (Winter)*
- 5 *Great Lakes Nosferatu*

Food Pairing

The beer's caramel notes draw out sweetness in apple and pumpkin pie, while the healthy dose of hops makes the bite less sticky. Ambers also pair well with most deli sandwiches; the malt notes complement fresh bread, while the hops clear meat and mayo from the palate and keep lettuce crisp.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Amber to coppery brown in color. Moderately large off-white head with good retention. Generally quite clear, although dry-hopped versions may have a slight haze.

SMELL: Low to medium hop aroma from dry hopping. A citrusy hop character is common. Moderately low to moderately high maltiness balances and sometimes masks the hop presentation, and usually shows a moderate caramel character.

TASTE: Medium to high hop flavor from American hop varieties, which often but not always has a citrusy quality. Malt flavors are moderate to strong, and usually show an initial malty sweetness followed by a moderate caramel flavor. Malt and hop bitterness are usually balanced and mutually supportive.

MOUTHFEEL: Medium to medium-full body. Carbonation average to high. Overall smooth finish

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Evolved from American Pale Ale, this style has a darker color and generally a greater malt emphasis of caramel and other malt flavors, balanced by American hop varietals often imparting citrusy traits. Low to medium fruity esters make way for a smooth or crisp mouth-feel. Initially gaining popularity in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, it was known more as “red ale”—often

used in the beer’s name by brewers in this region. As the style’s popularity spread across the country, more breweries began brewing their own interpretations, with some calling it an “amber,” and this name caught on. Continuing the evolution, craft brewers have taken the American Amber/Red Ale and pushed the envelope of hop bitterness, aroma and flavor, thus “doubling” or “imperializing” it into American Double / Imperial Red Ale.

TYPICAL RED ALE

Essentially maltier, bigger-bodied American pale ales, ambers are high in hop flavor, but a strong caramel malt presence tips the scale back into balance. Sometimes nicknamed red ales, ambers actually range in color from copper to brown, but are usually clear. Some versions feature pronounced citrus hop flavors, while others focus on sweetness. Despite their abundant hops, these brews should finish smooth; some even offer a slight alcohol warmth, and in some examples a light fruitiness.

AMBER/CATCH ALLS

Some breweries see this style as a catch all for any beer less than a Dark Ale in color, ranging from amber to deep red hues. This style of beer tends to focus on the malts, but hop character can range from low to high. Expect a balanced beer, with toasted malt characters and a light fruitiness in most examples. The range can run from a basic ale, to American brewers who brew faux-Oktoberfest style beers that are actually ales instead of lagers.

TASTING NOTE

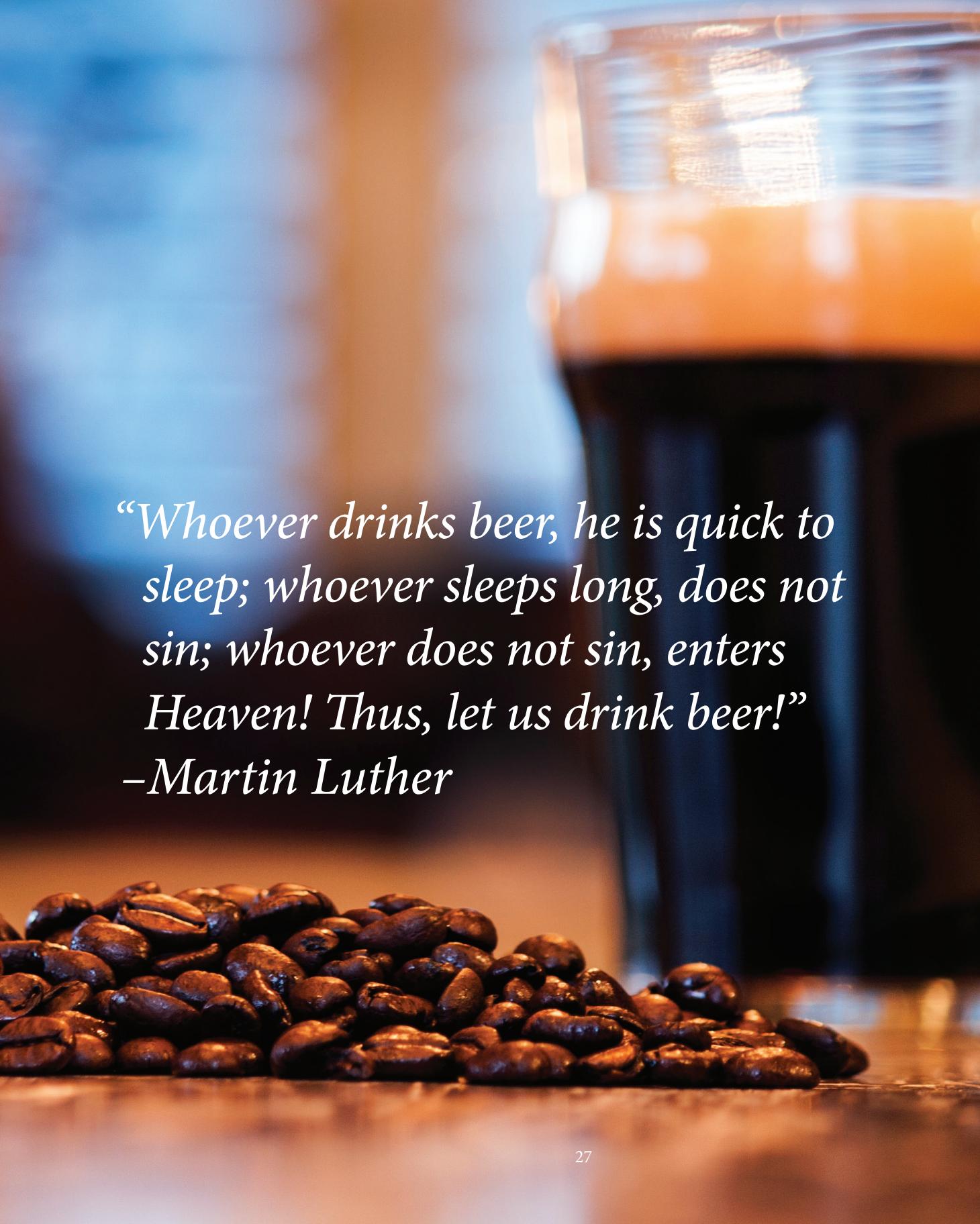
Since this style of beer can sometimes be a grab bag ranging from fruity to super hoppy rye ales be aware of the labels and take a closer read if you have not had the particular beer yet. There is nothing worse than bringing home a beer that you have no interest in trying.



Dark Beers

Most dark beers get their distinctive coloration from the heavily roasted barley that is used in the malting process, it also gives them their distinctive full bodied taste that they are known for. However there are other plants involved to help bolster their roasty taste, deep color and most of which have a distinct flavor character.





“Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!”

-Martin Luther



Brown Ale

originated in England

SRM 18–35

IBU 20–40

ABV 4.3–6.2%

5 Brown ales to try

- 1 *Moe's Bender*
- 2 *Palo Santo Marron*
- 3 *Indian Brown Ale*
- 4 *Hazlebut Brown Nectar*
- 5 *Maracibo Especial*

Food Pairing

Match American brown ales with foods that mingle with the beer's chocolate malt. Nutty dishes like cashew chicken, almond coffee-cake and banana-nut bread echo the beer's sweet malt tones, creating a harmonious swallow.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Lightish to very dark brown color. Clear. Low to moderate off-white to light tan head, with lacing on the edges.

SMELL: Malty, sweet and rich, which often has a chocolate, caramel, nutty and/or toasted quality. Hop aroma is typically low to medium.

TASTE: Medium to high malty flavor (often with caramel, toasted and/or chocolate flavors), with medium to medium-high bitterness. Hop flavor can be light to moderate. Some styles may have a slight fruitiness to them and compliment the caramel toasted malts.

MOUTHFEEL: Medium to medium-full body. More bitter versions may have a dry, resinous impression. Average to moderately high carbonation.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Spawned from the Mild Ale, Brown Ales tend to be maltier and sweeter on the palate, with a fuller body. Color can range from reddish brown to dark brown. Some versions will lean towards fruity esters, while others tend to be drier with nutty characters. All seem to have a low hop aroma and bitterness. Brown ales come in two main varieties; American and English. American brown ales are bigger than English versions in both malt and hops but smaller than brown porters, and though they're closely related to American pales and ambers.



AMERICAN BROWN ALES

American browns feature a distinct caramel-chocolate malt character. Aromas should be low in hops but rich and hearty in malt; sniff for a chocolate, nutty, toasted or caramel essence. Flavors should begin malty with those same nuances, but should appear balanced in the finish as some hop flavors and bitterness appear in the conclusion. Brown ales should display high carbonation and medium bodies, and some feature a touch of alcohol warmth in the finish. Breweries almost always use crystal and darker malts to complete the malt bill. American hops are typical, but UK or noble hops can also be used. Moderate carbonate water would appropriately balance the dark malt acidity, to create the characteristic smooth and easy drinking brown ale.

ENGLISH BROWN ALES

While the brown ales from northeastern England tend to be strong and malty, often nutty, however ales from southern England are usually darker, sweeter and lower in alcohol, and caramel and chocolate flavours are almost always evident. One of the popular flavours used to gain the nutty flavor is hazelnut, however when used in beer they have fatty acids and lipids which can make it tough to include them into a beer. To make it easier to include them some breweries take the nuts and add them during the boiling process and skim off the solids at the top. A more popular method is to go with powders and extracts that are derived from the nuts to avoid such difficulties with the lipids and fat which tend to separate themselves.

STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Medium brown to very dark brown, often with ruby- or garnet-like highlights. Can approach black in color. Clarity may be difficult to tell in such a dark beer. Full, tan-colored head with moderately good head retention.

SMELL: Lightly burnt, black malt character should be noticeable and may be strong. Might also show some grainy, bready, toffee-like, caramelly, chocolate, coffee. With hop aroma low to high.

TASTE: Fairly strong malt flavor usually features a lightly burnt, black malt character sometimes chocolate and/or coffee flavors with a bit of roasty dryness in the finish. Medium to high bitterness, which can be accentuated by the roasted malt.

MOUTHFEEL: Medium to medium-full body. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation normally with a dry finish.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

Porter is said to have been popular with transportation workers of Central London, hence the name. Most traditional British brewing documentation from the 1700's state that Porter was a blend of three different styles: an old ale (stale or soured), a new ale (brown or pale ale) and a weak one, with various combinations of blending and staleness. The end result was also commonly known as "Entire Butt" or "Three Threads" and had a pleasing taste of neither new nor old. It was the first truly engineered beer, catering to the public's taste, and had a hand in creating the mega-breweries of today.

ROBUST PORTERS

Porter saw a comeback during the homebrewing and micro-brewery revolution of the late 1970's in the US. Modern-day Porters are typically brewed using a pale malt base with the addition of black malt, crystal, chocolate or smoked brown malt. The addition of roasted malt is uncommon, but used occasionally. Some brewers will also age their beers after inoculation with live bacteria to create an authentic taste. Hop bitterness is moderate on the whole and color ranges from brown to black. Overall they remain very complex and interesting.

Cacao commonly used in porters to add a bitter sweet flavor that adds to the burnt or heavily roasted flavor of the malts. Cacao is often advertised as being used to add chocolate to the porter, and because of that are often thought of as a brunch or dessert beer.

BALTIC PORTERS

Malty, dark and medium-bodied, robust porters fall between subtler brown porters and full-bodied, higher-ABV Baltic porters. These porters exude roasty aromas from tan heads, while more roasty dryness and, sometimes, a slightly burnt flavor mark the taste. Luscious dark malt flavors occasionally receive a bitter boost from moderate hopping; other versions offer chocolate or coffee flavors (be careful not to confuse those versions with darker, creamier stouts). An industrial beer that came of age with 18th-century England's Industrial Revolution, this style was originally intended as a working-class refresher; thus, good porters are never as thick as they seem in the glass.



Porter

originated in the England

SRM 22–35

IBU 25–50

ABV 4.8–6.5%

5 Porters to try

- 1 *Victory at Sea*
- 2 *Founder's Porter*
- 3 *Black Butte Porter*
- 4 *Stone Smoked Porter*
- 5 *Twilight of the Idols*

Food Pairing

Match a robust porter's blackened quality with the same characteristic in smoked sausages or barbecue. Just snacking? Creamy, earthy Gruyere cheese holds up well against this style's bold flavors, and peanut butter brownies augment the beer's warm, malty notes.

Glassware



Stout

originated in England

SRM 22–35

IBU 25–50

ABV 4.8–6.5%

5 Stouts to try

- 1 *Obsidian Stout*
- 2 *Aphrodisiaque*
- 3 *Chocolate Stout (Rogue)*
- 4 *Sierra Nevada Stout*
- 5 *Allagash Black*

Food Pairing

Echo these stouts' bitterness with meaty dishes that offer a bit of the same, such as Italian sausage and flank steak. The beer's roasted malt clings to both meats' fat, and the bitterness from the sausage's fennel and the steak's char mirror those same nuances in the beer.

Glassware



STYLE CHEATSHEET

APPEARANCE: Generally a jet black color, although some may appear very dark brown. Large, persistent head of light tan to light brown in color and usually opaque.

SMELL: Moderate to strong aroma of roasted malts, often having a coffee or dark chocolate scent. Burnt or charcoal aromas are low to none and medium to very low hop aroma.

TASTE: Moderate to very high roasted malt flavors, often tasting of coffee, dark or bittersweet chocolate. Low to medium malt sweetness, often with rich chocolate or caramel flavors. Medium to high bitterness.

MOUTHFEEL: Medium to full body and creamy. Stouts can have a wide range of carbonation from practically none to high.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE

The first known use of the word stout for beer was in a document dated 1677 found in the Egerton Manuscript, the sense being that a stout beer was a strong beer. The expression stout porter was applied during the 18th century to strong versions of porter, and was used by Guinness of Ireland in 1820 – although Guinness had been brewing porters since about 1780. Stout could be related to any kind of beer, as long as it was strong: in the UK it was possible to find "stout pale ale", for example. Later,



stout was eventually to be associated only with porter, becoming a synonym of dark beer. Stouts have evolved into their own style since then and now come in two main categories, European and American stouts, which over the years have grown into two very different breeds of stouts.

EUROPEAN STOUTS

European or English stouts are not as mysterious as they look typically dark brown to pitch black in color. A common profile amongst Stouts, but not in all cases, is the use of roasted barley (unmalted barley that is kilned to the point of being charred) which lends a dry character to the beer as well as a huge roasted flavor that can range from burnt to coffee to chocolate. A different balance of hops is up to the brewer's preference, but the roasted character must be there.

AMERICAN STOUTS

Inspired from English & Irish Stouts, the American Stout is the ingenuous creation from that. Thankfully with lots of innovation and originality American brewers have taken this style to a new level. Whether it is highly hopping the brew or adding coffee or chocolate to complement the roasted flavors associated with this style. Some are even barrel aged in Bourbon or whiskey barrels. The hop bitterness range is quite wide but most are balanced. Many are just easy drinking session stouts as well.

TASTING NOTE



The sign of a good stout is striking the perfect balance between the heavily roasted flavors with the playful bitterness of the hops being used. You can test this by taking a small sip and moving it from the tip of your tongue to the back and holding in each spot.



Last Round

Now that you've gone through nine of the most popular styles of beer ranging from very light to some of the darkest available you have some of the tools you'll need to make informed choices and opinions. We hope that the insights you've gained from this quick reference guide will serve you well and jump start your learning process. However the only way to know what you like for sure is to get out there and start trying as many beers as you can and taking the time to really evaluate each one using the four different areas that we covered for each style in the cheatsheet.

Feel free to share this book with friends and family and get them involved in the experience, it's always more fun to share a brew you love with the people you care about, plus it allows you to verbalize and really think about your opinion on the beer. Use this information for good, don't be one of those obnoxious beer snobs that nobody likes, help people out and don't make them feel like less of a person because they don't know the difference between a porter and a stout. Good luck out there and "May your glass be ever full. May the roof over your head be always strong."

- An Irish toast

A Pint Sized Guide to Beer gives you a crash course on beer to get you started. Covering a wide range of information from a brief history and popular beer styles to which glasses to use for what type of beer. If you're a beer connoisseur then we've got you covered too, with food pairings and recommendations. *A Pint Sized Guide to Beer* provides a quick reference and a great place to start on your journey into the world of beer.