

Craft Beer GUIDE



How to Drink Craft Beer

One of craft beers' best qualities is the variety. So much to choose from, in fact, that it can lead to a paralysis of indecision.

What to order? The best route is a flight, four or five short pours at once of a variety. This will provide a study in the various styles of flavors if you're unsure about new craft lagers. Line up IPAs, a couple of stouts or a couple of porters and discover. The Los Angeles Times had a few other tips, too.

FINDING A FOOD PAIRING

Allow your palate to explore. Taste test a pale ale, a stout or something sour with your cheeseburger. See what works. Blonde ales and lagers are good with salty fried foods. The citrusy accents in blonde ales complement the richness of fried foods. Marzen, an Oktoberfest beer, pairs well with fried chicken and chicken fried steak.

Black IPA, black ale and a dry stout or porter with a balance of malts and hops work well with richly marbled steaks on the grill.

American wheat ale, white ale, Kolsch pair well with sushi and tossed salads in vinaigrettes. Sushi's delicate flavors call for lighter beers.

But, to each her own. The only way to find out what's



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good for you is to test them.

SOCIAL JUICES

"Flights are great for first dates," said Brian Lenzo, founder of Blue Palms Brewhouse. "You gotta put your cellphone down and talk to each other while you're

drinking." Craft beer is social construct. Sit and talk about the beers as you consume them, what you like, what you don't, what you agree about and why your friend – or date -- is wrong. Pro tip: Don't get in a knock-down-drag-out fight with your girl on the first date.

STRATEGIZE CONSUMPTION

Put some thought to the order in which you drink the flight. "Build yourself a story in beer," recommended the Times. Start with something light -- a lager or a blonde ale -- then progress to more

full-flavored, stronger brews, a pale ale, then an IPA or a brown ale and then a stout. Finish boldly. Choose a "hefty beer with a high alcohol content and the flavor volume to match it, like an imperial stout, a double (or triple) IPA, or a barleywine."

Guide to Craft Beer Styles

You've heard all the names — IPA (India Pale Ale), ale, lager — but haven't trained your tastes on which is which.

Craft beers require a period of discernment what with all the choices today. Here's a guide to the more popular types of craft beer, according to UpstreamBrewing.com.

AMERICAN PALE ALE

Its distinctive flavor of hops distinguishes it from many European craft beers. It's more closely aligned with British ales. Its strong taste pairs well with sweeter and fruitier flavors. American pale ale is one of the most popular types of beer. This craft beer style is more responsible than any other for popularizing the craft brewing scene in the U.S.

KOLSCH AND BLONDE

Kolsch and blonde are craft beer styles from southwest Germany. These are produced by taking Pils or pale malt, hops and yeast to create a crisp, clean taste. They're matured in relatively cool brewing conditions over several weeks. It features a subtle ale yeast fruitiness.

BELGIUM PALE ALE

Brewed from pilsner or some pale malts, the profile of the beer is fruity and mildly spicy. The taste of Belgian ale



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yeast only adds to the unique flavor.

SAISON AND FARMHOUSE

These cousin ales also originated in Belgium. These beers were first believed to be drunk in the 19th century. In recent years, as sustainability and ecological factors grew more important to craft beer drinkers, these ales became more popular.

HEFEWEIZEN

Hefeweizen is a popular craft beer offering from Germany. With its distinct wheat flavor, this craft beer style shares a lot of similarities with American wheat ale, another popular flavor. The German version is often said to have bubble-gum or banana undertones.

PORTER AND STOUTS

These two are dominant

players in today's craft beer boom. Porters were introduced to Britain in the late 1700s and the influence of the British Empire during the 19th century increased their impact.

BROWN ALE

Though it originated in the 19th century, many experts argue brown ales are a 20th-century development because the difference in taste

between the centuries is so strong. They bear little resemblance to the historical variations.

AMBER (RED) ALE

Amber, aka red ale, is smooth and easy to drink. Developed early in American craft brewing, it's designed to provide a balanced and easy-to-drink option for those new to craft beer.

Sour Beer Basics

Sour beer is the oldest kind of beer in history — as in world history.

Nearly all beer used to be at least somewhat sour before science better understood pasteurization and sterilization, according to VinePair.com. Sours today are tart-tasting and made with a chemist's touch with wild bacteria and yeasts, which interact in barrels as their own ecosystem.

WHAT IS SOUR BEER?

Wild organisms are what make sour beers enticing. Flavor profiles range from mouth puckering sour to barnyard funky to fruity and light, says VinePair.com. In Belgium, famous for its sour beers, they are often aged in oak barrels that allow the beer to breathe and let microorganisms build communities.

“The Belgians are experts at aging,” said David Soulsby, a professor of chemistry at the University of the Redlands, in a story produced by CNN. Fruit additives, such as peaches or blackberries, help punch up the flavor.

In recent years, sour beer has increased dramatically in popularity in the U.S. Statistics from Information Resources Inc. and Nielsen showing a spike of 40% in popularity in 2018 and 2019.

Highly tart, sour beers can



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take on many forms, including Belgian-style Lambic beer, fruity Flanders ale and lemony Berliner Weisse beer, according to Time magazine. Adding other fruits, such as cherry, raspberry or peach, sour beers, provides a sweet-and-sour flavor that's a far cry

from traditional lagers.

WHAT MAKES SOUR BEER SOUR?

Intentionally introducing beer to wild yeasts or bacteria creates the sour taste, writes Forbes.

Two types of bacteria and

one type of wild yeast are used to make sour beers today: Lactobacillus, also found in yogurt, and Pediococcus, used to add acidity to Belgian beers, along with the wild yeast Brettanomyces, which adds an earthy flavor.

In fact, brewing sour beers

presents somewhat of a logistical challenge to breweries, as any leftover bacteria or yeast in their equipment can taint other beers. Some breweries house their sour beer operations separately from their main breweries for this reason.

Five Best Craft Beer Road Trips

Independent beer makers are blossoming in America. They are also great themes for vacations for young people or honeymooners.

CraftBeer.com mapped out some of the best craft breweries off the beaten path.

BLACKBERRY FARM, WALLAND, TENN.

The family owned brewery has been gaining attention for their earthy saisons and barrel-aged beers since the brewery's opening on the 4,200-acre estate in the Smoky Mountains. You can also stay here. This working farm also boasts luxury accommodations, including a wellness center and spa.

TITLETOWN BREWING COMPANY, GREEN BAY, WISC.

No one should be surprised that Green Bay appeared on a must-visit beer location. This small brewpub is located in a renovated train station, originally opened in 1899 as the Chicago & North Western Depot. In its heyday, the depot was also the main port of call for the NFL's Green Bay Packers, with all travel to away games for the team always beginning and ending at the depot. History says 20,000 showed up here in 1929 to greet the new NFL champions. Packers fans will drink to that.

SALT SPRINGS BREWERY, SALINE, MICH.

In 2015, the brewery and restaurant opened up in a former Methodist church, which as a brewery retained its brick exterior and stained-glass windows. You won't find communion



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wine here, but rather the brewery's popular Big Brown Bunny Porter -- a 6.9% percent ABV dark, rich and slightly sweet beer.

THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE BREWERY, WINTHROP, WASH.

In this historic mining town sits an old schoolhouse that has been converted into a brewery.

Located about a four-hour drive from Seattle, the small town of Winthrop is located along the North Cascades Highway and is the perfect landing place for road-tripping brew hounds.

HAYMARKET PUB AND BREWERY, BRIDGMAN, MICHIGAN

This is Haymarket Pub & Brewery's second location, about 90 miles east and "one big Great Lake away from its original location in Chicago." The new 30-barrel brewery was built on 18-acres of land that once held the jail cells of the Michigan State Police.

VAULT BREWING COMPANY, YARDLEY, PENN.

How protected is the Vault Brewing Company of its beer? An original 8,000-pound vault door protects the

beer cellar. This is the former National Bank, originally built in 1889. The vibe here is less brewery and more a throwback to the speak-easys of the 1920s.

MOON RIVER BREWING COMPANY, SAVANNAH, GA.

Don't be surprised if you run into Casper while dipping into Moon River Brewing Company's hand-crafted beers. The building has been featured on "Ghost Hunters" and is routinely a stop on ghost tours that take place throughout the city. The building's history dates to 1821.

America's Only Trappist Brewery

The Trappists, a nickname for the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, are one of the strictest orders in the Roman Catholic Church.

They were founded in La Trappe, France, in the 1660s. One tradition of the order is praying seven hours a day. Another is beer. Beer is the source of income for food, shelter, health care and the local charities they support. One of the world's 169 Trappist communities is at St. Joseph Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, near Boston. They run Spencer Brewery, the first and only Trappist beer maker in the U.S.

SEEKING STRONGER FINANCIAL SUPPORT

In 2000 the abbot at St. Joseph's determined the monastery needed to secure a stronger financial footing for the future for the monastery, according to a story published by America Magazine – the Jesuit Review. “Self-support has been an important part of monastic life since the beginning,” Damian Carr, the monastery's abbot in 2019. “We need as much money to support ourselves as any family would.”

An advisory group of non-monks, including business



LORIANNE DISABATO/CREATIVE COMMONS

leaders and academics, concluded that more revenue was needed, especially for an aging community. They ended up with beer “by process of elimination,” said Fr. Isaac Keeley, 69, who runs Spencer Brewery.

Father Isaac wakes up at 2:30 a.m. every morning and prays until dawn. Then he's off to boost beer sales.

Spencer's objective is to produce 10,000 barrels of beer

a year within 10 years. Each barrel is sold for around \$300, according to distributors America Magazine spoke to. That would equate to about \$3 million a year in revenue.

The brewery's bottling lines are from Italy, brewing gear from Germany. Thicker bottles designed to withstand higher fermentation pressures are imported from Belgium. Hops come from the western United States and Germany,

malts from the United States, Germany, Canada, the Czech Republic and Canada.

OPENING AND DIVERSIFYING

In 2013, the brewery launched Spencer Trappist Ale, a 6.5% alcohol golden ale. Analysts described the beer as a “Belgian pale ale.”

“The right way to describe it is that it's brewed to have the color of the sunrise on Nauset

Beach on Cape Cod on the third Monday of September,” Fr. Isaac said.

Today, Spencer sells nine different types of beer, including The Monkster Mash, a pumpkin-spiced ale.

The brewery is popular in the area, according to America Magazine. In 2019 more than 7,000 people attended an open house. However, the brewery is closed the rest of the year.

Water Is the Key Ingredient

When we think of craft beer a number of ingredients come immediately to mind, starting with hops, barley and yeast.

Yet, it's the champagne of the earth that is key to making craft beer. Water is essential to life. So it is with beer. Water is more complex than we ordi-

narily think it is, often littered with a mix of compounds and microbes, which produce pH variances that alter reactivity and changes everything from color to taste. Here are some insights from CraftBeer.com on how water affects brewing.

REGIONAL STYLES ARE BASED ON WATER

The secret to why the Irish make more stouts than the Germans, while Germany is known more for lagers can be traced back to water.

CraftBeer.com cites an assessment of beers made in the Czech Republic with water that was low in mineral content — soft water. This water works best for producing beers such as lagers and pilsners.

Ireland, on the other hand, has hard water with lots of minerals, and is known for stouts.

“Water is a really big deal, big enough to shape the history of beer,” writes CraftBeer.com.

A MATTER OF CHEMISTRY

In “Water: A Comprehensive

Guide for Brewers,” authors John Palmer and Colin Kaminski state that calcium is a key component of water when it comes to beer. Calcium helps with yeast flocculation and facilitating the mash process. Calcium reacts with phosphates in malted barley to lower the pH in a

process known as buffering. This helps enhance the activity of crucial enzymes that extract and break up sugars as a part of the mashing process.

Bicarbonate is a compound that serves the opposite purpose, explains CraftBeer.com. It raises the pH (increasing alkalinity). It's used in the

brewing process as a kind of counter-balance, preventing things from becoming too acidic.

ALTERING THE WATER CHEMISTRY

So, how do brewers brew a variety of styles rather than only beers that work well with

the local water source?

They tinker, according to CraftBeer.com. Brewers use chemistry to change the composition of the water, with additives such as gypsum, baking soda and table salt. That is why full-scale breweries and homebrewers alike can use them.



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Beer Terminology

When you're talking about your favorite craft beer, it can be hard to put just the right words together to express your tastes.

Tasting beer involves smell, sight, taste and touch. In addition, craft brewing is both art and science. Brewers pride themselves on the unique combinations of elements they are able to elucidate in their beers.

Over the years, many common terms have been used to describe each element. Here are some terms to help you sound like a polished beer tasting pro, from Winning-HomeBrew.com and Beer for Dummies.

Mouthfeel: How does it feel in your mouth? Common descriptors include smooth, light, creamy, prickly, silky, velvety, tingly, warming, viscous, hot, astringent, oily.

Finish: The parting flavor at the end of a sip. It can be described as dry, fruity, sweet, alcoholic, warming, bitter, acidic, buttery, wet, quenching, lingering.

Notes (smell or taste): Often described as fruity, floral, hoppy, malty, grainy, sweet, corn-like, hay, straw, graham cracker, caramel, toast, roast, coffee, espresso, burnt, alcohol, tobacco, gunpowder, leather, pine, fresh cut grass, bread, bitter, spicy, chocolate, toffee, malty, tart, subtle, woody, earthy, sulfuric, diace-



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tyl (buttery or butterscotch), citrus, tropical, herbal, onion-garlic, sweaty, woody, green, pine, spruce, resinous.

Color: Common terms include malty, honey, caramel, russet red, brown, root beer, amber, chestnut, dark red, apricot, orange, black, burnt auburn, garnet, ruby,

copper, deep gold.

Carbonation level: You might hear terms such as spritzy, champagne-like, prickly, round, creamy, light, gassy, sharp, delicate.

Body: Commonly described as full, heavy, dense, viscous, robust, medium, balanced, medium-light,

light, delicate, wispy.

Clarity: A description of the appearance of solids in suspension. Common terms include brilliant, clear, slight haze, hazy, opaque, cloudy, turbid, crystal, bright, dull.

Flavor intensity: How intense the flavor profile is. Common descriptors include

assertive, mild, bold, balanced, robust, intense, metallic, harsh, complex, delicate, refined, hearty.

Head: The qualities of the foam on top of a glass of beer. You might hear it described as persistent, rocky, large, fluffy, dissipating, lingering, white, off white, tan, frothy, delicate.