

BEER STYLES

Including all the major beer styles and all of their sub-styles (see below), there are believed to be over 100 different beer styles in the world.

Every beer that you've served at your brewery, bar, or restaurant can be broken down into 2 basic types: *ales* and *lagers*. The main difference between an ale and a lager is the type of yeast used to ferment the beer. Beers may be broken down into ales and lagers, but there are a number of different types of beers; and each beer varies greatly in its color, alcohol content, and taste. Understanding the difference between each kind of beer will allow you to make drink recommendations to customers based on their meal or taste preferences.

How is the beer style determined? It all comes down to *the beer recipe*. The types of grain, hops and yeast you choose, the amounts, and even the chemistry of the water have an impact on the flavor, color and ABV of beer, not to mention if we add special ingredients like fruit, spices or coffee.

How are Ales made?

Ales are brewed with *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* which is a yeast that ferments throughout the beer and settles at the top of the vessel. They typically ferment at temperatures between 60°F to 75°F which allows the yeast to quickly process. Ales have a high tolerance for alcohol and are known for having richer and more complex flavors than lagers.

How are Lagers made?

Lager beers are brewed with *Saccharomyces pastorianus* yeast which ferments at the bottom of the vessel. This type of yeast ferments best at temperatures between 35°F to 55°F. The fermentation process of lagers takes longer to complete than ales because they ferment in cooler temperatures. Lagers also tend to have a crisper and cleaner taste than ales.

With so many different types of beers around the world, foodservice establishments continue to expand their beer list. While an extensive beer menu guarantees that there's a drink for every beer lover that dines at your establishment, it can make it difficult for bartenders and servers to understand how each drink is unique. This beer guide may help you identify the key differences between each beer to easily make beer and food pairing recommendations and upsell customers.

Ale

Ale is a general category of beer: You'll find sub-categories like brown ales or pale ales. This is the oldest style of beer, which dates back to antiquity. What distinguishes an ale - and also makes this category of beer accessible for home brewers - is a warm-temperature fermentation for a relatively short period of time. In the brewing process, brewers introduce top-fermenting yeasts which, as the name suggests, ferment on the top of the brew. The fermentation process turns what would otherwise be a barley and malt tea into a boozy beverage.

Lager

Lagers are a newer style of beer with two key differences from ales. Lagers ferment for a long time at a low temperature, and they rely on bottom-fermenting yeasts, which sink to the bottom of the fermenting tank to do their magic. Lagers are common among European countries, including Czechia, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as in Canada, where they make up more than half of all beer sales.

Porter

Porters originated in London during the 18th century. A type of ale, porter beers are known for their dark black color and roasted malt aroma and notes; and may be fruity or dry in flavor. They are made with roasted brown malts or barley which gives the drink strong notes of chocolate, toffee, coffee, and caramel. Although porters have a similar color to stouts, porters have a crisper taste.

- *Types Of Porters*
 - ✓ American imperial porter
 - ✓ Baltic porter
 - ✓ English brown porter
 - ✓ Robust porter
 - ✓ Smoke porter
- *Porter Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Smoked foods
 - ✓ Barbeque
 - ✓ Desserts

Stout

Stouts are well-known for their dark color and thick, creamy head. They feature a heavily roasted flavor that comes from un-malted roasted barley that is added to the wort. Stouts often contain hints of coffee, chocolate, licorice, or molasses which makes this beer unique and great to pair with desserts. Ireland's Guinness may be one of the world's best-known stouts.

- *Types Of Stouts*
 - ✓ American stout
 - ✓ American imperial stout
 - ✓ Irish dry stout
 - ✓ Milk stout
 - ✓ Oatmeal stout
 - ✓ Oyster stout
- *Stout Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Desserts
 - ✓ Grilled meats
 - ✓ Shellfish

Blonde Ale

This easy drinking ale is a summer favorite, thanks to its light malt sweetness and trace of hops, which add aroma. As the name suggests, blonde ales have a pale color and a clear body. They tend to be crisp and dry, with few traces of bitterness, rather than hop-heavy or dank.

- *Types Of Blonde Ales*
 - ✓ Twilight Summer ale
 - ✓ Summer Love ale
 - ✓ Kirby
 - ✓ American Cream Ale
 - ✓ Berliner-Style Weisse
- *Blonde Ale Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Sugar Cookies
 - ✓ Spaghetti and Meatballs
 - ✓ Pepper Jack Cheese

Brown Ales

Brown ales range in color from amber to brown, with chocolate, caramel, citrus, or nut notes. Brown ales are a bit of a mixed bag, since the different malts used and the country of origin can greatly affect the flavor and scent of this underrated beer style. Depending on where the beer was brewed, it'll likely have a different flavor. The English version of the brown ale is usually dry and nutty, while the American version tends to be hoppier.

- *Types Of Brown Ales*
 - ✓ American brown ale
 - ✓ English brown ale
 - ✓ Mild brown ale
- *Brown Ale Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Nutty cheeses
 - ✓ Red meats
 - ✓ Barbeque

Pale Ale

The pale ale is one of the most popular beer styles in the world. It's known for its golden to copper color and hops. Brewed with pale malt and ale yeast, pale ales tend to be hoppy and feature light malt flavors which give the drink a bitter aftertaste. They generally have low alcohol content and are easy to drink.

- *Types Of Pale Ales*
 - ✓ American amber ale
 - ✓ American pale ale
 - ✓ Blonde ale
 - ✓ English pale ale
- *Pale Ale Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Spicy foods
 - ✓ Savory dishes

India Pale Ale

Originally, India Pale Ale or IPA was a British pale ale brewed with extra hops. High levels of this bittering agent made the beer stable enough to survive the long boat trip to India without spoiling. India pale ales (IPAs) usually have a golden or amber color. This beer tends to be bitter due to the number of hops used to brew it. However, many brewers add citrus or herbal tones to IPAs which help balance the bitterness and make it flavorful. This drink possesses high alcohol content, and many patrons may find this drink to be strong. Before recommending IPAs to customers, ask them if they would like a hoppy but heavy drink.

- *Types Of India Pale Ales*
 - ✓ American IPA
 - ✓ English IPA
 - ✓ Imperial IPA
 - ✓ New England Style IPA
 - ✓ West Coast IPA
- *India Pale Ale Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Fried foods
 - ✓ Meats
 - ✓ Fish
 - ✓ Poultry

Wheat

An easy-drinking, light style of beer, wheat beers are known for a soft, smooth flavor and a hazy body. Wheat beers tend to taste like spices or citrus, with the hefeweizen or unfiltered wheat beer being one of the more common styles. This beer has very little hops presence and its flavor depends on the type of wheat used. Wheat beers tend to have citrusy and tangy flavors that make them a great beverage for a sunny day.

- *Types Of Wheat Beers*
 - ✓ American wheat
 - ✓ Belgian witbier
 - ✓ Berliner Weisse
 - ✓ Dunkelweizen
 - ✓ Hefeweizen
- *Wheat Beer Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Salads
 - ✓ Fruit tarts
 - ✓ Vegetables
 - ✓ Seafood

Pilsner

A subspecies of lager, pilsner beers are distinguished by their water, which varies from neutral too hard. Pilsners generally have a dry, slightly bitter flavor. Originating in Pilsen, Czech Republic, this light gold drink is typically made with malts, hops, and neutral or hard water. Pilsners stand out from other lagers because they have a dry, slightly bitter taste. This beverage is extremely popular during the summertime because it's easy to drink and has low alcohol content.

- *Types Of Pilsners*
 - ✓ American pilsner
 - ✓ Czech pilsner
 - ✓ German pilsner
- *Pilsner Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Soft cheeses
 - ✓ Seafood
 - ✓ Poultry
 - ✓ Pork

Sour Ale

Sour ales are brewed with wild yeast and bacteria to help provide them with high levels of acidity. The acidity gives the beer a tart and sour flavor as opposed to the bitter flavors you usually taste in other ales. Many brewers also add fruits and spices to wild ales to give them a sweet, fruity profile.

- *Types Of Sour Ales*
 - ✓ American Brett
 - ✓ American sour
 - ✓ Belgian fruit Lambic
 - ✓ Belgian Gueuze
 - ✓ Flanders red ale
- *Sour Beer Food Pairings*
 - ✓ Vegetables
 - ✓ Fruit Tarts & Salads
 - ✓ Seafood

Perfect Beer Pour

Whether you're pouring from a normal tap, nitro tap, bottle, or can, the perfect beer pour consists of the same few steps.

- *Use a clean glass.* Remnants of other types of alcohol, mixes or even dish soap will change how the beer tastes and develop foam. Don't waste a great beer on a subpar glass.
- *Tilt the glass 45 degrees.* This will allow the beer to slide down the edge of the glass and prevent too much foam, also called head, from forming.
- *Pour beer into the center of the glass.* You can avoid splash-back or overpouring by pouring into the optimal area.
- *Level the glass when half to two-thirds full and pour until full.* This will achieve the proper amount of foam. The head should be one-half inch to 1 1/2 inches.

How to Pour the Perfect Pint of Guinness

There are unique steps to take when pouring a Guinness that sets it apart from other beers. Just make sure you know how many ounces in a pint. (A pint is 16 US fluid ounces or 20 British imperial ounces).

- *Use a Guinness glass.* When pouring, use a glass designed specifically for Guinness. It is essential for the steps below.
- *Tilt the glass 45 degrees.* There are no exceptions to this rule as it is needed for proper foam creation.
- *Slowly tilt the glass while pouring.* Instead of waiting until half-full, slowly tilt the glass throughout the pour.
- *End on the harp.* End the pour three-quarters of the way up the glass, not when the glass is level. This optimizes the head for a Guinness.
- *Let it rest.* Wait to drink until the beer has settled and shows off the deep, black color that is synonymous with Guinness.

How to Pour Beer without Foam

To minimize the foam, pour the beer into a glass angled at 45 degrees. Pour as closely as possible to the glass, (without touching it), and slowly level the glass once it's too full to continue to pour at that angle. The longer you pour a beer into a tilted glass, the less foam that will be present in the final product. You may still have to wait a moment after pouring for the small amount of foam that does appear to dissipate. Foam is an integral part of a properly poured beer. If you truly don't enjoy the taste or feel of foam, try to aim for only half an inch.

A beer with no foam at all often tastes flat and the presence of foam indicates proper carbonation. If you pour beer and it doesn't develop any foam at all, you might want to check the expiration date of the beer.

How to Pour Draft Beer

To pour draft beer, tilt the glass 45 degrees and place it as close to the tap as possible, (again... without touching). Pull the handle and fill the glass halfway to two-thirds, then level the glass and fill to the top. This is the standard pour for beer and ensures that you get the optimal amount of head in your beer. It's one of the first skills they teach you in bartending 101.

Pouring draft beer is a bit different from pouring from a can or bottle. You need to keep track of the beer left in the keg when pouring from a tap. You don't want to end up with a glass full of beer dregs and foam; and make sure to understand how much beer is in a keg.

How to Pour a Nitro Beer

Pour beer from the nitro tap into a glass at 45 degrees until the glass is two-thirds full. Wait until the foam fully resides and fill the now-level glass to the top. The added period of settling allows the excess foam to dissipate and ensures you get the most beer possible with the silkiest texture.

Nitro beer is carbonated differently than a regular beer on tap and should be handled as such. In addition to carbon dioxide, nitrogen is added to change the consistency of beer. The use of nitrogen makes the beer smoother to drink, but also extends pour time as it adds foam more quickly.

Of Note: Guinness claims that the perfect pour for nitro beer takes about 120 seconds, or two full minutes.

Pour Beer from a Can

Tilt your glass to a 45-degree angle and align the can so it pours directly into the center of the glass. Once half full, tilt the glass to a level position and fill to the top. This pour should produce an ideal head that is around one-half inch. Pouring beer from a can should be treated no differently than pouring it from a tap. Regardless of the price, even the cheapest can of beer will taste better when poured correctly; and management may be able to price beer higher since it will taste better.

Bartender Advisor