25 Most Common Beer Styles with Definitions and Suggested Food Pairings

# American Lager

Definition: A light, crisp, and clean beer with a mild hop and malt character.

Suggested Food Pairings: Burgers, salads, light pasta dishes, or sushi.

# Pilsner

Definition: A type of pale lager that offers a more pronounced hop flavor and bitterness than American lagers.

Suggested Food Pairings: Seafood, chicken, spicy cuisines like Thai or Mexican.

# India Pale Ale (IPA)

Definition: Known for its strong hop bitterness, floral aromas, and higher alcohol content. Variants include American IPA, English IPA, and New England IPA.

Suggested Food Pairings: Bold, spicy foods, grilled meats, and strong cheeses.

# Stout

Definition: A dark, rich beer with flavors of roasted malt, chocolate, and coffee. Includes sub-styles like dry stout, milk stout, and imperial stout.

Suggested Food Pairings: Barbecue, stews, chocolate desserts.

# Porter

Definition: Similar to stout but generally lighter in body; flavors of caramel, roasted malt, and chocolate.

Suggested Food Pairings: Smoked meats, shellfish, and rich desserts.

# Wheat Beer

Definition: Made with a significant proportion of wheat; styles include hefeweizen and witbier. Characterized by light, refreshing tastes and sometimes fruity and spicy notes.

Suggested Food Pairings: Salads, seafood, and German cuisine like bratwurst.

# Saison

Definition: A highly carbonated, fruity, and spicy pale ale originally from Belgium; often with a dry finish.

Suggested Food Pairings: Cheese, seafood, and light meats like poultry.

# Belgian Dubbel

Definition: A deep reddish-brown ale with flavors of caramel, toffee, and dark fruit.

Suggested Food Pairings: Roasted meats, stews, and aged cheeses.

# Belgian Tripel

Definition: Strong, pale, and spicy with a high alcohol content; flavors of fruit and hops.

Suggested Food Pairings: Heavy dishes like game and roast pork, as well as creamy cheeses.

# Pale Ale

Definition: A flavorful, often hoppy beer with a balance of malt and a range of hop character from mild to strong.

Suggested Food Pairings: Burgers, fried foods, and spicy dishes.

# Bock

Definition: A strong lager of German origin; varieties include traditional bock, doppelbock, and maibock. Features malty sweetness.

Suggested Food Pairings: Roasted meats, Mexican food, and rich desserts.

# Brown Ale

Definition: Offers a deep amber or brown color with flavors of caramel, nuts, and a mild bitterness.

Suggested Food Pairings: Sausages, grilled meats, and aged cheeses.

# Amber Ale

Definition: Medium-bodied with a balance of malt and hops; colors range from amber to deep red hues.

Suggested Food Pairings: Pizza, fried foods, and grilled meats.

# Barleywine

Definition: A very strong ale with a high alcohol content; flavors of rich malt, fruits, and strong hop bitterness.

Suggested Food Pairings: Blue cheese, rich desserts, and game meats.

# Scotch Ale

Definition: Known for its full body and deep malt flavors with hints of caramel and smoke; also called Wee Heavy.

Suggested Food Pairings: Roasted or grilled meats, smoked fish, and creamy desserts.

# Kölsch

Definition: A light, crisp ale from Cologne, Germany, with a subtle fruitiness and delicate hop bitterness.

Suggested Food Pairings: Light dishes like salads, seafood, and poultry.

# Berliner Weisse

Definition: A tart, refreshing wheat beer from Berlin, often served with flavored syrups.

Suggested Food Pairings: Light salads, seafood, and fruity desserts.

# Gose

Definition: A sour wheat beer from Germany with a notable addition of salt and coriander.

Suggested Food Pairings: Seafood, especially shellfish, and light, fresh cheeses.

# Lambic

Definition: A unique, spontaneously fermented beer from Belgium with a sour and often fruity character.

Suggested Food Pairings: Fruit desserts, creamy cheeses, and poultry.

# Sour Ale

Definition: A broad category of beers with a deliberately acidic, tart, or sour taste.

Suggested Food Pairings: Light and fruity desserts, spicy dishes, and salads.

# Rauchbier

Definition: A German beer style known for its distinctive smoky flavor, achieved by using malted barley dried over an open flame.

Suggested Food Pairings: Barbecue, smoked cheeses, and hearty meats.

# Session IPA

Definition: A lighter, more sessionable version of an IPA with lower alcohol content but still featuring a hop-forward profile.

Suggested Food Pairings: Light pub fare, grilled vegetables, and salads.

# Imperial Stout

Definition: A stronger and richer version of a traditional stout, often with notes of dark chocolate, coffee, and dark fruits.

Suggested Food Pairings: Game meats, rich desserts, and aged cheeses.

# Altbier

Definition: A German style ale from Düsseldorf, known for its copper color and balanced flavor profile, combining malt sweetness with hop bitterness.

Suggested Food Pairings: German cuisine, pork dishes, and sharp cheeses.

# Vienna Lager

Definition: A medium-bodied, amber to reddish-brown lager with a malty sweetness and a smooth, clean finish.

Suggested Food Pairings: Roast pork, chicken dishes, and Mexican food.