

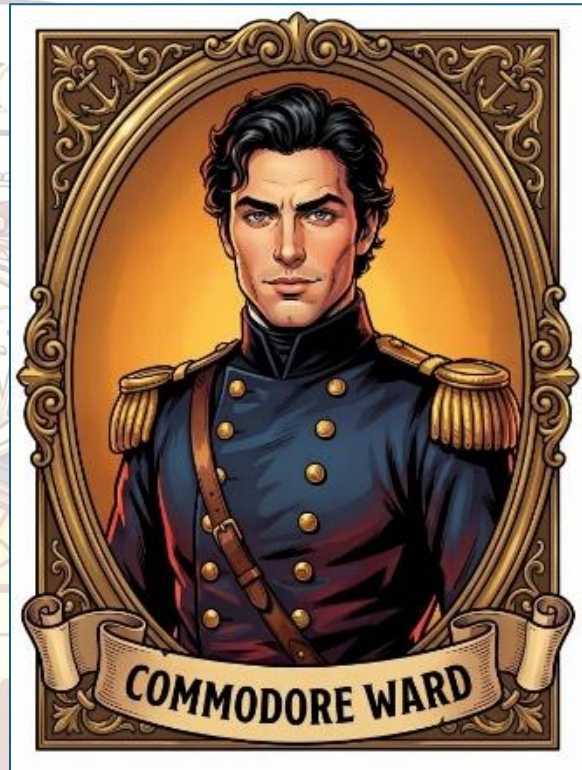
COMMODORE WARD'S IMPERIAL STOUT

Dark, Commanding. Imperial Standard.

5-Gallon All-Grain Homebrew Recipe

THE CHARACTER

Commodore Burton Ward — the youngest officer to earn the rank of Commodore in the Royal Navy. He built his reputation not with words but with actions — navigating impossible waters, leading men through storms that would break lesser captains, and never once losing a vessel under his charge. His Imperial Stout was brewed to his specification: dark, uncompromising, and built to endure. It is not a beer that asks to be liked. It is a beer that earns respect. Burton's last name is on the door. He earned it.



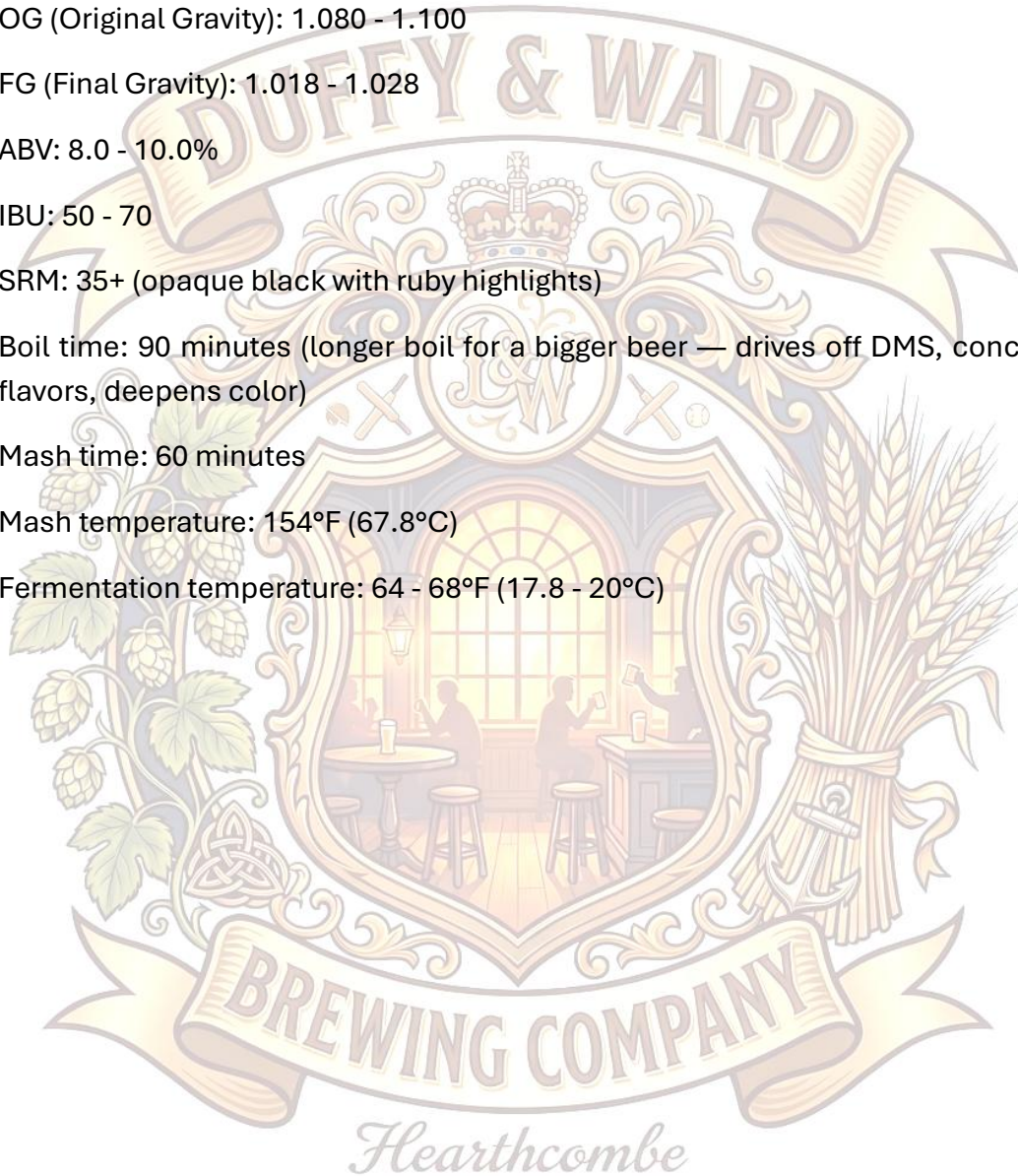
THE STYLE

Imperial Stout traces its origins to 18th century London, where it was brewed as an extra-strong version of the popular porter style. Known originally as "Russian Imperial Stout," it earned its name because it was brewed specifically for export to the court of Catherine the Great of Russia. The beer had to be brewed to a higher alcohol content and with more hops than a standard stout to survive the long sea voyage across the North Sea and Baltic without spoiling. By the Victorian era, Imperial Stout had become the prestige dark beer of the British Empire — bold, complex, and built to endure. The style nearly died out in the 20th century but was revived by craft brewers and has since become one of the most respected styles in the world.

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THE SPECS

- Batch size: 5 gallons (into fermenter)
- Pre-boil volume: 7.5 gallons (higher volume — longer boil concentrates wort)
- OG (Original Gravity): 1.080 - 1.100
- FG (Final Gravity): 1.018 - 1.028
- ABV: 8.0 - 10.0%
- IBU: 50 - 70
- SRM: 35+ (opaque black with ruby highlights)
- Boil time: 90 minutes (longer boil for a bigger beer — drives off DMS, concentrates flavors, deepens color)
- Mash time: 60 minutes
- Mash temperature: 154°F (67.8°C)
- Fermentation temperature: 64 - 68°F (17.8 - 20°C)



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THE WATER

- Start with RO or distilled water — build from scratch
- Treat ALL water with one Campden tablet per 20 gallons to remove chlorine and chloramine
- Target a London-inspired water profile with moderate bicarbonate — supports the massive dark malt bill and rounds roasted edges

Mineral Additions (for 10 gallons total water — mash plus sparge):

- Gypsum (calcium sulfate): 3 grams
- Calcium chloride: 5 grams
- Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate): 1 gram
- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate): 3 grams
- Lactic acid (88%): as needed to achieve mash pH of 5.2 - 5.4
 - The massive dark malt bill will significantly lower mash pH
 - You may need LESS acid than lighter beers — measure first
 - The baking soda helps buffer against excessive pH drop from the dark malts

Target Water Profile (approximate ppm):

- Calcium: 80-120
- Magnesium: 5-15
- Sodium: 30-50
- Sulfate: 60-80
- Chloride: 90-120
- Bicarbonate: 100-150

Note: The high chloride-to-sulfate ratio emphasizes the rich, smooth, velvety malt character that defines Imperial Stout. The elevated bicarbonate supports the heavy dark malt bill — without it, the roasted malts can create harsh, sharp, acidic flavors. The moderate sodium adds a subtle roundness and perceived fullness to the body. This is a BIG beer and it needs BIG water to support it.



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THE GRAIN BILL

This is the most complex grain bill in the Distinguished Company lineup. A Commodore does not settle for simple.

- Maris Otter pale malt: 14.0 lbs (70%)
 - The foundation. Even in a beer this dark and complex, the base malt matters enormously. Maris Otter provides the rich biscuity backbone that all the specialty malts build upon. Fourteen pounds. This is a big beer.
- Roasted barley: 1.0 lb (5%)
 - The dark heart of the stout. Provides deep black color, dry roasted bitterness, and coffee-like character
 - More assertive than the 3 oz in Sloane's Red — this beer WANTS the roast
- Chocolate malt: 0.75 lb (3.75%)
 - Adds smooth bittersweet chocolate character without the sharp edges of black patent
 - Works in harmony with the roasted barley — roasted barley is coffee, chocolate malt is cocoa
- Black patent malt: 0.25 lb (1.25%)
 - Small amount adds depth and complexity to the darkest notes
 - Too much creates harshness — a quarter pound is the ceiling
 - Adds ink-black color and a subtle sharp roast that cuts through the sweetness
- Crystal 80L: 1.0 lb (5%)
 - Adds rich caramel, dark toffee, and dried fruit character
 - Provides body and residual sweetness to balance the roasted malts
 - The bridge between the light malts and the dark malts

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- Crystal 120L: 0.5 lb (2.5%)
 - Adds deep caramel, dark raisin, fig, and plum-like complexity
 - Contributes to the aged, port-like character of finished Imperial Stout
- Munich malt: 1.0 lb (5%)
 - Adds bready depth and malt richness
 - Fills out the middle of the flavor — the connective tissue between the biscuity base and the dark roasted top
- Brown malt: 0.5 lb (2.5%)
 - Historic English ingredient — porter and stout were originally brewed with brown malt
 - Adds dry, nutty, biscuity notes and a toasted complexity
 - A nod to the original 18th century recipe heritage
- Flaked oats: 0.5 lb (2.5%)
 - Adds a smooth, velvety, almost creamy mouthfeel
 - Rounds out the body and creates the silky texture that separates good Imperial Stout from great Imperial Stout
 - Traditional oatmeal stout character woven into the Imperial framework
- Flaked barley: 0.5 lb (2.5%)
 - Adds body, head retention, and a slight creaminess
 - Complements the oats in building a rich, thick mouthfeel

Total grain bill: 20.0 lbs

Note: This is a LOT of grain for a 5-gallon batch. Your mash tun needs to accommodate approximately 20 lbs of grain plus 7.5 gallons of strike water. If your system cannot handle this volume, consider the following options:

- Reduce batch size to 4 gallons
- Perform a double mash — mash half the grain, collect wort, mash the second half
- Use a partial mash approach — replace 2-3 lbs of Maris Otter with 2-3 lbs of light dry malt extract (DME) added directly to the boil

Mash Instructions:

- Strike water volume: approximately 6.25 gallons (1.25 quarts per pound — lower ratio for a large grain bill to fit the mash tun)
- Strike water temperature: approximately 165°F (to achieve 154°F mash temp — the large grain mass absorbs more heat)
- Mash in at 154°F (67.8°C) — hold for 60 minutes
 - Higher mash temperature than the lighter beers — this produces a less fermentable, more full-bodied wort
 - Imperial Stout should have SIGNIFICANT residual sweetness and body
 - A thin, dry Imperial Stout is a failure — the body is the whole point
- Mash out at 168°F for 10 minutes (recommended for this grain bill — helps with lautering)
- Vorlauf until wort runs clear
 - This will take longer than lighter beers — the heavy grain bill with flaked adjuncts creates a denser grain bed
 - Be patient. Do not rush. Do not compact the grain bed.
 - If the sparge sticks, gently stir the top inch of the grain bed and restart

- Sparge with 170°F treated water to collect approximately 7.5 gallons pre-boil volume
 - You need more pre-boil volume because of the 90-minute boil
 - You will boil off approximately 2-2.5 gallons over 90 minutes
 - Treat sparge water with Campden and mineral additions proportionally



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THE HOPS

A firm, assertive hop bill to balance the massive malt backbone. But this is an ENGLISH Imperial Stout — earthy, herbal, structured bitterness. Not an American hop bomb.

- Magnum: 1.0 oz at 90 minutes (bittering)
 - Clean, neutral, high alpha acid bittering hop
 - Provides the backbone of bitterness without adding specific hop flavor
 - Approximately 35-40 IBU
 - Added at the START of the 90-minute boil
- East Kent Goldings: 1.0 oz at 30 minutes (flavor)
 - Adds earthy, floral English hop character to the mid-palate
 - Approximately 8-10 additional IBU
- Fuggles: 1.0 oz at 15 minutes (flavor)
 - Adds woody, earthy depth
 - Approximately 4-5 additional IBU
- East Kent Goldings: 0.5 oz at 5 minutes (late aroma)
 - Subtle earthy, floral note in the nose
 - Minimal IBU contribution

Total hops: 3.5 oz

- Magnum: 1.0 oz
- East Kent Goldings: 1.5 oz total
- Fuggles: 1.0 oz

Total IBU: approximately 50-58

Note: The hop bitterness should be FIRM but never dominant. In a beer with this much malt, 50-58 IBU will be perceived as balanced, not bitter. The massive malt sweetness absorbs

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bitterness like a sponge. If you under-hop this beer, it will taste cloying and syrupy. The hops provide structure — the bones that hold the body upright.

Alternative Bittering Hop (if Magnum unavailable):

- Warrior — clean, neutral, high alpha
- Columbus — slightly more assertive, still works
- Target — English high-alpha, traditional choice



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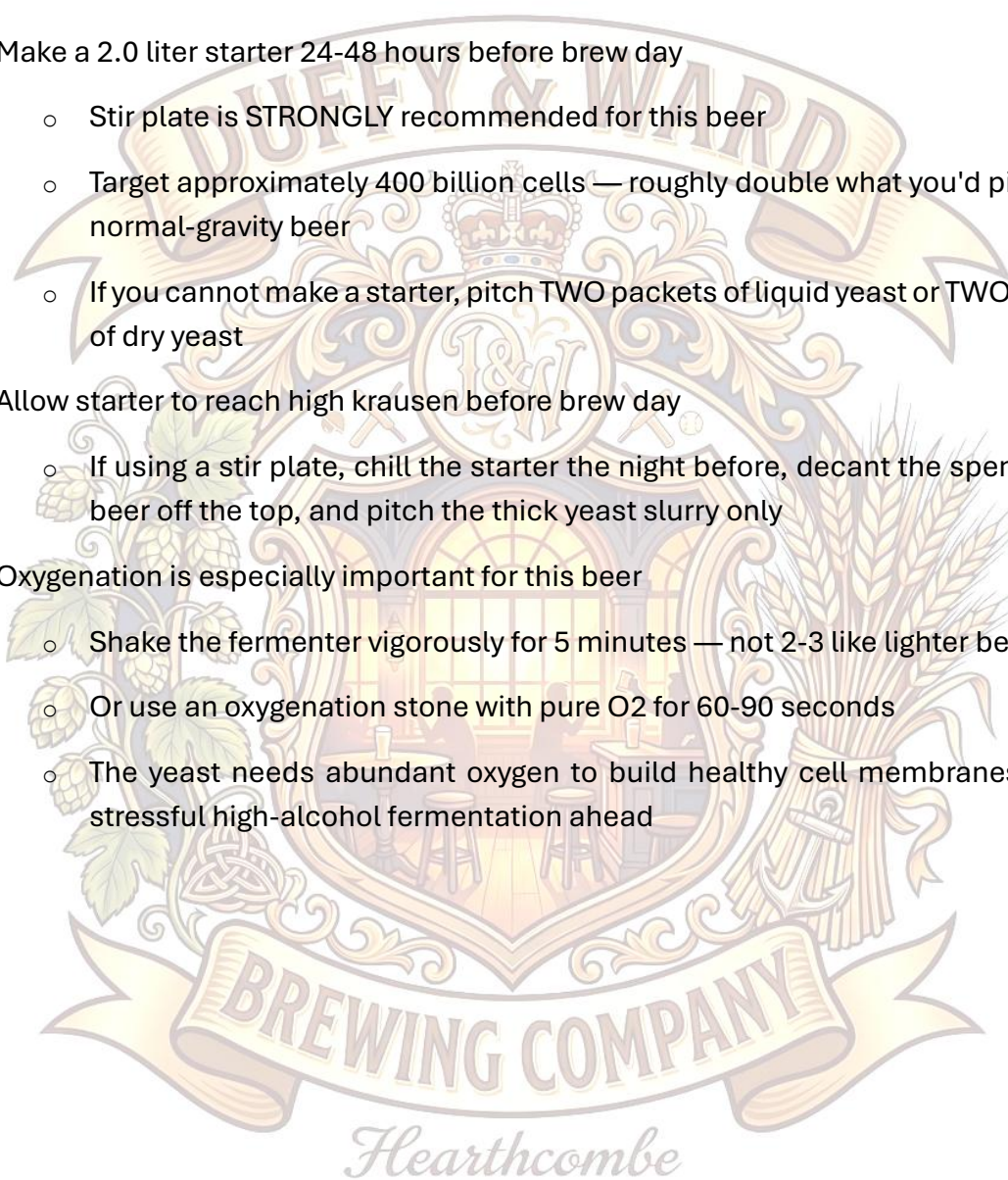
THE YEAST

This is the most demanding beer in the lineup for yeast. The high gravity wort is a stressful environment. Yeast health and preparation are critical.

- Primary recommendation: White Labs WLP007 (Dry English Ale) or Wyeast 1098 (British Ale)
 - High attenuation for an English yeast — will ferment the big wort more completely
 - Moderate fruity esters — subtle dark fruit character that complements the malt
 - Tolerant of higher alcohol — important for a 9-10% beer
 - Flocculates well — clears nicely despite the dark color
- Alternative: White Labs WLP002 (English Ale) or Wyeast 1968 (London ESB)
 - Can handle Imperial Stout but attenuates less — will produce a sweeter, fuller-bodied beer
 - Higher risk of stalling on a big beer — monitor gravity carefully
 - If using WLP002, consider blending with a small pitch of a more attenuative yeast as insurance
- Second alternative: Safale S-04 (dry)
 - Reliable, clean English character
 - Good attenuation, good alcohol tolerance
 - A safe choice if you're nervous about the big beer

Yeast Preparation — CRITICAL:

- This beer DEMANDS a large, healthy yeast pitch. Under-pitching a high-gravity wort is the number one cause of stuck fermentation, off-flavors, and failed Imperial Stout batches
- Make a 2.0 liter starter 24-48 hours before brew day
 - Stir plate is STRONGLY recommended for this beer
 - Target approximately 400 billion cells — roughly double what you'd pitch for a normal-gravity beer
 - If you cannot make a starter, pitch TWO packets of liquid yeast or TWO packets of dry yeast
- Allow starter to reach high krausen before brew day
 - If using a stir plate, chill the starter the night before, decant the spent starter beer off the top, and pitch the thick yeast slurry only
- Oxygenation is especially important for this beer
 - Shake the fermenter vigorously for 5 minutes — not 2-3 like lighter beers
 - Or use an oxygenation stone with pure O₂ for 60-90 seconds
 - The yeast needs abundant oxygen to build healthy cell membranes for the stressful high-alcohol fermentation ahead

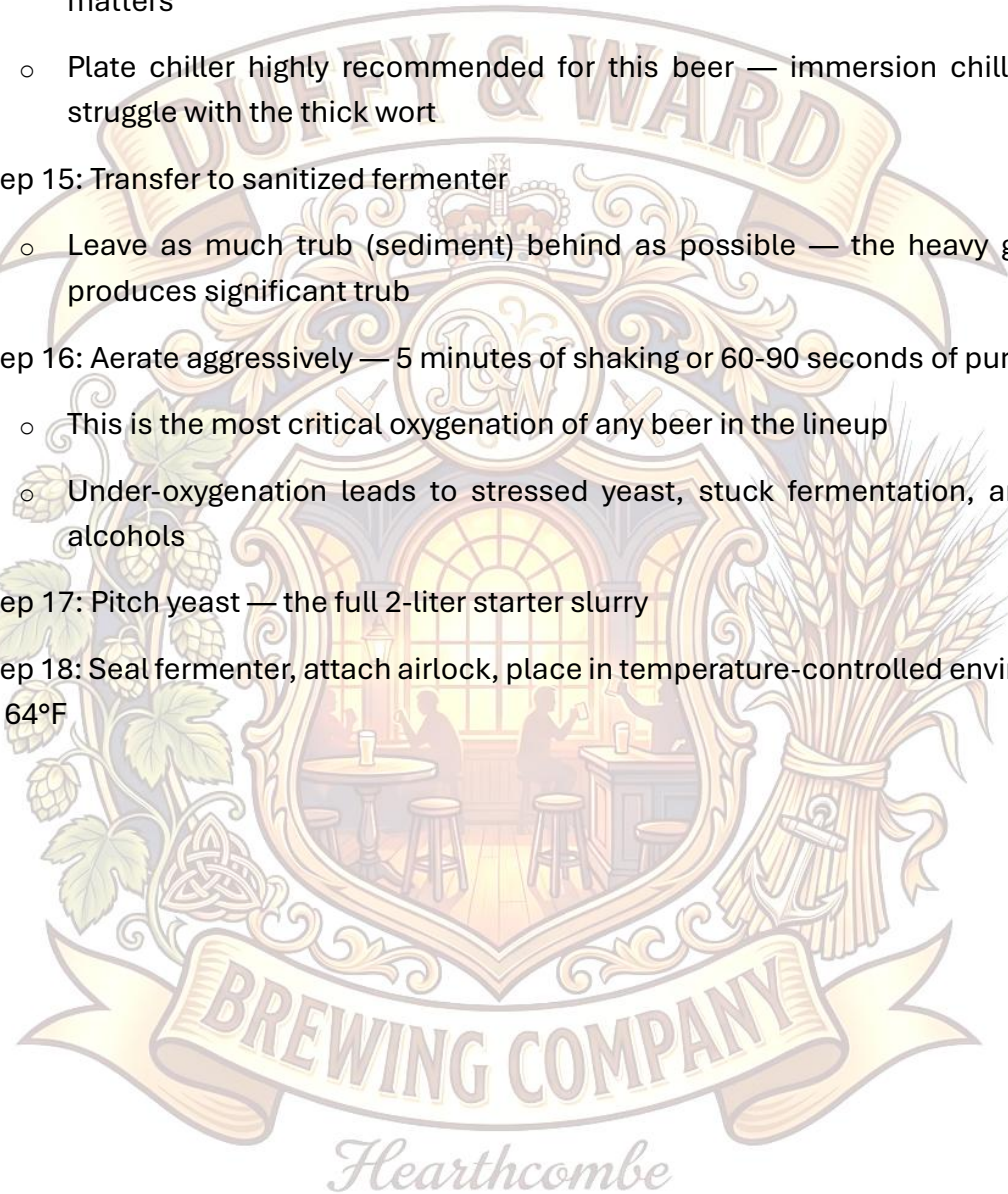


THE PROCESS — Brew Day

- Step 1: Collect and treat water — RO or distilled, add minerals including baking soda, add Campden tablet
 - You need approximately 10 gallons total — strike water plus sparge water
 - Treat all water identically
- Step 2: Heat strike water to approximately 165°F
 - Adjust based on your system — the 20 lb grain bill absorbs significant heat
- Step 3: Mash in — add grain SLOWLY, stir thoroughly, target 154°F
 - This is a massive grain bill — take your time adding it
 - Stir continuously to prevent dough balls — dry pockets of grain that don't convert
 - Check temperature at multiple points in the mash — large grain bills can have hot and cold spots
 - Check mash pH — target 5.2 to 5.4
 - The dark malts will lower pH significantly — you may not need any acid at all
 - If pH is below 5.0, the baking soda in the water should help. If still too low, add more baking soda in tiny increments
- Step 4: Hold mash at 154°F for 60 minutes
 - Monitor temperature — a mash this thick holds heat well but can also lose heat unevenly
 - Stir gently at 30 minutes to equalize temperature
- Step 5: Mash out at 168°F for 10 minutes
 - Important for this grain bill — the mash out helps thin the wort and prevents a stuck sparge

- Step 6: Vorlauf — recirculate until wort runs clear
 - Expect this to take longer than lighter beers
 - "Clear" for an Imperial Stout means "not chunky" — it will still be very dark
 - If flow stops, gently stir the top inch of grain bed with a fork
- Step 7: Sparge with 170°F treated water — collect approximately 7.5 gallons
 - Sparge SLOWLY for a grain bill this large — rushing extracts harsh tannins
 - Stop sparging when runoff gravity drops below 1.010 — below this point you extract undesirable astringent compounds
- Step 8: Bring to a rolling boil
 - WATCH THE POT — hot break on a high-gravity wort is INTENSE
 - The foam will rise dramatically in the first 5-10 minutes
 - Keep a spray bottle of cold water on hand to knock down the foam if it threatens to boil over
 - Reduce heat temporarily if needed
- Step 9: Add bittering hops — 1.0 oz Magnum at 90 minutes (start of boil)
- Step 10: Continue rolling boil — the 90-minute boil serves multiple purposes
 - Drives off DMS (dimethyl sulfide) — a cooked corn off-flavor especially common with Maris Otter
 - Concentrates the wort — intensifying flavors and increasing gravity
 - Develops melanoidins — complex malty flavors from extended heating
 - Deepens the color
- Step 11: Add flavor hops — 1.0 oz East Kent Goldings at 30 minutes remaining
- Step 12: Add flavor hops — 1.0 oz Fuggles at 15 minutes remaining
- Step 13: Add late aroma hops — 0.5 oz East Kent Goldings at 5 minutes remaining

- Step 14: At flameout — begin chilling immediately
 - Chill to 64°F as quickly as possible
 - A high-gravity wort is especially susceptible to contamination — speed matters
 - Plate chiller highly recommended for this beer — immersion chillers may struggle with the thick wort
- Step 15: Transfer to sanitized fermenter
 - Leave as much trub (sediment) behind as possible — the heavy grain bill produces significant trub
- Step 16: Aerate aggressively — 5 minutes of shaking or 60-90 seconds of pure O₂
 - This is the most critical oxygenation of any beer in the lineup
 - Under-oxygenation leads to stressed yeast, stuck fermentation, and fusel alcohols
- Step 17: Pitch yeast — the full 2-liter starter slurry
- Step 18: Seal fermenter, attach airlock, place in temperature-controlled environment at 64°F



FERMENTATION

This is a LONG fermentation. Patience is not optional. Burton Ward waited out storms. You can wait out a stout.

- Primary fermentation: 64-68°F for 14-21 days
 - Start at 64°F for the first 4-5 days — controls ester and fusel alcohol production
 - The early days of high-gravity fermentation generate significant heat — the wort temperature may be 3-5°F warmer than ambient. Account for this.
 - Allow temperature to rise gradually to 66-68°F after day 5
 - Raise to 70-72°F for the final 3-4 days — this helps the yeast clean up residual sugars and diacetyl
 - Active fermentation may take 3-5 days to become visible — the high gravity means a longer lag phase. Do not panic.
 - Fermentation may appear to stall at multiple points — this is normal for big beers. The yeast works in waves. Be patient.
- Check gravity at day 14, day 18, and day 21
 - Fermentation is complete when gravity is stable over three consecutive days
 - Target FG: 1.018 - 1.028
 - A HIGHER final gravity is expected and desirable — this is not a dry beer
 - If gravity is stuck well above 1.028, gently rouse the yeast, raise temperature to 72°F, and wait another week
 - If still stuck, pitch a small amount of fresh high-attenuative yeast (champagne yeast as a last resort)

CONDITIONING

Imperial Stout benefits enormously from extended conditioning. This is a beer that improves with age.

- Minimum conditioning: 4 weeks at 64-68°F after fermentation is complete
 - Let the beer sit on the yeast for a while — the yeast cleans up off-flavors during this time
 - The harsh edges of a young Imperial Stout soften with time
- Cold conditioning: 2-4 weeks at 34-38°F
 - After warm conditioning, cold crash for extended clarity and flavor melding
 - The beer will clear beautifully despite its dark color
- Extended aging (optional but recommended): 3-6 months total time
 - Imperial Stout is one of the few beer styles that genuinely improves with extended aging
 - The roasted harshness mellows
 - The chocolate and coffee notes smooth out
 - Dark fruit character develops
 - The alcohol integrates and becomes warming rather than hot
 - If you can wait 6 months from brew day to drinking, you will be rewarded
 - Burton Ward did not build his reputation with impatience

PACKAGING

Kegging (Preferred):

- Transfer to sanitized keg
- Purge headspace with CO₂ — multiple purges recommended to minimize oxygen exposure
 - Oxygen is the enemy of Imperial Stout — it causes staling and cardboard-like flavors
- Carbonate at 10-12 PSI at 38°F for 7-10 days
 - Target carbonation: 1.8 - 2.2 volumes CO₂
 - Low to moderate carbonation — this beer should feel smooth and velvety, not fizzy
 - Over-carbonation ruins the mouthfeel

Bottling:

- Prepare priming solution: 3.0 oz corn sugar dissolved in 2 cups boiling water, cooled
 - Less sugar — we want low carbonation
- Add priming solution to bottling bucket
- Transfer beer onto priming solution VERY gently — minimize any oxygen pickup
 - Oxygen exposure during bottling is the biggest quality risk for this style
- Fill bottles, cap
 - Use oxygen-absorbing caps if available
- Condition at room temperature (68-72°F) for 3-4 weeks minimum
 - The higher alcohol and lower carbonation mean bottle conditioning takes longer
- Refrigerate before serving
- These bottles will age beautifully for 1-2 years — the flavor improves over time

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SERVING

- Glass: Snifter or tulip glass
 - The wide bowl concentrates the complex aromas
 - The narrow top captures them for the drinker
 - A pint glass is **WRONG** for this beer — the aromatics dissipate before you smell them
- Serving temperature: 50-55°F (10-13°C)
 - NEVER serve cold. Remove from refrigeration 15-20 minutes before serving, or store at cellar temperature
 - This beer reveals new flavors as it warms in the glass — this is intentional and desirable
 - At 40°F it tastes like coffee. At 50°F it tastes like chocolate. At 55°F it tastes like dark fruit and port wine. Let it evolve.
- Pour: Tilt glass to 45 degrees, pour slowly down the side to approximately two-thirds full, then straighten and pour down the center to build a half-inch head
 - Do not rush. This beer deserves a careful pour.
- Presentation: Serve on a coaster or small napkin. This is a sipping beer, not a session beer.
- The beer should be opaque black with ruby highlights when held to a strong light. Thick, creamy, tan to dark brown head.

TASTING NOTES — What To Expect

- Appearance: Opaque black with ruby highlights at the edges when held to light. Thick, creamy, tan to dark brown head with good retention
- Aroma: Rich dark chocolate, espresso, dark dried fruit — raisin, fig, plum. Dark caramel and molasses. Subtle vanilla and leather. A whisper of earthy English hops beneath the malt. Warming alcohol
- Flavor: Complex layers of roasted malt, bittersweet chocolate, coffee, dark fruit. Molasses and dark toffee sweetness balanced by firm hop bitterness and dry roasted character. The alcohol is present but smooth — warming, not hot. The finish is long, dry, slightly bittersweet, with lingering chocolate and dark fruit. New flavors emerge as the beer warms in the glass
- Mouthfeel: Full and heavy — velvety, smooth, almost viscous. The oats and flaked barley create a silky texture. Low to moderate carbonation enhances the smooth character
- Overall: Commanding. Complex. A beer that demands your attention and rewards your patience. Not for the faint of heart or the short of time

Commercial Benchmark:

- Taste alongside North Coast Old Rasputin or Samuel Smith Imperial Stout
- Your version should have similar depth and complexity
- Focus on smoothness — a harsh, hot, or astringent Imperial Stout needs more conditioning time

FOOD PAIRINGS

- The Burton Burger with smoked cheddar
- Beer braised short ribs
- Sticky toffee pudding
- Chocolate stout cake
- Strong aged cheeses — stilton, aged cheddar, Gorgonzola
- Dark chocolate desserts
- Roasted meats
- Anything rich, bold, and unafraid



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TROUBLESHOOTING

- **Too sweet / cloying:** Under-attenuated. Check yeast health. Make a bigger starter next time. Raise temperature to 72°F and be patient. Consider pitching more yeast
- **Too thin / dry:** Mash temperature was too low. Next time mash at 155-156°F. Or increase Crystal 80L to 1.5 lb
- **Harsh / astringent roast:** Too much black patent malt. Reduce to 2 oz. Or cold steep the dark malts — add roasted barley and black patent directly to the fermenter rather than the mash to reduce harsh extraction
- **Hot / fusel alcohols:** Fermentation temperature too high in the early days. Hold 64°F firmly for the first 4-5 days. Also ensure adequate oxygenation and a large healthy yeast pitch
- **Stuck fermentation:** Rouse the yeast. Raise temperature. Wait. If truly stuck, pitch fresh yeast. Do not give up on this beer — it can recover
- **Cardboard / stale flavors:** Oxygen exposure during packaging. Purge kegs aggressively. Use oxygen-absorbing bottle caps. Minimize splashing during transfer
- **Too bitter:** Reduce Magnum to 0.75 oz next time. In a beer this big, hop bitterness perception changes significantly with small adjustments
- **Not complex enough:** Add 0.25 lb of Special B (Belgian dark crystal) for raisin and dark fruit. Or add 0.25 lb of Midnight Wheat for color and smooth dark character without roast harshness
- **Tastes young / rough:** This beer needs TIME. If it tastes harsh at 4 weeks, wait until 8 weeks. If still rough at 8 weeks, wait until 16 weeks. Imperial Stout rewards patience more than any other style in the lineup

NOTES

This is the flagship. The anchor. The beer that earns the Duffy & Ward name its respect.

Brewing an Imperial Stout is not like brewing a session ale. It is a commitment. The grain bill is massive. The boil is long. The fermentation is slow. The conditioning takes months. The recipe demands care at every stage.

But that is the point.

Burton Ward did not become Commodore by taking shortcuts. This beer does not become Imperial Stout by rushing.

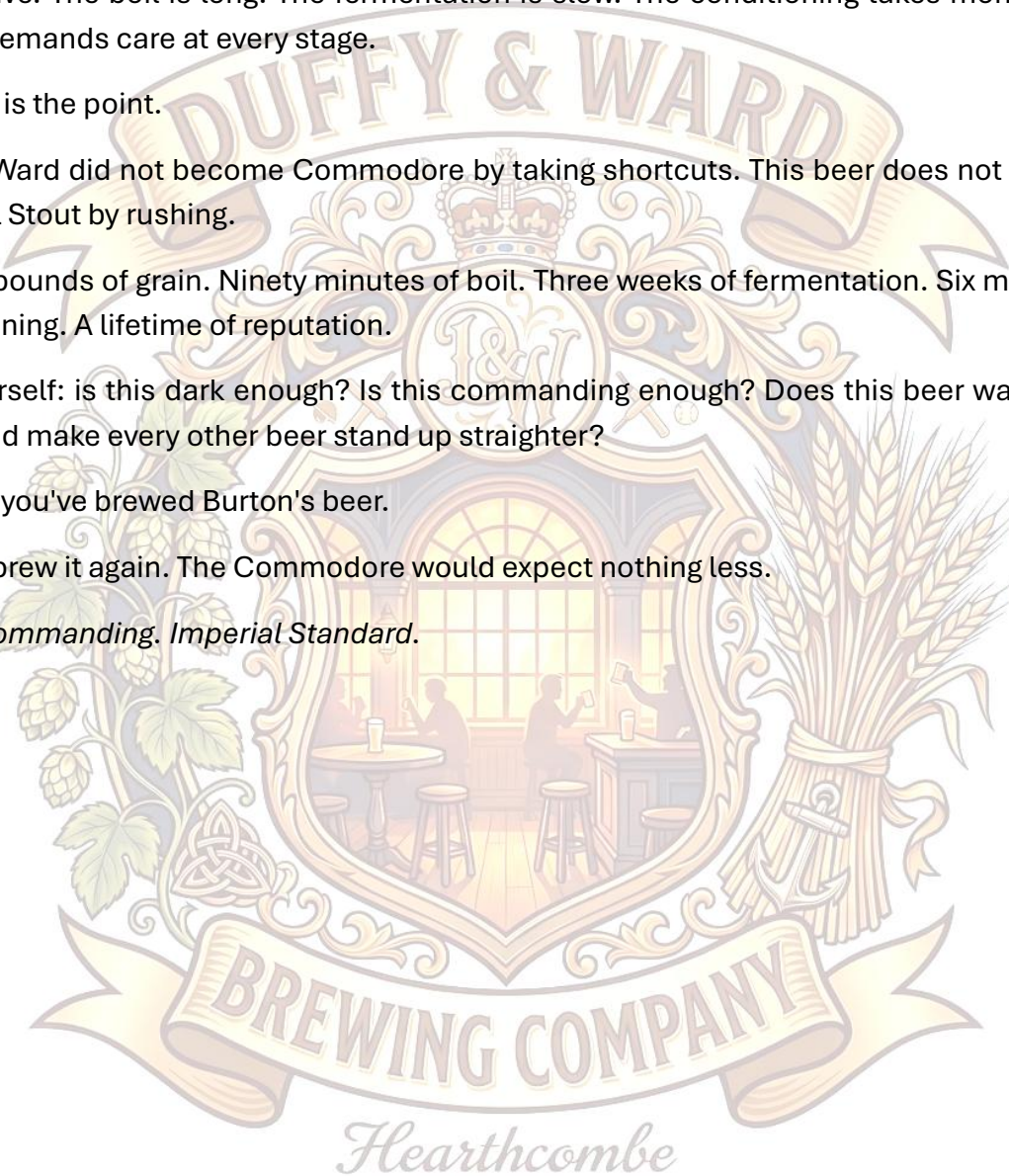
Twenty pounds of grain. Ninety minutes of boil. Three weeks of fermentation. Six months of conditioning. A lifetime of reputation.

Ask yourself: is this dark enough? Is this commanding enough? Does this beer walk into a room and make every other beer stand up straighter?

If yes — you've brewed Burton's beer.

If no — brew it again. The Commodore would expect nothing less.

Dark, Commanding. Imperial Standard.



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