

A collection of craft beer glasses and a plate of food including salami, cheese, and pickles. The glasses contain various styles of beer, including a tall glass of reddish beer, a tall glass of golden beer, a tulip-shaped glass of dark beer, a tulip-shaped glass of reddish beer, and a tulip-shaped glass of golden beer. The food includes a large slice of salami, a slice of blue cheese, and a pickle.

**AMERICAN
CRAFT BEER
AND FOOD:**

**PERFECT
COMPANIONS**

The logo for the Brewers Association, featuring the letters 'BIA' in a stylized font with a beer glass integrated into the letter 'A', and the words 'BREWERS ASSOCIATION' below it.

BIA
BREWERS
ASSOCIATION

AMERICA'S HOT CRAFT BEER SCENE

During the 1960s and 1970s, many young Americans traveled abroad, seeking new and exciting experiences. Among these were memorable encounters with classic European beers. When travelers returned, some sought to recreate those experiences by brewing, first at home, and then in small commercial breweries. By 1980, there were four or five of these new craft breweries. Presently, thousands of small, independent and traditional breweries are creating exciting, uniquely American interpretations of every imaginable style of beer. This abundance of flavorful beers led to economic growth. The U.S. craft beer category continues to grow rapidly. Beer lovers clearly appreciate the flavor, diversity and quality of the new American beer scene. These creative brewers have produced a range of delicious beers to suit nearly every kind of food. Here we present a brief introduction to the pleasures of American craft beer as a dining companion. Enjoy!





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages 4–5

The Principles of Beer & Food Matching

Pages 6–7

Beer with Various Types of Food

Pages 8–9

Beer & Food Matching Chart

Page 10

Serving Up the Perfect Beer Experience

Page 11

Cooking with Beer

Back Cover

About the Brewers Association

WHAT IS CRAFT BEER?

It is generally agreed to mean all-malt beer brewed with traditional methods and ingredients, inspired by classic styles. Brewed by small, independent breweries, craft beer offers a huge range of colors, flavors, strengths and sensations. Naturally, it makes a great companion to the wide world of foods.

HOW TO MATCH BEER AND FOOD

For centuries, beer and food have been enjoyed together as part of the good life. The grain-based nature of beer makes it a food in itself, and the huge range of flavors, aromas and textures makes it a perfect match for nearly any kind of food, from a handmade sausage to the most luxurious gourmet dish. Choosing beers and foods that enhance one another means paying attention to the gustatory qualities of both. We have some suggestions we hope will make your experience more enjoyable and successful.

For great beer and food pairings, a number of things must be considered. Here are the most important concepts:

- **Match strength with strength.** It is simply common sense that delicate dishes work best with delicate beers, and it is equally true that strongly flavored foods demand assertive beers. Intensity of flavor may involve many aspects: alcoholic strength, malt character, hop bitterness, sweetness, richness, roastiness and so on.
- **Find harmonies.** Combinations often work best when they share some common flavor or aroma elements. The nutty flavor of an English-style brown ale and a handmade cheddar cheese; the deep, roasted flavors of an imperial stout and chocolate truffles, and the rich, caramelly flavors of an Oktoberfest lager and roasted pork are all examples of this.

BEER AND FOOD: SPECIFIC INTERACTIONS

Beer Flavor	Interaction	Food
Hop Bitterness Roasted Malt Carbonation Alcohol	Balances	Sweetness Richness (fat)
Sweetness Maltiness	Balances	Spiciness (chili heat) Acidity
Hop Bitterness	Emphasizes	Spiciness (chili heat)

- **Consider sweetness, bitterness, carbonation, heat (spice) and richness.** This may seem a little complicated, but it really is quite straightforward. Specific characteristics of food and beer interact with each other in predictable ways. Taking advantage of these interactions ensures that the food and beer will balance each other, each giving you a desire for a taste of the other.

Don't be afraid to try things out and seek new possibilities. The best pairings have yet to be discovered. And remember, beer is a pleasurable experience, so enjoy yourself.



Some additional thoughts about enjoying beer and food together:

- **Look to classic cuisines.** The cuisines of beer-drinking countries offer many great beer and food combinations. Schnitzel with pale lager may be obvious, but who would have thought to put stout together with oysters? Classic matches such as this can be found if you search for them, and offer a great start to further exploration.
- **Practice makes perfect.** Not every pairing works as expected—this can be fun if you learn to appreciate the unexpected. Build on the things that work and keep seeking those magic combinations.
- **Consider seasonality.** Like light food and beer in the warm summer months or heavier beer in the winter, the beers and foods of a given season pair very naturally and suit the mood as well.
- **Contrast and complement.** All beer and food combinations should involve both of these principles. Some pairings will be more dependent on the contrasts, others on complementary flavors, but all should strive for some kind of balance. The chart at the left shows the important contrasting elements.

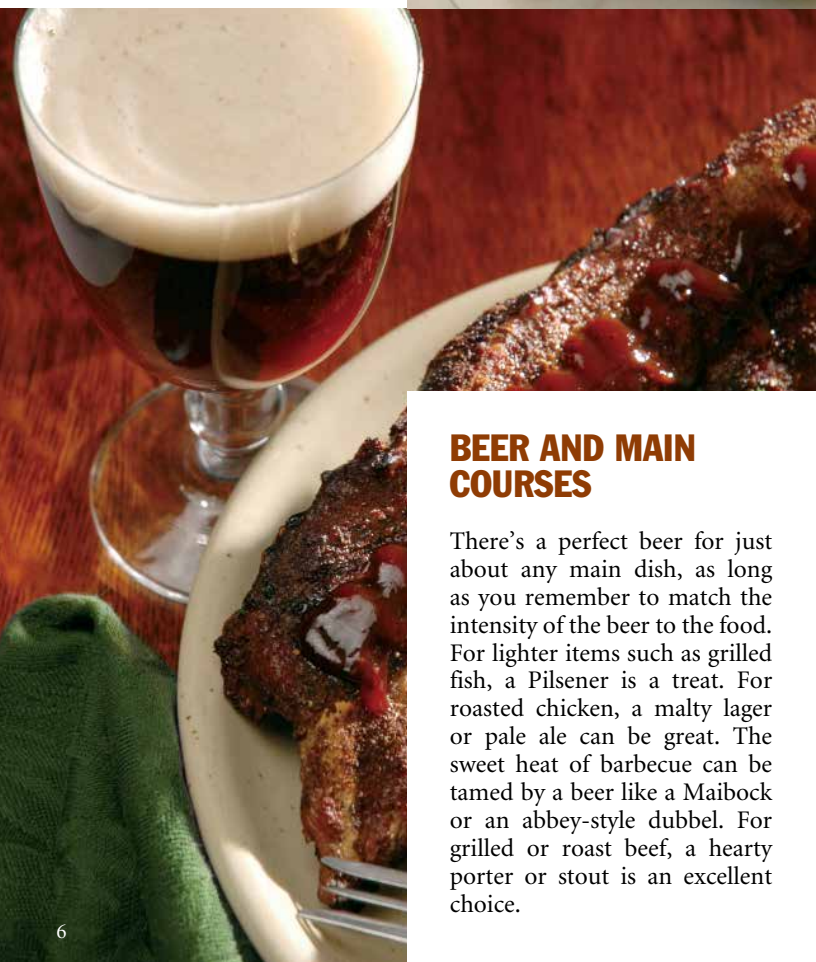


Remember, the above suggestions are just that—not absolute rules. The American craft beer experience was founded on creativity and experimentation. We hope you embrace that spirit on your beer and food journey.

BEER AS AN APERITIF (SALADS & APPETIZERS)

Crisp, refreshing beers are the best way to start a meal. Lighter wheat beers can be a perfect match for salads, although the bitterness of greens sometimes calls for a hoppy Pilsener. A floral blonde ale is great with seared Ahi tuna. Hoppy American pale ale can balance the richness of appetizers such as cheese tartlets. Spicy saison is the perfect counterpoint to New Orleans style shrimp. A full-flavored red ale or amber lager can be an ideal mate to smoked fish—or you might choose to present it with an elegantly crisp, dry stout.

The idea is to create a great experience without wearing out the palate. Look for beers that are light in body and aren't aggressively bitter.



BEER AND MAIN COURSES

There's a perfect beer for just about any main dish, as long as you remember to match the intensity of the beer to the food. For lighter items such as grilled fish, a Pilsener is a treat. For roasted chicken, a malty lager or pale ale can be great. The sweet heat of barbecue can be tamed by a beer like a Maibock or an abbey-style dubbel. For grilled or roast beef, a hearty porter or stout is an excellent choice.

BEER WITH DESSERT

So challenging with wine, dessert works beautifully with beer. Rich, full-flavored beers are needed to balance the sweetness of most desserts. American small brewers love to produce such styles, so there are plenty of choices. Fruity desserts can be paired with a strong pale tripel. Caramelly bread pudding or nut tart demands something with similar qualities—old ale fills the role beautifully. Super-sweet items such as cheesecake, crème brûlée or carrot cake can create a memorable experience with highly hopped beers such as double IPAs. Spice and citrus qualities in many beers work well with desserts that highlight similar flavors.

Chocolate loves a dark beer. Milk chocolate is wonderful with Belgian-inspired strong dark ales. Flourless chocolate cake or truffles call for an inky imperial stout. Fruit beers have an obvious affinity for fruit desserts, but they can be magic with chocolate as well.






BEER AND CHEESE


































































Beer's bright carbonation and crisp hoppiness can handle the mouth-coating richness of cheese. Medium-intensity beers suit many cheeses, but one as powerful as Stilton requires an assertive barley wine.







The herbal and floral hop nose of an IPA blends nicely with the complex aroma of blue cheese, while the bitterness cleanses the palate. Aromatic hefeweizen makes a nice match with simple Chèvre. Fruit beers are excellent with soft-ripened cheese such as Brie. Stout and aged cheddar is another great pair, and for the adventurous, smoked porter with a smoked cheese is a rustic joy.

Flavor Impact
Alcohol
Color
Bitterness

Key to Symbols:

  Color approximates actual beer
 Shaded circles = range of variation

Beer Type	Alcohol	Flavor Impact	Color	Bitterness	Suggested Foods
1. Kölsch, Cream Ale, Blonde Ale					Lighter food: chicken, salads, salmon, bratwurst; Monterey jack cheese.
2. British-Style Bitter					Wide range of food: roast chicken or pork, fish & chips; mild cheese.
3. Pale Ale					Wide range of food: meat pie, English cheese; great with a burger!
4. India Pale Ale					Strong, spicy food (classic with curry!); bold, sweet desserts like carrot cake.
5. Double/Imperial IPA					Smoked beef brisket, grilled lamb; Southern chicken-fried steak.
6. Amber/Red Ale					Wide range of food: chicken, seafood, burgers; great with spicy cuisine.
7. Scotch Ale/Wee Heavy					Roasted or grilled beef, lamb, game, smoked salmon.
8. Brown Ale, Altbier					Hearty foods: roast pork, smoked sausage, grilled salmon.
9. Abbey Dubbel					Barbecue, meat stews, or a nice thick steak or smoked rib roast.
10. Abbey Tripel, Strong Golden Ale					Spicy Cajun food, crab cakes, pheasant or roast turkey.
11. Old or Strong Ale					Big, intense dishes such as roast beef, lamb or game, grilled or roasted.
12. Barley Wine					Easily overpowers most main dishes. Best with strong cheese or dessert.
13. Porter					Roasted or smoked food: barbecue, sausages, roasted meat, blackened fish.
14. Dry Stout					Hearty, rich food: steak, meat pie; a classic with raw oysters.
15. Sweet or Oatmeal Stout					Rich, spicy food like barbecued beef, Oaxacan mole or hearty Szechuan dishes.
16. Imperial Stout					Easily overpowers most main dishes, but stands up to foie gras, smoked goose.
17. Hefeweizen					Great with lighter food: salads, seafood, sushi; classic with weisswurst
18. American Wheat Ale					Best with very light foods: salads, sushi, vegetable dishes.
19. Witbier					Great with lighter seafood dishes—classic with steamed mussels.
20. Dunkelweizen					Substantial salads; roast chicken or pork; excellent with hearty sausage.
21. Weizenbock					Roast pork, beef, smoked ham or game dishes.
22. Classic Pilsener					Great with lighter food: chicken, salads, salmon, bratwurst.
23. Helles, Dortmunder					Lighter food: salads, seafood, pork; works with spicy Asian, Cajun, Latin.
24. Oktoberfest, Märzen, Vienna					Mexican or any hearty, spicy food; chicken, sausage, pork.
25. Amber Lager					Hearty, spicy food: barbecue, hamburgers, chili.
26. Dark Lager, Dunkel, Schwarzbier					Hearty, spicy food: barbecue, sausages, roasted meat.
27. Maibock/Pale Bock					Spicy food like Thai or Korean barbecue; great with fried chicken, too.
28. Doppelbock					Rich roasty foods like duck or roasted pork shanks; great with cured meats.

Alcohol/volume: 3%  ▶ 10%+ 
 Hop Bitterness: 15 IBU  ▶ 70+ 
 Flavor impact: Delicate  ▶ Intense 

Flavor impact includes: original gravity, sweetness, bitterness, maltiness, roastiness and fermentation character. Glassware symbols may be found on page 10.

Glassware
Serving Temp

Cheese

Dessert

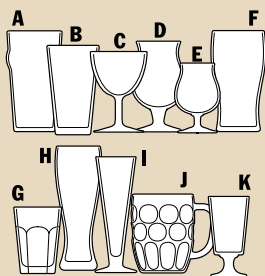
Monterey Jack, brick or similar light, nutty cheese.	Light apricot or mandarin cake, lemon custard tart.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Mild English cheese such as Lancashire or Leicester.	Oatmeal-raisin-walnut cookies or some other satisfyingly basic dish.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
English cheese such as cheddar or Derby with sage.	Pumpkin flan, maple bread pudding, bananas Foster.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Milder blue such as Gorgonzola or Cambozola.	Caramel apple tart, ginger spice cake, persimmon rice pudding.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Sharp and rich American artisanal blue.	Very sweet desserts like carrot cake, caramel cheesecake or crème brûlée.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Port-Salut or other lightly tangy cheese.	Poached pears with dulce de leche, banana pound cake, pecan lace cookies.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Aged sheep cheese: Mizithra or Idiazabal (smoked!).	Brilliant with sticky toffee pudding or chocolate chip shortbread.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Aged Gouda or a crumbly Cheshire.	Almond or maple-walnut cake, pear fritters, cashew brittle.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Washed-rind abbey-type cheese or French Morbier.	Heavenly with milk chocolate; butter truffles, chocolate bread pudding.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Triple-crème such as St. Andre or Explorateur.	Non-chocolate desserts: apricot-amaretto tart, baklava, Linzer torte.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Double Gloucester or other rich, moderately aged cheese.	Spiced plum-walnut tart, classic canoli, toffee apple crisp.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Stilton and walnuts is a classic updated. Who needs port?	Rich, sweet desserts: chocolate hazelnut torte, toffee caramel cheesecake.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Cow milk such as Tilsit or Gruyère.	Chocolate peanut butter cookies, toasted coconut cookie bars.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Irish-type cheese like a Dubliner cheddar.	Chocolate soufflé, tiramisu, mocha mascarpone mousse.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Great with very buttery, well-aged cheddar.	Chocolate espresso cake, cream puffs, profiteroles.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Long-aged cheese: Gouda, Parmesan or cheddar.	Dark chocolate truffles, chocolate raspberry mousse cake.		10–13 °C 50–55 °F
Simple chèvre goat cheese or herbed spread such as Boursin.	Strawberry shortcake, fruit trifle or other very light dessert; key lime pie.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Buffalo mozzarella or Wisconsin brick.	Generally too light for dessert, but could pair with fresh berries or a fruit soup.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Mascarpone or herb cheese spread on crackers.	Banana orange crêpes, blood orange sorbet, panna cotta with lemon.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Soft-ripened goat or smoked Gouda.	Sweet potato tart, peach pecan strudel, banana cream pie.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
Aged provolone or Spanish Manchego.	Tarte tatin (caramelized apple), pine nut torta with dried fruit, banana soufflé.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
Mild white Vermont cheddar.	Light desserts: lemon shortbread, fresh berries with sabayon.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
Wisconsin butterkäse or other soft and mild cheese.	Light desserts: blueberry trifle, cranberry-apple cobbler.		4.5–7 °C 40–45 °F
The perfect beer for spicy jalapeño jack.	Mango or coconut flan, almond biscotti, spice cake with pine nuts.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
White cheddar, jack, brick.	Passionfruit bread pudding, pears poached in doppelbock.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
Authentic washed-rind Münster.	Pomegranate tart with walnuts, candied ginger pear cake.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
Classic Emmenthal Swiss cheese.	Apple almond strudel, white chocolate cheesecake, honey-walnut soufflé.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F
Limburger is a classic!	German chocolate cake, Black Forest cake, dried fruit (rumtopf) rum tart.		7–10 °C 45–50 °F

THE PERFECT PRESENTATION

Like any gastronomic experience, the proper setting and preparation can mean the difference between an ordinary experience and a fabulous one. Here are a few things to consider when enjoying American craft beer and food.

Taste from less to more intense. Alcohol, hops, roast malt and sweetness can tire your palate, so it's wise to put the more delicate beers at the start of the tasting.

Glassware matters. Proper glassware shows off the color, supports the head, and focuses the aroma of beer for the best possible tasting experience. All classic European beer styles have a traditional glass, and American versions usually work well in those. Whatever the glass, make sure it is spotlessly clean. Stronger beers should be served in smaller portions. Symbols in the box below can be seen with the appropriate beers in the chart on pages 8–9. These show the essential types, but many more specialized ones exist.



Glass	ml	Oz
A “Nonick” Imperial Pint	600	20
B American “Shaker” Pint	470	16
C Stemmed Abbey Goblet	330	11
D Large Tulip Glass	500	17
E Small Tulip or Snifter	330	11
F Irish Imperial Pint	600	20
G French “Jelly” Glass	360	12
H Weissbier “Vase”	500	17
I Classic Pilsner Flute	360	12
J Handled Glass Stein	500	17
K Stemmed “Pokal”	330	11

Observe proper serving temperatures. Each beer tastes best at a certain temperature. Serving a beer too cold masks a lot of flavor and aroma. Served too warm, beer loses its wonderful refreshing quality. The proper ranges are given on the chart on pages 8–9.

Control the setting. There are many different types of tasting experiences, from formal judging to casual drinking. In all instances, providing a comfortable environment free from distractions will enhance the experience and show off the beers at their best. Light, noise, smoke, room temperature and many other things need to be considered.

Don't overdo it. Whether in a beer tasting or a dinner, tasting too many beers can lead to palate overload. Try to limit the number of beers to six to eight tasting portions. Beer contains alcohol, so please enjoy responsibly.





COOKING WITH BEER

Because of its wide range of properties, beer makes an excellent ingredient in the kitchen. It may be used in similar ways to other cooking liquids, but requires a few considerations. Match the intensity of the beer to the dish, just as if you were pairing a beer and a finished dish. Bitterness in beer requires special attention. In general, low-bitterness beers

are best for cooking. It is advisable not to reduce beer, as even a slightly bitter beer may become too bitter for the dish. Small amounts of bitterness may be balanced by a touch of sweetness, salt and/or acidity. As always, taste as you cook.

Beer can be used to:

Lighten up a batter. Beer adds a lightness to batter used to deep-fry items like fish and chicken. Beer suggestions: pale or amber lightly hopped lager or ale.

Deglaze the pan. A quick sauce for sautéed or roasted items can be made by using beer to deglaze the pan. Do not reduce the beer, as it may become excessively bitter. Beer suggestions: delicate or intense, to match the nature of the dish, but low-bitterness beers are preferred.

Dressings and marinades. Beer can make a great addition to salad dressings and marinades for grilled meat or barbecue. Acidic ones can substitute for vinegar in dressings. Beer suggestions: Pale, low-bitterness beers for dressings; heartier amber or brown beers for marinades.

Steaming or poaching liquid. Although mussels steamed in wheat beer is a classic, other great combinations are possible. Beer Suggestions: witbier, weissbier, other delicate, lightly-hopped brews.

Replace or augment stock in soups and sauces. Many beers can add richness to hearty soups or meat gravy. Don't make cheese soup without it! Beer suggestions: sweet stout, doppelbock, Scotch ale.

Make dessert even more luxurious. Strong, rich beers may be substituted for other liquids in cakes and other pastries. Fruit beers add another layer to fruit compote or sauce. Or, make beer the star—drop a scoop of ice cream into a glass of imperial stout, and voilà, dessert! Beer suggestions: sweet stout, doppelbock, fruit beer.

A Few Dishes Prepared with Beer

Roast pork loin with apples and cherry ale

Duck glazed with doppelbock

Roast salmon with witbier cream sauce

Grilled steak marinated in red ale and green peppercorns

Roast chicken with dried apricots and weizenbock sauce

Steamed scallops in witbier

Gingerbread brown ale cake

Chocolate imperial stout truffles, dusted with powdered black malt

Barley wine walnut ice cream



ABOUT THE BREWERS ASSOCIATION

The Brewers Association is an organization of brewers, for brewers and by brewers.

Our purpose is to promote and protect American craft brewers, their beers and the community of brewing enthusiasts.

Some of our other programs include:

Great American Beer Festival®—The world's largest gathering of U.S. beers ever served takes place in Denver, Colorado, USA every fall. GreatAmericanBeerFestival.com

World Beer Cup®—The world's largest international beer competition, held every two years. WorldBeerCup.org

Craft Brewers Conference & BrewExpo America®—A conference and trade show dedicated to the needs of small brewers. CraftBrewersConference.com

American Homebrewers Association®—Supporting and advancing the hobby of homebrewing. HomebrewersAssociation.org

Brewers Publications—The leading publisher of books on beer and brewing. BrewersPublications.com



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