

Beer Styles

American Version

Light Lager

Light American Lager

Low levels of all but carbonation. Thirst quenching. Miller Lite, Bud Lite, et al.

Standard American Lager

A bit more. Balanced malt and hop bitterness “Strong flavors are a fault.” Miller High Life, Budweiser, Molson Golden, Corona Extra, Foster’s Lager.

Premium American Lager

More filling, slightly more flavor. Genuine Draft, Michelob, Heineken, Beck’s, Stella Artois, Singha.

Pilsner

Classic American Pilsner

Somewhat lighter than European styles, using rice or corn adjunct grains. What German-American brewers made with available supplies over here. Died out in Prohibition. Found these days in microbreweries and brewpubs only.

European Amber Lager

American versions of these styles tend to be a bit stronger, unfortunately (ever wonder how the Germans can put all that festival beer away? It's not really more than 4.5% alcohol by volume). We tend to overdo the bitterness, as well, as Oregon is fueling an overall American love affair with the hops plant.

Continental Version

Munich Helles

Light, mostly malt flavor but slight “noble” hops component OK. “Helles” is German for “pale.” Spaten Premium, Hacker-Pschorr Münchner Helles, Stoudt’s Gold Lager.

Dortmunder Export

Deeper color, marked by balance with hops and malt. Hard water can be tasted. A mite stronger than others in this category. DAB Export, Ayinger Jahrhundert, Great Lakes Dortmunder Gold.

German Pilsner

Light grainy malt character, sometimes like graham crackers. Light color, brilliant. May have initial sulfury aroma from yeast or water, crisp and bitter. “noble” hops only. Bitburger, Warsteiner, Spaten Pils, Brooklyn Pils

Bohemian Pilsener

Rich complex maltiness, distinct hoppy bite from Saaz hops. Light to deep gold. The original clear, light-colored beer, from 1842. Pilsner Urquell, Budweiser Budvar (“Czechvar” in the US), Staropramen, Dock Street Bohemian Pilsner.

Vienna Lager

A soft, elegant lager with a dry finish, not sweet. Light toasty aroma may be present, hops low. Color light reddish to coppery. Nearly extinct in Austria, popular in Mexico. Negra Modelo, Great Lakes Eliot Ness (Unusual in its strength), Samuel Adams Vienna Style, Wisconsin Amber.

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European
Amber Lager

Oktoberfest / Märzen

Rich German malt aroma, light to moderate toasted character. No hops aroma, moderate bitterness. Initially sweet, but with dry finish. Dark gold to deep orange-red color. Smooth, elegant, complex. Examples: almost any German Oktoberfest import, Goose Island or Samuel Adams Oktoberfest (the last a bit unusual in it's hop aroma).

Dark Lager

Dark American Lager

A somewhat sweeter version of standard or premium lager, with a little more body and flavor. Deep amber to dark brown, may include hints of coffee, molasses, or cocoa from roasted malts. Low to medium bitterness, little hop flavor. "Dark beer for Americans" Dixie Blackened Voodoo, Shiner Bock, San Miguel Dark, Beck's Dark, Saint Pauli Girl Dark.

Munich Dunkel

Aroma like bread crusts or toast, often with hints of chocolart, nuts, or caramel. Can be moderately sweet but not cloying. Deep copper to dark brown in color, often with a red tinge. Full bodied, moderately carbonated. The classic brown lager of Munich. Ayinger Altbairisch Dunkel, Paulaner Alt, Harpoon Munich-type Dark Beer, Dinkel Acker Dark.

Bock Beer
...having nothing
to do with goats,
but from
Einbeck in
northern
Germany.

Once upon a time, dark American lagers were marketed as Bock beers, something exotic and special. It was a simpler time. Remember Genny Bock?

Schwarzbier (Black Beer)

Like a Dunkel, but more so. Darker, roastier, a bit hoppier. Don't expect roasted, porter-like flavor. Einbecker Schwarzbier, Weeping Radish Black Radish Dark Lager, Sapporo Black Beer

Maibock / Helles Bock

A relatively recent introduction, designed to walk a fine line between blandness and too much color. Less rich and often more bitter than a traditional Bock. Hofbräu Maibock, Einbecker Mai-Urbock, Gordon Biersch Blonde Bock, Victory St. Boisterous

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(more German Bocks...)

Traditional Bock

Strong, complex maltiness is the hallmark, hops only enough to balance the malt. Some caramel from the long boil. Clean, can be a bit sweet through to the finish. 6-7% alcohol by volume; a strong, dark, malty lager beer. Einbecker Ur-Bock, Aass Bock, Great Lakes Rockefeller Bock.

Eisbock –freeze it to concentrate the alcohol... popular in Germany and Niagara, like ice-wine. Kulmbacher Eisbock

Light Hybrid Beer

Cream Ale

“A clean, well-attenuated [light-bodied, fully fermented], flavorful American lawnmower beer.” An ale version of the American lager, fermented at warmer temperatures but sometimes with lager yeast. Pre-Prohibition versions were slightly stronger, hoppier, and more bitter. Genny Cream, Little Kings, Dave's Original Cream Ale (Molson).

Blonde Ale

Currently a brewpub favorite, as an entry-level craft ale. Easy-drinking, malty, little hops. Redhook Blonde, Pete's Wicked Summer Brew, many others.

American Wheat or Rye Beer

Pale to yellow-gold, often hazy with suspended yeast in the German hefeweizen style, but the spiciness of the latter is lacking here. Refreshing, in a grainy sort of way. Bell's Oberon, Anchor Summer Beer, Redhook Sunrye, Pyramid Hefe-Weizen.

Continental Version

Doppelbock

Darker, stronger yet (7% to over 10!) Malt, Malt, Malt. Deep gold to dark brown in color, large, creamy, persistent head. Fruity notes possible from interaction with malts, long boil times, and aging. First brewed in Munich by the monks of St. Francis of Paula, esteemed as “liquid bread.” Called “double-bock” by the consumers. Many have names ending in “-ator” in imitation of the prototypical Salvator. Paulaner Salvator, Ayinger Celebrator, Spaten Optimator, Weltenburger Kloster Asam-Bock, Bell's Consecrator, Moretti La Rossa.

Kölch

Native to the Cologne (Köln) region, appellation controlled, even. A delicate, slightly fruity, light-colored ale. Very subtle, and with a short shelf life. Imports are often damaged. When traveling, try PJ Früh, Hellers, Sion, Peters, Dom. Imports sometimes available are Reissdorf, Gaffel, or try Goose Island Summertime, Crooked River Kölch or Harpoon Summer Beer.

Hefeweizen

Over 50% malted wheat in this high-malt beer provide a medium to full bodied light-colored beer, while the presence of yeast brings fruity and phenolic (clove, nutmeg) aromas, sometimes vanilla or even bananalike esters on top. This is a cloudy and fizzy beer. Paulaner Hefeweizen, Schneider Weisse.

Roggenbier

A “weizen” with rye, bringing a different grainy character. Served with or without yeast, and color ranges from light to rather dark amber. Paulaner Roggen,

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Amber Hybrid Beer

California Common Beer

A lightly fruity beer with firm, grainy maltiness, interesting toasty and caramel flavors, and showcasing the signature Northern Brewer hops with their woody or minty qualities. American West Coast original, originally fermented in large shallow coolships to compensate for the lack of refrigeration. A lager yeast is used, but at warmer fermentation temperatures. Anchor Steam is the (trademarked) prototypical example, try also Old Dominion Victory Amber or Flying Dog Old Scratch Amber Lager.

Then there's the German *Dunkel (Hefe-) Weizen*

This is the dark cousin of the Hefeweizen, sometimes cloudy with suspended yeasts, sometimes clear. The full grain richness is still present, with more caramel or roasty character from the darker malts taking some of the phenolic yeasty spiciness of the Hefes. Hacker-Pschorr Weisse Dark, Schneider Dunkel Weiss, Tucher Dunkles Hefe Weizen, Weltenburger Barock-Dunkel

Continental Version

Düsseldorf Altbier

The traditional style of beer from Düsseldorf, Alt refers to the “old-style” use of top-fermented ale yeasts common before lager brewing became popular. Altbiers are malty German beers with assertive hops and some fruitiness from the yeast. Still a good session beer, good for an evening of solving the world's problems. Zum Uerige, Schumacker, Zum Schlüssel, Diebels Alt, Schlösser Alt, Widmer Ur-Alt

Northern German Altbier

A very clean and relatively bitter beer, a bit darker, sometimes more caramelly, usually sweeter and less bitter than Düsseldorf Alts. DAB Traditional, Hannen Alt, Grolsch Amber, Alaskan Amber, St. Stan's Amber, Schmaltz' Alt.

Rauchbier

Should have smoky characters that range from detectable to prevalent in aroma and flavor, but smoothly so, not harsh. Malty sweet and full bodied, low to moderate noble hop bitterness, with an even balance of malt, hops and smoke. Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen, Kaiserdom Rauchbier.

Berliner Weisse

This is a very pale wheat beer, the lightest of all the German weisses. The unique combination of yeast and lactic acid bacteria fermentation produces a light beer that is acidic and highly-carbonated. This and Leipziger Goss are German versions of Belgian beers. Often served in Berlin “mit schuss,” or sweetened with syrup, usually either raspberry or woodruff. I've only ever been offered raspberry in the US, though. 1809 is just making an appearance in Ohio this year. I've had it, but can't find it in retail.

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Pale Ale

(listed this way as few remnants of early Colonist styles remain, in the US it's a revival of the English styles we see.)

American Pale Ale

An American adaptation of English pale ale, but with a twist. Reflecting domestic ingredients, often lighter in color, cleaner in fermentation by-products, and having less caramel flavors than the English versions. And boy, do we love the hops! Usually possesses a moderate to strong hop aroma in addition to the bitterness expected. Hops from the northwest coast growers are citrusy offspring of the Cascade variety, and this character is the identifying feature of American hoppy styles. Pale golden to deep amber in color, with moderately large whiteish head. Refreshing. Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Stone Pale Ale, Great Lakes Burning River Pale Ale, etc.

India Pale Ale

American IPA

“An American version of the historical English style, brewed using American ingredients and attitude.” A decidedly hoppy and bitter, moderately strong American Pale Ale. Prominent to intense hop aroma with the citrusy, floral, piney and/or fruity character of American hops. Medium gold to medium reddish copper, good persistent head. Enough malt to support the hops in all but the most extreme versions. Stone IPA, Victory Hop Devil, Anchor Liberty Ale, Three Floyds Alpha King (referring to the alpha acids that provide hop bitterness), Bell's Two-Hearted Ale.

Continental Version

Standard / Ordinary Bitter

Originally a draught ale served very fresh under no pressure (gravity or hand pump) at cellar temperatures, known as “real ale.” Low density, low alcohol, low carbonation combine to make this really an easy-drinking style. One spends all evening in the pub, and strong ales limit the time one can spend in happy company. Balance is to the bitter, but not so much as to overwhelm the often caramelly malt. Low hop aroma, however, for the high bitterness. Boddington's Pub Draught, Young's Bitter, Adnams Bitter, Brakspear Bitter.

Special / Best / Premium Bitter

More evident malt flavor than an ordinary bitter, and stronger, too, but still one for an evening's worth. Medium gold to medium copper in color, clear, little head due to low carbonation (as for Ordinary). Fuller's London Pride, Shepherd Neame Masterbrew Bitter, Harviestoun Bitter and Twisted, Goose Island Honkers Ale, Roger Younger's Special Bitter.

English India Pale Ale

Brewed specially to support Her Majesty's folks in India, with extra alcohol and hops to preserve the ale during the long voyage. English Pale Ales were derived from IPA. Today, the terminology is muddled between the styles. English hops are grassy, earthy, fruity, not citrusy as American hops are. English malts are more biscuity, toasty, or toffee-like than ours are, too. Sufficient malt is present to support the higher hop levels. Color ranges from golden amber to light copper, most are rather pale. Hard water gives some examples a dry finish, possibly with a not-unpleasant hint of sulfur. Examples:

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Imperial IPA

We can do it, we can make them faster, stronger, better... Outrageously hoppy and strong versions of American IPAs (see also Imperial Stouts, etc.) Not as malty as a barleywine, however. A showcase for hops. Dogfish Head 90-minute IPA, Rogue IPA, Stone's Arrogant Bastard and Ruination IPA, Three Floyds Dreadnaught, Moylander Double IPA.

Brown Ale

American Brown Ale

These range from deep copper to brown in color, with the malty caramel or chocolate notes of the English styles, particularly like the Northern Brown Ale style. As is usual, hops are more distinct and American browns tend to be more bitter than their British cousins. Brooklyn Brown Ale, Great Lakes Cleveland Brown Ale (of course!), Bell's Best Brown, Big Sky Moose Drool Brown Ale

Scottish and Irish Ale

American Amber Ale

Known simply as Red Ales in some regions, popularized in the hop-loving Northwest before spreading nation-wide. Like an American Pale Ale but with more body, more caramel richness, and balanced more toward malts, although hops remain significant. Amber to coppery brown,

Continental Version

(continued) Fuller's IPA, Samuel Smith's India Ale, King and Barnes IPA, Hampshire Pride of Romsey IPA, Shipyard Fuggles IPA, Goose Island IPA.

Mild

A light-flavored, malt-accented beer that is readily suited to drinking in quantity. Refreshing, yet flavorful. Less hoppy than a Bitter. Nearing extinction in Britain, being replaced by high-profile imports like AB Budweiser. Copper to dark brown, almost a light porter. Doesn't travel well. Highgate Mild, Brain's Dark, Coach House Gunpowder Strong Mild, Goose Island PMD Mild.

Southern / Northern (Nut) Brown Ale

Light, sweet malty aroma, with toffee, nutty, or caramel notes. Generally dark, can be almost black. Southern English Brown Ales are darker and sweeter than their northern cousins, which are drier and hoppier. Luscious, rich, like a lighter sweet stout. Newcastle Nut Brown Ale (northern), Goose Island Hex Nut Brown Ale, Mann's Brown Ale (this southern example may not be available in US)

Irish Red Ale

From light red-amber-copper to light brown in color. These ales have a medium hop bitterness, often without hop aroma. Commonly with slight candy-like caramel sweetness, sometimes with a bit of fruity ester flavor and aroma. Examples:

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moderately large, off-white head. Red color most easily comes from toasted malt, not as highly kilned as dark malts such as Chocolate Malt or Black Patent. Mendocino Red Tail Ale, North Coast Red Seal Ale, Bell's Amber, Hoptown Paint the Town Red.

Scottish Light, Heavy, and Export

Scottish Light Ale (60/-)

Sometimes identified by the old prices, 60 shillings, 70, and 80 for an export. Good luck getting a pint at those rates today! A Scottish Light has little to no hop bitterness, but a sturdy malty, caramelly chewiness. Yeast adds a little diacetyl and sulfur, giving a butterscotch note in the background. Color ranges from golden to deep brown. A low level of peaty smoke flavor is a recent introduction, after that other famous malt product of Scotland! Bellhaven 60/-, McEwan's 60/- (not usually seen in the US).

Scottish Heavy Ale (70/-)

Take a Light Ale, and bump everything up a notch. More malt body, balanced by a light touch of hops. A little more caramel, a bit more butterscotch, and a wee bit more alcohol. Caledonian 70/- (Amber Ale in the US), Belhaven 70/-, Orkney Raven Ale, Maclay 70/-

Porters and Stouts

Distinctly American versions of these styles are basically like their British originals, but with more of everything, especially hops, particularly American hop varieties with their citrusy flavors. This doesn't necessarily unbalance the ale, but it does differentiate them from those more true to the style.

Continental Version

(continued...)

Smithwick's Irish Ale, Beamish Red Ale, Murphy's Irish Red (really a lager, as is the less-accomplished Killian's).

Scottish Export (80/-)

The overriding character is sweet caramel and malt. Hops should be subtle if perceptible at all. Again, like a Heavy but up a notch yet again. Orkney Dark Island, Belhaven 80/- (called Scottish Ale in the US), McEwan's IPA (!), Broughton Merlin's Ale, Three Floyds Robert the Bruce.

Strong Scotch Ale (aka a "wee heavy")

Overwhelmingly malty and full bodied. Color ranges from deep copper to brown, The caramel malt is balanced with some sharpness of the roasted malts, some fruitiness or diacetyl from the yeast, and of course, the heat of alcohol. Some of these range up to 8% alcohol by volume. Traquair House Ale, Orkney Skull Splitter, McEwan's Scotch Ale, Broughton Old Jock, Scotch du Silly, Founders Dirty Bastard.

Brown Porter

These are mid to dark brown, possibly with a red tint in transmitted light. No roast barley or strong burnt/black malt character should be present. Not too sweet, low in hop bitterness, can be slightly fruity. Light to medium body. Samuel Smith Taddy Porter, Fuller's London Porter, Shepherd Neame Original Porter, Flag Porter, Geary's London Style Porter, Yuengling Porter.

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Porters and Stouts

American Version

Robust Porter

Black in color with a roast malt flavor balanced with the sharpness of black patent malt without a highly burnt flavor. Malty sweetness remains, Hop bitterness can be high, but aroma restrained. Fruity esters should shine here. Anchor Porter, Great Lakes Edmund Fitzgerald Porter, Sierra Nevada Porter, Thirsty Dog Old Leghumper, Bell's Porter, Avery New World Porter.

Baltic Porter

A misnomer, Baltics are true lagers, but black, with roasted malts and an alcoholic fruitiness without any trace of butterscotch. Tends to be strongly alcoholic. Baltika Porter (Russia), Carnegie Stark Porter (Sweden), Aldaris Porteris (Latvia).

American Stout

This is a hoppy stout, basically. Take a British stout version at right, and increase the hops, particularly the American citrusy varieties. Alcohol should remain 5% or less. Sierra Nevada Stout, Three Floyds Black Sun Stout, Rogue Shakespeare Stout, Bell's Kalamazoo Stout.

(Russian) Imperial Stout

Originally made for the Russian court, which liked them sweet and strong. A big stout, rich in malt body which can support higher hop rates and the strong alcohol flavor (7-8%). American versions are blacker and hoppier, European ones dark copper and caramel-rich. Samuel Smith Imperial Stout, Brooklyn Black Chocolate Stout, Rogue Imperial Stout, North Coast Old Rasputin, Bell's Expedition Stout, Great Lakes Blackout Stout, Avery the Czar, Victory Storm King, Thirsty Dog Siberian Night.

Continental Version

Dry (Irish) Stout

An initial malt and light caramel flavor with a dry-roasted bitterness in the finish which is all from the malt. Hops, while present, should be invisible. This is a light beer with coffee overtones! Low in alcohol, despite the reputation. It comes in pints, after all. Guinness Draught Stout (bottle or can), Murphy's, Beamish, Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout, Brooklyn Dry Stout, Goose Island Dublin Stout.

Export Stout

As above, but a bit more so. Generally higher alcohol balanced with a bit more hops. Lion Stout, Dragon Stout, Guinness Extra Stout (bottled in North America), Jamaica Stout, Bell's Double Cream Stout.

Sweet Stout

Sometimes known as cream or milk stouts, these have less roasted bitter flavor and fuller body, often achieved by adding milk sugar (lactose) which yeasts cannot digest. Hops should balance sweetness without standing out. Mackeson's XXX Stout, Marston's Oyster Stout, Left Hand Milk Stout, Sam Adams Cream Stout.

Oatmeal Stout

Oatmeal provides a pleasant, full flavor and a smooth, silky feel in the mouth, adding richness. Should be caramellike or even chocolaty, with coffee or nut overtones. Bitterness moderate, hops should not shine here. Samuel Smith Oatmeal Stout, Young's Oatmeal Stout, Founder's Breakfast Stout, etc.

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Strong Ales

see also the section of Belgian Ales

Barleywine

English-style barleywines range from tawny copper to dark brown, with full body and high residual sweetness. The complexity of alcohols and fruity esters are often high and balanced by low-moderate bitterness and “extraordinary” alcohol content (8-12%). A caramel and winey or sherrylike aroma and flavor are what is expected. These age well, and could be cellared. Thomas Hardy's Ale, Fuller's Golden Pride, Young's Old Nick. Whitbread Gold Label. Heavyweight Old Salty

American-style barleywines can run from amber to deep copper or garnet in color, with the full body and high malt sweetness of their forbears. Again, the difference between styles is the American use of higher hop levels, sometimes assertively so. Again, beers that can be savored for years after bottling. Sierra Nevada Bigfoot, Rogue Old Crustacean, Anchor Old Foghorn (sensibly sold in 7oz. Bottles), Victory Old Horizontal, Stone Old Guardian, Weyerbacher Blithering Idiot...(you get the idea).

Odds & Ends

Herbs and Vegetables

Then there are a whole range of funny things I'm putting in here for lack of a better choice. These are ales (mostly) with spruce tips, or Scottish heather, or chili peppers in them. Mostly the base beer is one of the described styles, with the unique element substituting for some of the hops, mainly, except when it's CHOCOLATE, which is sort of a malt. Fraoch Heather Ale, Young's Double Chocolate Stout, Rogue Chocolate Stout, Stoney Creek Vanilla Porter...

Continental Version

Old Ale

Dark amber to brown in color, these ales are full-bodied and malty-sweet with minimal hops. Fruity esters and alcohol flavors bring complexity to the ale, and develop with time. These ales are aged, sometimes for years, on the yeast, either in the bottle or in cask, further developing a complex character. Oakiness is acceptable, as is oxidation, like port or sherry. Good sipping beers, distinguished from barleywines by being aged before being released by the brewer. Gale's Prize Old Ale, Burton Bridge Olde Expensive, Harviestoun Old Engine Oil, Theakston Old Peculier, Fuller's 1845.

Winter Warmers

If the thought of sitting by the fire on a cold winters' evening sipping a brandy appeals to you, try these. Winter wamers share most of the qualities of old ales or barleywines, but include additional flavor notes from carefully selected herbs, fruits, or particularly spices. Some brewers vary their recipe each year, making it interesting to compare “vintages.” Anchor Our Special Ale, Harpoon Winter Warmer, Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale, Samuel Adams Winter Lager (!), Great Lakes Christmas Ale, Fuller's Old Winter Ale, Young's Winter Warmer

... Left Hand Ju Ju Ginger Beer, Bell's Java Stout (with coffee), Buffalo Bill's Pumpkin Ale, Cave Creek Chili Beer.

Chilies tend to appear in lagers, and ginger beer is sort of a category by itself, not to be confused with the soft drink.

Beer Styles American Version

Reasons Why Beer is Better Than Religion

10. No one will kill you for not drinking Beer.
9. Beer doesn't tell you how to have sex.
8. Beer has never caused a major war.
7. They don't force Beer on minors who can't think for themselves.
6. When you have a Beer, you don't knock on people's doors trying to give it away.
5. Nobody's ever been burned at the stake, hanged, or tortured over his brand of Beer.
4. You don't have to wait 2000+ years for a second Beer.
3. There are laws saying Beer labels can't lie to you.
2. You can prove you have a Beer.
1. If you've devoted your life to Beer, there are groups to help you stop.

Beer

It is the drink of men who think
And feel no fear nor fetter
Who do not drink to senseless sink
But drink to think the better
-- Anonymous

Continental Version

Beer Web Pages worth checking out:

Beer Advocate www.beeradvocate.com

The Real Beer Pages www.realbeer.com

The Brewers' Association www.beertown.org
Industrial, craft, and home brewers united, sort of.

All About Beer magazine www.allaboutbeer.com

The Beer Travelers www.beertravelers.com

Beer and Cheese pairings

<http://www.allaboutbeer.com/food/232-cheeseandbeer.html>

Pairing Beer with food in general:

<http://www.beertown.org/education/pairing.html>

<http://beertravelers.com/lists/pairings.html>

http://www.tastings.com/beer/beer_and_food.html

Cooking with Beer

www.beercook.com

<http://www.beer100.com/cooking/>

<http://www.belgianexperts.com/kitchen.php>

Summer Institute 2007 Beer Tasting Afternoon Workshop

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Belgian Ales

Witbier

Belgian White ales are very pale in color and contain about half barley malt and half unmalted wheat. Typically they are spiced with coriander and orange peel, and conditioned in the bottle with yeast, resulting in an orangey, fizzy, refreshing beer that is rather cloudy when served. There is a little noble hop bitterness to round things out. Currently a very popular style with American brewers. Hoegaarden Wit, Blanche de Bruges, Sterkens White Ale, Blanche de Brooklyn, Great Lakes Holy Moses, Unibroue Blanche de Chambly, Blue Moon Belgian White.

Belgian Pale Ale

Mostly like a Blonde Abbey Ale, perhaps with a bit more hops, but not to the level of the British Pale Ales. Ommegang Rare Vos might be an American example, although the brewery is owned by a Belgian firm.

Golden Strong Ale

A light colored ale, light in body, often brewed with Belgian “candi” sugar to boost the strength without overdoing malt. Low to medium hops, sometimes herbs or spices add a delicate flavor. Very deceptive with 7-11% alcohol. Duvel, Lucifer, Delirium Tremens, North Coast Pransster, Unibroue Eau Benite.

Dark Strong Ale

Some of these could be called *Quadrupel* if an Abbey brewed them. Amber to dark-brown, medium to full body, low hops, sometimes spiced, with a fruity complexity and roasted malts to provide interest and character. Also brewed with candi sugar, so beware! Alcohol 7-11%. Rochefort 10, Westvleteren 12, Chimay Grand Reserve, Gulden Drak,

Continental Version

Abbey Ales

There are six remaining Trappist abbeys brewing ales in Belgium. Chimay is most responsible for reviving the tradition, but the others are equally serious about it. The others are Westmalle, Westvleteren, Rochefort, Orval, and Achel. Affligem is no longer brewing; those ales are brewed under license from the abbey by a nearby brewery.

Blonde Ale

Light to amber in color, light to medium in body, low-level balance of malt, noble-type hops, and some yeasty fruity or spicy notes. Deceptively stronger than they appear at 5-7% alcohol. Leffe, Afligem, La Trappe (Konigshoeven), Grimbergen, Watou Kapittel Blonde.

Dubbel

Dark amber to brown-colored, medium to full bodied ales with low bitterness and hop aroma. The emphasis here is on a rich nutty, chocolate-like, roasty malt character. Some yeasty fruitiness, especially banana, serves as balance. Strong, 6-7.5% by volume. Westmalle Dubbel, La Trappe, Affligem, Corsendonk Abbey Brown Ale (!), Grimbergen, Chimay Premiere, New Belgium Abbey Belgian Style, Ommegang.

Tripel

Tripels are pale or light-colored ales with a complex, spicy, phenolic flavor produced by the yeasts used. Banana or estery components can also be found. Medium to full-bodied, sugar sometimes is used to keep the alcohol high without adding too much body. These will sneak up on you! Alcohol 7-10%. Westmalle Tripel, Chimay Cinq Cents,

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(continued...) Gouden Carolus Grand Cru of the Emperor, St. Bernardus Abt, Ommegang's Three Philosophers also has some cherry lambic in the blend (see Sour Ales).

Sour Ales

Oud Bruin / Oud Red Ales

This is a Flanders style of deep coppery or brown ale with light malt or even roasted character, low bitterness, no hop aroma or flavor, but fruitiness and a slight to strong *lactic acid* tartness. Oak or woody character may also be present. Liefman's Oud Bruin, Rodenbach Klassick, Rodenbach Grand Cru,

Saison

This French/Belgian style is a light to moderately bodied ale that could be fruity, spicy, strong (4-9%), with herbs, spices, cloves, or even a bit smoky; a "Farmhouse Ale" These brewers pride themselves on making something unique, often with wild yeasts that have been present in the brewery (or farmhouse) for generations. Saison Dupont, Fantome Saison, Saison Silly, Ommegang Hennepin, many others.

Bierre de Garde

Like Saisons, each is distinctive, but here the flavor notes are malts, toasted and sweet, with moderate hop bitterness to balance all. These are golden to deep amber, can be a bit fruity, and can be rather strong (4-8%). La Chouette, La Chouette Bier des Sans Culottes, Sant Sylvestre 3 Monts

Continental Version

(continued...) Corsendonk Abbey Pale Ale (!), Unibroue La Fin du Monde, Brooklyn Tripel.

Lambics

Fermented with "wild yeasts" including ale yeast, *Saccharomyces*, as well as *Brettanomyces*, *Pediococcus*, and others.

Gueuze (pronounced like "goose" with an umlaut)

Aged lambic is mixed with fresh to create this unique style of sour pale beers refermented in the bottle. This is an appellation, ales from outside the Brussels area must be called "lambic-style." Lambics are made with malted barley, unmalted wheat, and stale, aged hops which provide bitterness without flavor or aroma. They can be fruity-estery, sour, acidic, and are probably an acquired taste. Most common brands are Boon, Caltillon, Lindemans, Timmermans, Oud Beersel.

Fruit Lambic

As Gueuze, but with fruits of various kinds added after the initial fermentation, resulting in a dry champagne-like character. Some make great dessert beers. All the lambic brewers are represented, with flavors of:

Framboise raspberries; *Pêche* peaches; *Kriek* cherries; *Cassis* currants, and even banana versions available.

These are not to be confused with American fruit beers, which can be any ale or even lager with fruit added to the final fermentation. These are often good (check for real fruit, instead of extracts or flavorings), but do not have the sour character of lambic-style or genuine lambics.