

BEER SCHOOL

The Tailgater's Introduction
to the World of Beer

By David Kierski

BACK IN COLLEGE, BEER

wasn't a drink. It was a cheap ticket to a heady, sexy world of late nights at the Waffle House and waking up on some stranger's couch. In those days, you didn't care how a beer tasted or where and how it was brewed; all you cared about was how long the liquid courage would take to kick in so you could talk to that cute girl over there. But now you're all grown up, and grown-ups want to focus on the finer things in life. So why, my friend, are you still filling your tailgating coolers with Coors and Bud? Sure, they're okay as gameday beverages go, but don't you know there's a whole world of beer out there with such exotic



Your handcrafted tailgate bar calls for a handcrafted beer!

names as Arrogant Bastard Ale and Dogfish Midas Touch? Here is a brief introduction to the world of beers, with some tips thrown in to help you let your tailgating friends know that beer comes in more than one flavor.

BEER HISTORY

Humans have been drinking beer ever since they started cultivating the land for food. Some scholars think that we learned how to make beer before we learned how to make bread!

The earliest signs of beer brewing were found in modern-day Iran. Archaeologists found pottery fragments that were 7000 years old with traces of beer on them. The first written beer recipe is in a 3900 year-old Sumerian poem. In 1996, archaeologists teamed up with the folks at Newcastle Brewery in England to make Tutankhamen Ale from a beer recipe written in ancient Egypt 3200 years ago. Who says scientists don't know how to party?

From that time to now beer has been a drink of choice in nearly every culture in the world. The recipe has changed since then for sure, and different cultures have their own

version of beer. The beer we Americans know and love today can trace its roots to Europe in the Middle Ages. This is where brewing beer transitioned from an in-home activity to an industry. Some of the first breweries were found in pubs and in monasteries. That's right, monks were some of the first brewmasters! They were the ones who started adding hops to beer, the ingredient that gives it its sharp, tangy taste. They standardized the recipe and probably drank a beer that is similar to the ones we drink today.

HOW BEER IS MADE

Beer is a drink made from brewed grain that has been left to sit for a period of time to allow alcohol to develop. This process is called fermentation. The most basic recipe for beer is this: take grain, steep it in hot water like tea, strain the liquid, boil it, add yeast, let it sit for awhile (called fermentation), and voila! You've got beer.

Of course, there are countless variations on this recipe, like what type of grain you use, what extra ingredients you add, how long you let the beer ferment; the list goes on. For most brewmasters today, from gigantic breweries to

the home brewers, beer making is part science, part art. There are as many different beer recipes as there are people who make beer, but all start out with a type of grain: wheat and barley are the most popular choices. These grains are allowed to germinate (sprout), and are then dried and roasted in a kiln. The grains are ground up and added to heated water to make a concoction a bit like tea. This process is known as mashing. The mixture is then strained and boiled with hops to give it flavor and to aid in the fermenting process. Hops is a flower that gives beer its distinctive, tangy, almost bitter taste. Other ingredients like herbs and sugar can be added during this stage as well. This mixture is then cooled and added to fermentation tanks, where yeast is added. The yeast eats the sugar in the beer and converts it to alcohol and carbon dioxide, our two favorite things about beer. The beer is left in the fermentation tanks from one to three weeks, and then it is bottled, let to sit for a few weeks to finish the fermentation process, and your beer is ready to drink.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BEER

If you walk down the beer aisle today, you'll be

BEER INDULGENCES



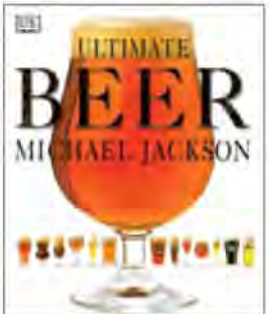
BBQ Tailgater Beer Basket

Get your beer adventure started with this tailgater-friendly microbrew basket. Includes 6 West Coast microbrews, BBQ sauce, steak sauce, pita chips, nuts, BBQ snacks, grill mitt, BBQ tongs, fold-up ice chest. Cannot ship to IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, OK, TN, or UT. \$79.95 at beeronthewall.com.



The International & Domestic Variety Beer Club

Discover unique beers from home and abroad. 12 beers a month from 2 US and 2 international breweries. Four different beer styles per shipment, plus monthly newsletter. \$26.95 plus S&H per month at beermonthclub.com.



Michael Jackson's Ultimate Beer

or someone who is interested in becoming a beer aficionado, this book has it all, from how beer is made, to how to taste beer, to what beer to serve on what occasion with what food. Written by late beer scholar Michael Jackson. \$19.77 at amazon.com.



Tailgaters at the University of Maryland can drink some beer!

Photo by Jay DiEugenio

faced with many different brands and styles of beer with mysterious names: Bock, Pilsner, Lager, Hefeweizen. How can a person make sense of all of these? Let us try to help.

There are two basic categories all beer falls under: lager and ale. The main distinction between these two is the method of brewing. Ales are fermented with a strain of yeast known as top-fermenting yeast, because this yeast rises to the top of the beer while it's fermenting. Ales are fermented at a higher temperature than lagers, which means they finish fermenting more quickly. Because of all this, ales taste sweeter and are slightly fruity. Most ales contain hops, which adds some bitterness to the beer.

Lagers are fermented with yeast that settles at the bottom, and ferments at a lower temperature than ale. Lagers tend to be paler and lighter than their ale cousins, and some of America's most popular beers, like Coors or Budweiser, are lagers.

Here are some of the more common beer styles you may encounter as you are trying to decide on the next beer to sample:

STOUT: Just like the name suggests, this beer is dark and strong-tasting, the black coffees of the beer world. Heavy, almost roasted, chocolaty taste. Example: Guinness.

PORTER: A variation of stouts, these beers are dark, heavy, and strong.

BROWN ALE: Deep amber to brown in color, these ales are strong, with a nutty taste. Examples: Newcastle Brown Ale, Pete's Wicked Ale.

INDIA PALE ALE (IPA): This golden yellow, clear beer is bitter and strong. It was brewed with extra hops and extra alcohol to survive the long trip from England to India. Example: Stone IPA.

HEFEWEIZEN: This light, mild, golden beer is made from wheat. It is cloudy because the yeast is not filtered out of it like most beers. Sometimes served with a slice of lemon to accent the light, fruity taste.

BOCK: This amber-to-dark brown beer is low on bitterness and high on flavor. Monks used to drink it when they were required to fast during the Lent season because of its higher calorie count. Example: the excellent Shiner Bock.

AMERICAN LAGER: This light gold or yellow beer is the most familiar to tailgaters, as most American breweries offer this as their beer of choice. Mild, watery, and in this author's opinion, completely boring. Examples: Coors, Budweiser, Molson.

PILSNER: This light, slightly bitter lager was first brewed in the town of Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Very pale yellow in color. Examples: Heineken, Stella Artois, Amstel.

BEER TIPS

It can be overwhelming when you go out on your own the first time to try a new beer, because the possibilities seem endless. Here are some tips to help you fake it 'till you make it.

- The number one rule is be adventurous! There are hundreds, maybe even thousands, of different beers out there; how boring would life be if you stuck with Bud? You'd be surprised at how different some of those beers taste, too. So take risks; most of the specialty beers out there are available as six-packs, or even individual bottles, so if you don't like the beer you're only out a few bucks. Pick a beer you've never heard of, and give it a try.
- As a general rule, the darker the beer, the more complex and "chewier" it will be. The beers that are almost black in color take some

getting used to; some people call Guinness a meal in a glass because it's so rich and thick-tasting. Also, the lighter the color of the beer, the more refreshing and sparkling it will be. But take note: many of the paler, clearer beers have a bitter, hoppy kick to them.

- The two best ways to learn about beers are to go with someone who knows more than you or to visit your local specialty beer bar. Flying Saucer, a nationwide bar chain, offers over 200 beers, with a descriptive menu to help you pick your beers.
- Visit local breweries. Restaurants that brew their own beers are becoming very trendy these days, and these places are a great introduction to various types of beers. If the brewmaster is there, he'd be delighted to give you an education.
- For the ultimate beer education experience, brew your own!

So there you have it! The next time your buddies come over for the game, or you're



Pour me another!

in the lot for a tailgate, present them with some grown-up beer. If they can swallow their pride, they'll be asking for seconds after their first swallow of beer. And you will be more than a man in their eyes: you will be the Bringer of the Beer. 🍷

***Note: some stadiums don't allow glass containers on their grounds. Be sure you know the policies; you've already spent plenty of time and energy convincing your friends to try something other than Bud; make sure you can actually drink the beer you've carefully selected so you don't give your friends an excuse to ditch the good stuff and remain unenlightened the rest of their lives.

ARE YOU THE ONE?



TAILGATER OF THE YEAR "MODEL" SEARCH*

*Clearly not based on looks alone.

▼ Green Bay's
Green & Gold Gang
2007 Tailgaters of the Year.



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Simply go to our TailgaterMonthly.com website to submit nomination, pictures and contact information. The winners will be featured in our January 2009 issue. Go to TailgaterMonthly.com today and good luck!



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