

Beer Pairing Tips

Pairing particular beers and foods can be an interesting and delicious experience. There are no absolute rules to proper pairings—the goal, after all, is personal taste satisfaction. Here are some brief descriptions of popular styles of beer and recommendations for getting started on making successful matches:

Lambic 	Dry and light, very fruity beers, sometimes tart. Delicious with pastries and fruit desserts or as an aperitif. Also ideal for dishes with cream or butter sauces.
Lager 	One of the world's most popular styles of beer. Smooth, golden beers with a slightly tangy, light flavor and a clean taste. Goes well with fish and strong dishes like curry.
Pale Ale 	Lighter-bodied beers. Moderate tang, sometimes caramel or toasted with a spicy aroma. Great with a wide range of food such as soups, salads, pizza or a burger.
Wheat Beer 	Crisp, lighter beers with a mild flavors. American wheat beers have a distinct, citrus character. Delicious with foods such as salads, sushi or vegetable dishes.
Brown Ale 	Smooth and more full-bodied beers with a distinctive nutty or woody flavor. Goes well with hearty foods such as roast pork, grilled chicken or smoked sausage.
Bock 	Strong, heavy beers either sweet or dry, characterized by caramel, toffee and toasted malt flavors. Delicious with game, lamb, heavy sausage or creamy desserts.
Porter 	Dark ale beers with rich, slightly bitter sometimes sharp taste. Goes well with roasted or smoked foods or strong cheeses.
Stout 	Drier, intense ales with a coffee-like finish. The roasted coffee and chocolate notes in this beer provide a rich complement to shellfish, meat dishes or chocolate desserts.

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How to Choose the Right Beer for Your Favorite Food

There are nearly 13,000 labels of beer available across the U.S., so there is a wide variety of flavors, textures and styles – something for everyone and for every palate.

Beer enhances the flavor of food, but food also enhances the flavor of the beer. There is no better way to learn to appreciate the complexity of hidden flavor within various beers than to pair it with food.

Start by considering the flavor of the beer. Take a slow sip of the beer and try to determine the prominent flavors. Is the beer yeasty or hoppy? Sweet or dry? Does it have a tangy, sharp taste with a clean finish?

Think about how the beer would best relate to foods, keeping in mind that there should be a balance between the two. The beer should either complement or contrast the food.

If you're planning a beer dinner with a different beer for each course, plan to serve lighter beers first and progress through the dinner to the heavier, stronger beers. Serve small portions of beer - about four ounces per course - to ensure that your adult guests enjoy each paired course responsibly.

So, have fun experimenting with various beer brands and your favorite food!

For more information on beer pairings, go to www.nbwa.org.



National Beer Wholesalers Association

1101 King Street, Suite 600, Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 683-4300

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