

Craft Beer GUIDE



Liquor Lends Taste to Craft Beer

Barrel-aged beers are growing in popularity and the practice has expanded rapidly in the past few years.

According to a study published by Cambridge University, the number of U.S. craft breweries producing and releasing barrel-aged beers expanded from just under 300 in 2008 to more than 1,000 by 2014, and is still climbing. In 2026, MarketWatch reported brewers reporting that despite a downturn in beer buying overall, barrel-aged beers continue to rise in popularity.

WHAT IS BARREL AGING?

Barrel-aged beers are beers that have been aged for any length of time in a wooden barrel. Usually, these are recycled barrels from the liquor trade that previously held bourbon, whiskey, wine, brandy, sherry or port. The barrels leave some of their flavor behind in the beer, including charred oak with notes of coconut or sweet spices.

Wine barrel aging sometimes produces a Brettanomyces fermentation, which results in a sour beer, though the souring process has shifted more to kettle souring in recent years.

SOME BARREL-AGED BEERS TO TRY

There are as many barrel-aged beers out there as there are used barrels to age



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them in, each with their own unique character. Here are some barrel-aged beers to try.

The Bruery Black Tuesday: These limited-release bottles are in high demand, so when one comes out, add to your cart quickly. Black Tuesday is an imperial stout aged in bourbon barrels for more than a year. It has notes of crème brûlée and poached fig, malted milk balls and licorice.

Revolution Brewing Straight Jacket: Also a limited release, Revolution's Straight Jacket is a bourbon-barrel aged brew with notes of caramel, stone fruits, brown sugar and vanilla.

Allagash Brewing Curieux: Allagash takes its golden ale and pops it in bourbon barrels for about seven weeks, then blends it with fresh Tripel, creating notes of vanilla, caramel oak and just a splash of

bourbon.

Gigantic Brewing Company's Pipewrench: Gigantic packages up Pipewrench every three months. It's an India pale ale aged in gin barrels for three months. The gin lends the beer a botanical, citrusy flavor, with notes of juniper berries (naturally), orange peel, lemon peel, coriander seed and mango.

Avery Brewing Co. Tequilacerbus: Avery takes their

sour ale and ages it in tequila barrels for months to produce a tart, citrusy beer.

Epic Brewing Big Bad Baptist: A rich imperial stout is aged in whiskey and bourbon barrels before being infused with coffee and cocoa nibs. Even though it's available all year round, each batch gets a different dose of coffee so it may have a slightly different taste.

The Language of Hops

The flowers of the *humulus lupulus* vine serve as the natural seasoning and a preservative in a beer.

Hops all contain the same things. Alpha acids are what's behind beer's bitterness and bite that cuts through malt sugars. They have essential oils that provide a brew's flavor and aroma. Depending on the variety of hops, these can be citrusy, tropical, piney, floral or possessing other flavor characteristics.

Learning how to speak the language of hops can point you to beers that fit your favorite flavor profiles. Here are some popular hops and their flavor profiles.

Hallertauer Mittelfruh: This European hop is probably the most famous of European hops and, as the name suggests, shows up in German and German-style beers. It offers up a gentle, floral profile with a peppery or woody spicy note. Beers to try: Victory Brewing Company Prima Pils, Hill Farmstead Brewery Self-Reliance, Augustiner Brau Lagerbier Hell.

Spalt: Also known as Spalter, this is another German hop known for its delicate, subtle flavor profile. It has earthy, herbal notes and often is found in classic European beer styles such as pilsners and bocks. Beers to try: Short's Brewing Company Alter Spalter, Root Down Brewing Company Single Hopped Spalt, Human Robot



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Splat Select Pils.

Fuggle: The English hop with the funny name has a flavor profile that's earthy, cedary, minty and floral. They're quintessentially English and are often used in traditional British style beers. Beers to try: Pelican Brewing Bad Santa, Summit Ex-

tra Pale Ale, Black Sheep Ale, Adnams Broadside.

Challenger: This hop is usually made into English pale ales and has a tea-like flavor with a lemony, fruity bitterness. Beers to try: Hopback Summer Lightning, Coniston Bluebird Bitter, Sierra Nevada Tumbler Autumn

Brown Ale, The Vaporizer Pale Ale.

Cascade: The American hop that started the hoppy flavor revolution in the States. It has a grapefruit flavor with floral notes. Beers to try: Deschutes Mirror Pond Pale Ale, Founders Pale Ale, Sam Adams '76.

Chinook: A piney American hop with a mellow citrus flavor that plays well with others. Beers to try: Stone Brewing's Arrogant Bastard Ale, Sierra Nevada Celebration Ale, Mikkeller Single Hop Chinook, Fort George Brewing Rock, Paper, Chinook.

The History of Growlers

Growlers are reusable containers, usually glass, ceramic or stainless. The standard size holds 64 ounces or about four pints.

They're typically used to take beer home from breweries or brewpubs, but can also be found at some grocery stores, convenience stores and bars.

THE FIRST GROWLERS

In the late 1800s, beer was transported in pails, pitchers, jars or jugs with the most common being the two-quart galvanized or enameled pail. When the beer was opened at home, the carbon dioxide released by the brew made a growling sound. But some suggest haranguing arguments between the bartender filling the pail and the customer looking for a full pail gave it its name.

Before World War II, Glass Jug Beer Lab says, American children would bring buckets of beer home from the local pub or brewery to workers at lunch time or to their parents at dinner time. Bucket boys were also called by the German term kesseljunges in those communities. By the 1950s, the pails had been replaced with waxed cardboard containers and by the 1960s, most bars had switched to plastic or pre-packaged beers, and the growler faded into obscurity.

MODERN GROWLERS

In 1989, Glass Jug says, Wisconsin microbrewery owner Charlie Otto's father remembered the growlers and offered them to his son as a suggestion for taking beer to go. Otto started putting his logo on half-gallon glass jugs

and today's growler was born. Growlers are often amber or darker glass, which protects the beer from ultraviolet radiation. Some are stainless steel, which helps insulate beer and keep it cold as well as protecting it from UV light. Ceramic growlers have great

insulating capabilities, but they are heavy and tend to be more fragile.

Crowlers are huge, 32-ounce aluminum cans used by craft breweries to package draft beer to go. It's a portmanteau of can and growler. The first crowler was devel-

oped by Oskar Blues Brewery in Colorado who worked with the Ball Corporation of glass jar fame to create an on-demand canning system. If it sounds familiar, Oskar Blues was also the first craft brewery to package its beer in cans in 2002.



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Beer and Cheese Pairings

Beer and cheese go together perfectly, perhaps owing to their very similar processes of making and maturation.

Pair beer and cheese based on the intensity of the flavor: Light cheeses go with light beers, robust cheeses with robust beers. You can use complementary flavors, such as salty cheeses with sweet beers and vice versa.

TRY THESE CHEESE AND BEER PAIRINGS

Start by talking to the experts at your local beer cave or quality liquor store to find craft brews you might like. Then, make a stop at a quality grocery store with a cheesemonger that knows their stuff. Otherwise, try these pairing ideas:

- Sharp cheddar with pale ales or IPAs: The bitterness of the hops in these brews cuts through the sharp, salty cheddar. Some beers to try: Bell's Two Hearted IPA, Ology Brewing Co.'s Hazy IPA, Voodoo Ranger Juicy Haze, Dogfish Head 60 Minute IPA.

- Creamy Brie with a pilsner: Soft, slightly sweet brie pairs well with the citrusy and slightly earthy notes of the beer. Beers to try: Birrificio Italiano Tipopils, Firestone Walker Pivo Pils, Victory Prima Pils, Untitled Art Non-Alcoholic Italian Pilsner.

- Aged gouda with a brown

ale or a bock: Gouda's sweet, nutty flavor pairs well with beer with caramel notes, such as brown ales and bocks. Beers to try: Oyster City Brewing Co. Hooter Brown, Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale, Newcastle Brown Ale, Yuengling Bock, Anchor Bock.

- Blue cheese with stouts and

porters: These pungent cheeses need a strong beer to stand up to its funkiness. Enter the stout and the porter. Beers to try: Boulevard Brewing Whiskey Barrel Stout, Rogue Rolling Thunder Imperial Stout, Founders Breakfast Stout, Great Lakes Brewing Co.'s Edmund Fitzgerald, Deschutes Brewery Black

Butte Porter.

- Gruyere or Swiss cheese with amber ales and lagers: These nutty cheeses go well with the subtle caramel notes often found in these kinds of brews. Beers to try: Fate Tire Amber Ale, Saint Arnold Amber, Red Seal Ale, Joe's Premium American Pilsner,

Jabby Brau.

- Parmesan and other hard cheeses with Belgian Tripel: The crystalline structure of hard cheeses demand a complex, sweet brew like these high-alcohol Belgian beers. Beers to try: St. Bernardus Tripel, Allagash Tripel, New Belgium Trippel.



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Cooking with Stout Beers

Stout beers are great for standing up to big flavors or for their thick, warming characteristics.

This gives them a great profile in recipes of all stripes. Try this stout-flavored stew today.

IRISH BEEF STEW

Recipe is from Taste of Home. Makes about 15 servings.

Ingredients

8 bacon strips, diced
 1/3 cup flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 3 lbs. beef stew meat, cut into one-inch cubes
 1 lb. whole mushrooms, quartered
 3 medium leeks, white portion only, chopped
 2 medium carrots, chopped
 1/4 cup chopped celery
 1 tablespoon canola oil
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 1 tablespoon tomato paste
 4 cups beef broth
 1 cup dark stout beer
 2 bay leaves
 1 teaspoon dried thyme
 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
 2 pounds gold potatoes, cut into one-inch cubes
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 2 tablespoons cold water
 1 cup frozen peas

Directions

1. Heat a stockpot over medium



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heat and cook the bacon until crisp. Remove the bacon to paper towels to drain, reserving the rendered fat in the pot. In a shallow dish, combine flour, salt and pepper. Add the beef, a few pieces at a time and turn to coat. Brown the beef in the bacon drippings and set aside.

2. Using the same pot, sauté the mushrooms, leeks, carrots and celery in oil until tender. Add the garlic and cook a minute longer. Stir in the tomato paste until blended and add the broth, beer, bay leaves, thyme, parsley and rosemary. Return the beef and bacon to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer until the beef is tender, about two hours.

3. Add the potatoes and return to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about an hour longer. Combine the

cornstarch and water, stir until smooth, then stir it into the stew. Bring to a boil, cook and stir until thickened, about two minutes. Add peas and heat through. Remove the bay leaves and serve.

CHOCOLATE STOUT CAKE

Recipe is from Allrecipes. Makes 12 servings, or one serving. We don't judge.

Ingredients

For the frosting:
 2 cups dark chocolate chips
 1 1/2 cups white sugar
 1/4 cup water
 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 3 tablespoons Irish cream liqueur
 3 tablespoons unsalted butter

For the cake:

1, 11.2 ounce bottle stout beer
 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
 1 3/4 cups flour
 1 cup cocoa powder
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 3/4 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup unsalted butter
 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
 1 cup dark brown sugar
 1/2 cup white sugar
 2 large eggs, room temperature
 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions

1. To make the frosting, place the dark chocolate chips in a large bowl and set aside. Combine 1 1/2 cups sugar, water and corn syrup in a light-colored, tall-sided saucepan. Place the pan over medium heat and cook, swirling occasionally, until it turns deep amber in color, about 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and carefully pour in the heavy cream. The mixture will bubble and then seize; this is OK. Place the pan back over low heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Allow the mixture to boil for five minutes, then pour the caramel over the chocolate chips. Allow it to stand for one minute. Stir until the chocolate is melted and smooth, then add the vanilla and Irish cream. Stir until combined. Add the butter, a tablespoon at a time, until all three tablespoons are incorporated. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and set aside to cool for four to six hours, stirring occasionally.

2. Let's make the cake: Combine the stout beer and a tablespoon of dark brown sugar in a saucepan over

medium heat. Bring it to a simmer, stirring occasionally until the mixture has reduced to a cup, about 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans.

3. Sift together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside. Beat 1/2 cup unsalted butter, vegetable oil, 1 cup of the dark brown sugar and 1/2 cup white sugar in a large bowl or using a stand mixture until light and fluffy, about 3-4 minutes. Add in the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Beat the mixture for four to five additional minutes after adding the last egg. Mix in the sour cream and two teaspoons of vanilla.

4. Pour in half the dry ingredients and mix on low until just combined. Pour in the cooled stout mixture and mix until just combined. Add in the remaining dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Divide the batter between two cake pans. Tap the pans on the counter to remove any large air bubbles.

5. Bake in the preheated oven until the tops of the cakes spring back lightly when touched, 30-35 minutes. Allow the cakes to cool in the pans for 20-30 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely for about an hour. Once the cakes and the frosting are both cooled, place one cake layer on a serving platter. Top with about a cup of frosting, then spread it into an even layer. Top with the remaining cake and pour the remaining frosting over the top of the cake and smooth over the top and sides until completely frosted.

Women in Craft Brewing

Women were once the primary brewers of beer.

Often called alewives, the women made the beer for both domestic and commercial consumption, with some women even becoming famous for it.

Yi Di, according to Chinese legend, is credited with making the first alcohol from rice grains. In ancient Sumeria, Ninkasi was the goddess of brewing and in ancient Egypt, brewing was watched over by the goddess Hathor.

St. Hildegard of Bingen is credited with adding the first hops to beers. In Finland's legends, Louhi of Kalevala made beer by mixing bear saliva with honey. Elizabeth Pease supplied beer to Temple Newsam in Yorkshire for more than 30 years in the 18th century. Martha Jefferson, wife of Thomas Jefferson, was well known for her wheat beer. Mary Lisle is said to be the first commercial brewer in the American colonies and Susannah Oland and her husband operated a popular Canadian brewery in the 19th century. Her recipe became the basis for Canada's oldest independent brewery, Moosehead.

MODERN WOMEN TO WATCH

The traditions of yore have continued well into today, with women taking top places at modern craft breweries. Here are some women (and breweries!) to watch.



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Liz Preston, Prestonrose Farm and Brewing, Arkansas: Preston brews beer as fast as she can at her small, organic farm and small-batch brewery in Paris, Arkansas.

"We hope to offer the farm/brewery as a venue, as an educational opportunity for students and community members to come to learn everything from cheese and beer making to composting to harvest and storage of food," Preston told CraftBeer.com.

Amicus Brewing, Florida: Amicus Brewing Ventures was founded by four Tallahassee women, Alison Denny, Mary Sheen, Laura York and Laura Barrett, along with their families. The brewery is in the city's Old City Waterworks building downtown, where it hosts events and has a taproom, and is a neighbor to other local breweries in Proof, Fools Fire and Oyster City. "You are really starting to get a brewery district (in Tallahassee),"

co-owner Rev. Sheldon Steen says.

Jess Reiser, Burial Beer, North Carolina: Burial Beer is known for its unique, forward-thinking flavors, CraftBeer.com says. Reiser says she sees craft breweries turning more to historical beers such as pilsener and Kolsch. "Finding complexity in the things that appear to be simple and understanding this history and processes behind beers," she told CraftBeer.com.

THE PINK BOOTS SOCIETY

The Pink Boots Society is an organization that focuses on women in the fermented and alcoholic beverage industry. It was founded in 2007 by Teri Fahrendorf, a brewmaster who wore pink boots as she traveled on a 139-day guest brewing road trip across the country and back. Today, it hosts educational webinars, holds an annual conference, and, last year, launched a mentorship program.

The Wellness Bandwagon

It may seem incongruous at first, but wellness and breweries are starting to intersect in unexpected ways.

As craft breweries grow, their taprooms are starting to become community third spaces, where people gather for all kinds of reasons, not just for getting a cool, refreshing brewski.

FITNESS CLASSES

Breweries are hosting yoga, pilates and other kinds of wellness classes, usually including a post-workout recovery pint. Ales and Asanas offer yoga classes featuring craft beer in Florida and Pittsburgh. “It will be sure to cure what ALES you,” their website says. The classes are designed to get you moving, but also to socialize and try new brews.

First Magnitude Brewing Co. offers yoga at its Gainesville, Florida, brewery every Sunday for a suggested donation of \$5 for one of its partner organizations. Seven Arrows Brewing Company in Virginia holds classes for \$15 per class, which includes an hour of yoga and the drink of your choice.

Some breweries host running or cycling clubs, followed by a beer—for recovery purposes, of course. The Sloppy Moose Running Club in Sacramento, California, meets every Thursday at New Helvetia



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Brewing Company. It was founded in 2013 and its mascot is founder Kyle Blaikie’s dog. Happy’s Running Club in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, meets every Thursday at Happy’s Irish Pub on Third Street in Baton Rouge.

WELLNESS BREWS

Craft breweries are also turning to wellness beers or

recovery beers. These are brews loaded with sea salts, electrolytes and other ingredients that help tired bodies recover. Take, for instance, Harpoon Brewery’s Rec League. It’s a low-calorie New England IPA with Mediterranean sea salt, buckwheat kasha and chia seeds. Sufferfest Beer Company offers its FKT Pale Ale with salt and vi-

tamin C from blackcurrants. Dogfish Head has a Sea-Quench Ale that’s a refreshing session sour brewed with black limes and sea salt.

BEER SPAS

Some breweries are going full spa day, offering brew-centric treatments such as hop-infused hydrotherapy and massage therapies. The

Orlando-area Beer Spa offers unique treatments such as the hop soak with minerals and antioxidants. The company says the soaks can relieve muscle pain, help improve circulation, reduce blood pressure and improve your immune system. Oh, and it comes with a self-serve beer. Wine is available at an additional charge.