

The Best Beers for New Homebrewers



HomeBrew

A C A D E M Y

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Some beers are more difficult to brew than others.

Certain styles require complex techniques, exotic ingredients, and extended aging.

Thankfully, just because a beer is harder to brew doesn't mean that it's better. "Better" depends on your tastes, but I'm going to generalize. Take for example, the Lambic ales of Belgium. They are difficult to brew, but they only appeal to a small niche because of their intense sourness. American Ales (e.g. Pale Ales, Ambers) on the other hand are very popular and you can make a fantastic one on your very first batch.

In fact, my favorite styles to drink and brew are American ales. They are straightforward to make and are ready to drink without much waiting.

There are close to 100 styles of beer. It's hard enough to know what they all are, let alone what it takes to brew them. If you're a new brewer, this report will guide you toward the styles that will give you the best chance for success.

Let's get down to some beer-talk...

American Pale Ale

Hops, hops, hops. American pale ale made its mark because of this small green flower. It gives this beer style a big, citrusy aroma and refreshingly crisp bitterness. They are not quite India Pale Ales (IPAs) – pale ales do have contribution from the malt, which is what makes them so drinkable. The excitement in brewing pale ales is finding that winning hop combination that makes the aroma jump out of the glass and put a smile on your face.

Commercial Pale Ale Examples:

- Sierra Nevada Pale Ale
- Deschutes Mirror Pond
- Dale's Pale Ale



American Amber Ale

An amber ale is a darker, maltier version of a pale ale. It retains the fragrant, citrusy hop character, but the caramel flavor of the malt really shines through. It is the ultimate in balance, with just enough sweetness to counteract the bitterness. These beers are fun to brew because they allow for endless experimentation with malt and hop varieties. It's hard to find a better crowd pleaser than an amber ale.



Commercial Amber Ale Examples:

- Troegs Hop Back Amber
- Red Seal Amber
- Boont Amber Ale

American Brown Ale

Brown ales are the next stop down the road towards maltiness. Plenty of people fall in love with brown ales the way that hop heads adore their pales. Darker malts add a slight bit of roast and a rich, creamy caramel flavor. Chocolate flavors emerge as well. This is another fun style to experiment with, whether it's making a nut-brown ale or even adding maple syrup (my favorite).

Commercial Brown Ale Examples:

- Brooklyn Brown Ale
- Moose Drool Brown Ale
- Sierra Nevada Tumbler



Porter

Porters are deceiving. They're very dark, sometimes jet black, but medium bodied and refreshing. Porters prove that dark doesn't equal heavy. They add to the rich caramel flavors in brown ales with chocolate and coffee notes. They have very little bitterness and a soft, velvety mouthfeel. I think every homebrewer should have porter in stock at all times, but be careful; this is one of those styles where you'll look down at your glass and wonder where your beer went.

Commercial Porter Examples:

- Deschutes Black Butte Porter
- Samuel Smith Taddy Porter
- Great Lakes Edmund Fitzgerald Porter



Wheat Beer

There are three different types of wheat beers that are great for the new homebrewer to try. You can make an American wheat, with its clean, refreshing flavor and high carbonation. Or you could make the German version of a wheat beer called a hefeweizen, which has delicious banana and clove flavors.

Finally, you could make a darker version of the hefeweizen called a dunkelweizen. It has the banana and clove flavors but adds more malty, biscuity flavors. The combination is astounding.

Commercial Wheat Beer Examples:

- Sierra Nevada Kellerweiss
- Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier
- Bell's Oberon Ale



Bonus Styles

While those are my top picks for beginner beer styles, there are a number of other ones you could brew right off the bat without much difficulty. Remember, it takes repeated tries to get a recipe just right, but there's no reason your first brew can't be great. Much of the fun in brewing is perfecting your very own recipe (and drinking your attempts).

- **India Pale Ale:** A pale ale on steroids for the true hop head. Commercial examples:
 - Dogfish Head 60 minute IPA
 - Bell's Two Hearted Ale
 - Green Flash West Coast IPA
- **Old Ale:** A fantastic winter beer with robust, toffee-like malt flavors. Commercial examples:



- Samuel Smith Winter Warmer
- Great Divide Hibernation Ale
- Founders Curmudgeon
- **Sweet Stout:** It's jet black with the classic stout roasted flavors, but there's enough sweetness to keep it highly drinkable.

Commercial Examples:

- Left Hand Milk Stout
- Young's Double Chocolate Stout
- Duck-Rabbit Milk Stout

So there you have it...

What I love about homebrewing is that you don't have to wait years until you can brew interesting styles. Did you notice the variety in the ones listed? You have beers that are hoppy, malty, light, and heavy. Pick what you like and brew it.

Just because these are the easier styles, it doesn't mean that you can just wing it and have an award winning beer. No, brewing great beer requires keen knowledge of the brewing process. For this reason, new brewers normally go through a rough patch where their beer is...unappetizing.

The Homebrew Academy smooths out the bumps in the road by helping new brewers create great beer from the very beginning, while keeping the process easy to follow.

Members are taught how to brew the styles in this report (plus more) by learning the right hops, malt, and yeast to use, while using example recipes as a reference.

If you want to brew one of your favorite types of beer, or want to make something completely nuts, [go see what The Homebrew Academy has to offer](#).

Best Regards,

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