

U.S. Cheese & Beer APPRECIATION *Guide*

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History OF CHEESE & BEER *in America*

America is a nation of immigrants, and many of our traditions reflect our immigrant ancestry. One of those traditions is a love for cheese. In fact, when the first pilgrims arrived in America, they brought cheese with them on the ship. As more people arrived in America and began to settle the land, they found rich soil and lush grasses that reminded them of their European homelands. Soon they began farming the land, and as they grew grain for their breads, they stored any surplus for use over the long, cold winters. The pilgrims made grain stalks into hay, so cattle could graze on lush pasture grasses in the summer and eat hay and grain in the winter. This steady source of milk, cream and butter started our dairy traditions, and cheese making followed soon after.

In addition to having a taste for cheese, many of our ancestors brought with them the expertise of cheese making. Using centuries-old recipes and traditional methods, they quickly began making cheese with any surplus milk available, first for themselves, and then for others. An industry was born, and it started a long tradition of cheese making in the United States that continues today. Our industry has pioneered research in dairy science and cheese making, yielding tremendous production efficiencies and an unparalleled safety record. Today, the United States is the largest cheese producing country in the world, crafting hundreds of different varieties of cheese and over five million metric tons annually. Our cheese is of the highest quality and consistently wins top honors at international competitions. We are justifiably proud of the heritage, craftsmanship and quality of the cheese that our cheese makers produce.

In the early days, before the Revolutionary War, beers in America were like beers in England, brown ales and porters. The influx of central European immigrants in the 1800s brought with them a demand and ability to produce the lagers, especially the pilsners, of their homelands. Around 1830, German immigrant David G. Yuengling founded a brewery that produced pilsner in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. The D.G. Yuengling & Son brewery is the oldest continuously operating

brewery in the United States. By the 1880s, pilsner was king, with brands like Anheuser-Busch's Budweiser, named after the town of Budweis in Bohemia.

The Great Depression put many breweries out of business and led to the consolidation of the brewing industry in America. At the end of our first hundred years as a nation, America boasted 2,700 breweries. By the end of the second hundred years, that number was down to 40, all of which produced basically the same beer. Like the trends in wine, bread and cheese, America has reawakened to the pleasures of quality crafted beers. What started in California with Fritz Maytag of Anchor Brewing and the gang at Sierra Nevada Brewing has spread to every corner of the country. Almost every major city in the United States has at least one brewery or brewpub, producing top quality, local craft brews.

Pairing CHEESE & BEER

Pairing cheese and beer is a tradition that dates back to the origins of each. They both started as farm products that were consumed daily. Cheese and beer are two of the primary ingredients in the traditional English "ploughman's lunch," along with pickled vegetables, cold meats and dark bread. Maybe this is why the pairing of beer and cheese does not have the panache of its more upscale cousin, wine.

Any good flavor combination challenges the palate by using flavors and textures that either complement or contrast each other. When pairing cheeses with beers and ales, the flavors seem to mingle together more than sharply contrast or sweetly complement. Nutty and buttery flavors meld with the sweet richness of the malt. Sharp or piquant notes in an aged cheese can be balanced with the pleasantly bitter bite of hops. Hops also add fruity, sometimes citrus, aromas and flavors to some beers and ales that play well off the fruity flavors in some cheeses. Yeast can impart a wide variety of flavors and aromas, the best known being that unmistakable aroma of fresh baked bread. Beer and ale have been referred to as "liquid bread," and what better to have with cheese than bread!

Soft-Fresh CHEESES

***Cream cheese** and **mascarpone** can be served plain or used with other ingredients—for instance, to make sweet or savory dips and spreads. Because of their high moisture content, these cheeses carry other flavors well. Sweet flavors from fruits or liqueurs go well in both. They also work well with savory flavors like fresh herbs or garlic.*

CHEESE

Cream Cheese

Creamy texture and flavor. Also available in reduced fat varieties.

Mascarpone

A triple cream style of cheese containing over 72% milkfat. Rich, creamy texture and flavor.

BEER

Saison

Translated “season,” it refers to the spring, when beers were brewed to hold for the summer and early fall. Brightly hopped and with an alcohol content of 6.5%, these beers maintain their crisp flavors through the hot months, and the use of adjuncts like orange peel, herbs and spices make these beers interesting and lively.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

For plain, fruit, or sweetened varieties of soft fresh cheese, serve with butter cookies, gaufrettes, ginger snaps, shortbread or vanilla wafers, or with fresh berries such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, or blueberries. For herbed or savory varieties, serve with assorted vegetable crudités or crackers.

Mascarpone & Saison-Style Ale

Mascarpone is a rich, buttery cheese that takes on the flavors around it. Pair mascarpone with a complex, fruity, saison-style ale, whole-grain crisp bread and radishes for a memorable combination of tastes and textures.

Soft-Ripened CHEESES

*The category includes **brie** and **camembert**. When selecting a beer to pair with these cheeses, a major factor to consider is the age or ripeness of the cheese. Pair younger brie with milder, maltier beers. Pair ripe or mature brie with fuller, more complex beers.*

CHEESE

Brie and Camembert

When young, brie and camembert have mildly earthy and buttery flavors and a firm texture. As they ripen, the flavors become more buttery and distinctly earthy. At the same time, their texture becomes soft, silky and creamy.

BEER

Fruit Lambics

Lambic ales are made using an ancient method employing spontaneous fermentation. Lambics are aged a minimum of 4-5 months to a few years, becoming more complex and subtle with age.

Frambozen/Framboise and Kriek

Fruit beers with raspberries (framboise) or tart cherries (kriek) that can be either sweet or dry and are based on lambics. They can vary greatly in flavors.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Tropical fruits, melons and fresh berries. Also stone fruits like peaches, nectarines and cherries. Plain water crackers, crusty sourdough bread.

Brie & Cherry Kriek

Brie softens as it ripens and develops a fuller aroma. When paired with fresh figs, grapes, water crackers and belgian-style cherry ale, brewed with the addition of whole tart cherries, brie completes the picture. Rich, creamy brie is balanced by the tart finish of this unique beer.

Semi-Soft CHEESES

*One common denominator in this group of cheeses is that all are made with whole milk and have creamy flavors and textures; many are American Originals. Semi-soft cheeses are separated into two distinct categories: **dry rind** and **washed rind**.*

***Dry rind semi-soft cheeses** have no surface ripening and are the mildest. Among these are monterey jack, muenster, fontina and havarti.*

***Washed rind or surface ripened semi-soft cheeses** yield strong, earthy flavors, and pungent aromas. In particular, limburger and brick tend to pair better with beer than wine.*

CHEESE

Monterey Jack

Monterey Jack has a delicate, buttery and slightly tart flavor. Available plain and in many flavored versions, including hot peppers (pepper jack), herbs and spices.

Havarti

Havarti is a supple and creamy cheese. Available plain and in a variety of savory flavors including garlic and herb, dill, caraway, and horseradish.

BEER

Tripel

An abbey/trappist ale fermented with triple the malt of the standard brew. This results in a very high alcohol content—about 9%. Straw to pale apricot in hue, these beers have a tall, alpine-looking head, described as “rocky,” with bright fruit flavors, malty center and minimal hops aroma or flavor.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Red or green grapes, tart apples including granny smith and mcintosh. Pears and stone fruit like nectarines, apricots or peaches. Plain butter crackers, wheat crackers and full-flavored breads including rye, herbed and multi-grain.

CHEESE

Surface-Ripened Brick

Brick was named for its shape and because cheese makers originally used bricks to press the moisture out of the cheese. This cheese has a full, earthy flavor with just a touch of nuttiness when young but turns pungent and tangy when aged.

BEER

Pale Ale/Bitters

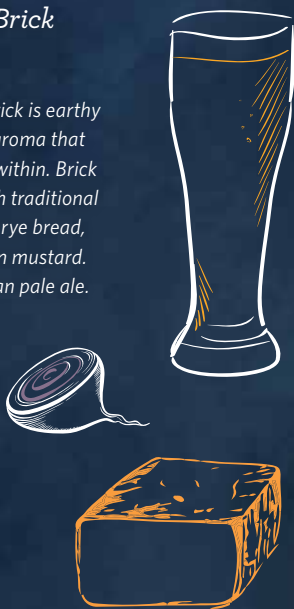
A broad category with strong regional differences, they vary in strength from 3.5%—“ordinary” bitters—to 5.5% extra special bitters and can be dark gold to dark amber in color.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Onion, shallots, chives, mustards, dark breads.

Surface-Ripened Brick with Pale Ale

An American Original, brick is earthy and nutty with a potent aroma that belies the milder flavors within. Brick cheese is best served with traditional accompaniments of dark rye bread, red onion and whole grain mustard. It pairs well with American pale ale.



Blue CHEESES

*This group includes **blue** and **gorgonzola**. There are dozens of different blue cheeses made in the United States, and while each has its own unique flavor and texture, most react similarly with beers.*

CHEESE

Blue Cheese

Blue cheese ranges in texture from firm and crumbly to creamy. Flavors vary but are typically sharp, piquant and full flavored.

Crumbly Gorgonzola

Gorgonzola is produced in two different styles: crumbly and creamy. Crumbly or aged gorgonzola is similar to traditional blue in flavor and texture and pairs well with similar beers.

BEER

Barley Wine

A dark, well-aged brew that is rich and malty, with multiple layers of flavor. Quite strong, usually over 8% and up to 14% alcohol content, with minimal carbonation. Barley wine, capable of aging for years, is considered the sherry of beers, and as such should be sipped, not quaffed.

Doppelbock

Developed by German monks to help them with fasts, this beer is quite dark and strong, with toffee and coffee flavors and a bit of sweetness on the finish.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Pears, including d'anjou, bosc, bartlett or red asian. Sweet apples including fuji, golden delicious and jonathan. Unsalted nuts, especially pecans. Honey roasted or candied nuts. Plain crackers, sourdough, crusty bread.

A background image featuring a glass of beer with a thick head of foam, a plate of cheese, and a plate of roasted pecans.

CHEESE

Italian-Style Creamy Gorgonzola

The most traditional style of gorgonzola is italian-style or creamy. This style has a creamy texture with a flavor that is more earthy than sharp. Accordingly, it calls for different beer choices.

BEER

Dubbel

An abbey/trappist ale fermented with twice the amount of malt, using aged hops. The resulting beer has pronounced malt aromas and flavors, without the bitter quality imparted by fresh hops. Dark brown, with fruity aromas and flavors, this beer weighs in at around 7% alcohol.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Pears including d'anjou, bosc, bartlett or red asian. Walnuts, hazelnuts, macadamia, pecans. Roasted garlic, plain crackers, crusty bread or ciabatta.

Blue & Gorgonzola with Abbey-Style Ale

Blues and gorgonzolas, while both full flavored, differ in that blues are typically more sharp and piquant, while gorgonzolas are more earthy and less salty. When paired with abbey-style ale, pears and walnuts, these cheeses contrast the sweetness in the pears, while marrying with the rich yeastiness in the ale.

Gouda & Edam CHEESES

*Both **gouda** and **edam** are available mild or aged. Both cheeses pair well with a range of beers, in particular the smoked and seasoned varieties (caraway, cumin, etc.).*

CHEESE

Gouda and Edam

Mild gouda is typically made with whole milk and has the creamiest texture. Edam is typically made with part-skim milk and is firmer. Their flavors are best described as buttery and nutty.

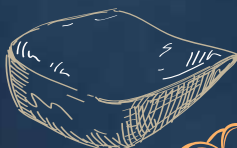
BEER

Brown Ale/Nut Brown Ale

Deep amber colored, these medium-bodied beers vary regionally, typically showing fruity character from the yeast, rich, biscuity malt and balanced bitterness.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Stone fruit including apricots, plums, cherries, nectarines and peaches. Fresh or dried tropical fruits like pineapple, mango and banana. Rye, pumpernickel or whole wheat crackers or breads.



CHEESE

Aged or Smoked Gouda and Edam

Known as sweet curd cheeses, buttery and nutty flavors intensify with age, yielding flavors like caramel or butterscotch. Smoked versions come in two styles, naturally smoked wheels and brine smoked.

BEER

Bock

Typically dark, full-bodied and strong with rich malt and toffee flavors and mild hops bitterness.

Porter

Full-bodied with rich, dark malt flavors, porters are usually about 5% alcohol. Caramel and chocolate flavors are balanced by the hops' bitterness and the fruity aromas of the ale yeasts.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Similar accompaniments as mild gouda with the addition of cherries, cranberries or other dried fruit. Nuts including cashews, pecans, almonds and macadamia. Whole wheat, rye, and multi-grain breads, crackers. Also, lavosh or flatbread.

Smoked Gouda with Bock Beer

Paired with a rich, malty bock beer, the smoky flavors of the gouda contrast with the sweetness in the beer.

Pasta Filata

CHEESES

Pasta filata translates in Italian to “spun paste or curd,” and refers to the cheese making procedure where fresh cheese curds are dipped in hot water and stretched or pulled like taffy.

*In the United States, **mozzarella** is made in a wide range of styles, including fresh high moisture, low moisture, part-skim milk and whole milk.*

***Provolone** is always made from whole milk and is available mild or aged in a wide range of shapes and styles, smoked or plain.*

CHEESE

Fresh Mozzarella

Fresh mozzarella is typically packed in water and has a fresh, clean milky flavor and a soft, creamy texture.

BEER

Dunkel

Translated as “dark,” dunkels are an old style of lager. They have distinctive aromas of bread with full malt flavors and moderate bitterness.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Traditional ingredients of basil, tomatoes and olive oil (caprese salad). Olives, pickled vegetables and cured meats.

Provolone with Vienna-Style Lager

Provolone starts mild and becomes more flavorful, pungent and piquant with age. Paired with a malty vienna-style lager, this cheese completes a perfect antipasto.



CHEESE

Mild Provolone

Provolone is made similarly to mozzarella, but always uses whole milk. Also, cheese makers use more and different cultures in the production of provolone, which yields a much fuller flavor.

BEER

Witbier

Belgian-style wheat beer, light bodied with distinct citrus tang and tart apple flavor, pale yellow, almost white (wit) and hazy from the yeast, with brilliant carbonation.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Fresh or dried figs, apricots. Antipasto platters with a variety of olives, pickled vegetables and cured meats. Focaccia, ciabatta, french baguette, sourdough.

CHEESE

Aged/Sharp Provolone

As provolone ages, it develops sharp, piquant flavors, and its texture becomes more granular.

BEER

Vienna-Style

Copper-bronze colored with noticeable sweetness and deep, caramelized malt flavors, this beer finishes off dry, with restrained bitterness.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Olives, pickled vegetables, cured meats. Focaccia, ciabatta, french baguette, sourdough.

Cheddar & Colby CHEESES

Cheddar is the most popular cheese in the United States and the world. Different styles and different ages of cheddar make each one distinctive.

Colby, an American Original, is named after its town of origin in Wisconsin; it is similar to mild cheddar.

CHEESE

Mild Cheddar and Colby

Mild cheddar is aged over 30 days. Its texture is firm and elastic. It has a slightly sweet aroma, mild flavors and a slightly tart finish.

BEER

Mild Scottish Ale

Golden to reddish-brown, these ales have a distinct malty character, described as “biscuity.” Hops, if detectable at all, are only in the mouth, not the nose. Medium mouthfeel.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Mild or tart apples including rome, gala, red or golden delicious. Also, pears and grapes. Plain water crackers, butter crackers, sourdough bread.

Aged Cheddar with Stout

There is a reason cheddar is the most popular cheese in the world—its taste. Almost impossible to describe, aged cheddar incorporates flavors as disparate as fresh fruit and beef broth. Paired with a rich, espresso-like stout, the combination is magic on the palate.



CHEESE

Medium Cheddar

Medium cheddar is traditionally aged over 90 days. It has a more creamy texture than mild cheddar and a slightly brothy flavor.

BEER

Dortmunder Export

Developed in the mid-1800s, this beer has golden honey color with firm malt flavors and a dry finish with moderate hops.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Mild or tart apples including fuji, jonathan, mcintosh. Green grapes, red asian pears. Plain crackers, butter crackers.

CHEESE

Aged Cheddar

Cheddar can be aged for months or years. As it ages, the cheese develops full, sharp, almost beefy flavor. Cheddar aged from 2 to 5 years is a good choice.

BEER

Stout

Stouts are black, not dark brown. Styles include english, irish, cream, oatmeal and imperial.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Tart apples like granny smith, mcintosh, or pippin. Pears and dates. Pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts. Water crackers, butter crackers, seeded breads.

A wooden cheese board is the central focus, featuring several types of cheese including a wedge of Swiss cheese with holes, a block of Gruyere, and some smaller pieces. Accompanying the cheese are several round crackers, some whole almonds, and a few cashews. In the upper right corner, a glass of beer with a thick head of foam is partially visible. The entire scene is set against a dark blue background.

Swiss CHEESES

Aged swiss and baby swiss contain holes or “eyes” as the cheese makers refer to them. As these cheeses age, certain cultures produce carbon dioxide, which expands to form the holes.

Gruyere and raclette are also swiss-style cheeses but are washed rind or surface ripened. They have very few eyes and develop more intense buttery and earthy flavors with age.

CHEESE

Baby Swiss

Baby swiss, an American Original, is made with whole milk and has a mild buttery, nutty flavor and a creamy texture with small, pea-size holes or eyes.

BEER

Helles

Germany’s answer to Bohemia’s pilsner, this is a light-bodied, bright yellow-gold beer with rich, malty flavors, but without the bracing bitterness pilsner carries.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Strawberries, kiwi, guava, green grapes.
Cashews, almonds. Plain water crackers,
wheat crackers, whole wheat bread.

Aged Swiss, Baby Swiss & Gruyere with Wheat Beer

These different cheeses come together when paired with a spiced wheat beer. The addition of spices in the beer, usually citrus peel and coriander, gives it an exotic flavor that works well with the nuttiness of these cheeses.

CHEESE

Aged Swiss

Aged swiss is made from part-skim milk and is very firm. It is typically made in large wheels, has large eyes and is well aged for a nutty and slightly piquant flavor.

BEER

Hefeweizen

A german-style wheat (weizen) beer, straw to almost white (weisse) in color, usually with yeast (hefe) left in the bottle. Light bodied with flavors of citrus, clove and banana with bright carbonation.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Apples like fuji, gala and jonathan.
Pears and grapes. Cashews, almonds.
Rye, pumpernickel, seeded breads.

CHEESE

Gruyere

Like raclette, gruyere is surface ripened and has rich buttery, nutty and earthy flavors. It is traditional in dishes like french onion soup, quiche lorraine and fondue, as well as being a wonderful table cheese.

BEER

Pilsner

Developed in 1842 by Bohemian brewmasters in the town of Pilsen using Bavarian lager yeast and British light malts, this beer took the world by storm. The first truly golden hued beer, pilsner has flowery, bready aromas and bracingly crisp hops.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Tart pickles like cornichons or gherkins, pickled onions and boiled new potatoes.
Apples, pears, green grapes. Crusty sourdough, whole wheat bread.

Hard CHEESES

*This group includes **parmesan**, **asiago**, **dry jack**, **romano** and **pepato**.*

Parmesan is known as the “king of cheeses,” and is one of the oldest cheeses known, with references dating back almost 1,000 years. These cheeses are also known as “grana,” referring to the granular texture they develop with long aging.

CHEESE

Parmesan

Parmesan is buttery and nutty and has an almost sweet, tropical fruit flavor that intensifies with long aging.

Asiago

Asiago is made with higher milkfat content, and yields a softer texture and sharper flavor than parmesan.

BEER

Märzenbier/Octoberfest

Translated “March beer,” märzenbiers were produced in the spring to be laid down for summer and fall, often served at oktoberfests. Soft amber, almost pumpkin-colored, this medium-bodied lager is full of caramelized malt and bread flavors and well-balanced hops.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Fresh or dried figs or apricots. Salted walnuts, cashews. Baguettes, plain crackers.

Asiago & Parmesan with Märzen Lager

These cheeses pair well with the mouth-filling maltiness of a märzen-style lager. Add fresh or dried apricots and salted walnuts and you have a great finish course.

CHEESE

Romano

Made in the United States of America from cow's milk with enzymes added to simulate the flavor of sheep's milk. Sharp flavors and strong, piquant aromas are typical of this cheese.

Pepato

Similar to a traditional product from Sicily, this is a romano-style cheese with whole black peppercorns mixed throughout the body.

BEER

Bière de Garde

Literally translated, "beer for keeping," this is a spring beer designed to last through the summer. These beers vary from bronze to auburn and range between 6% and 8% alcohol, but they all share the same earthy, spicy, herbal quality from the local ale yeast and biscuity malt with sweet anise notes.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Olives, pickled vegetables, cured meats, mustards. Focaccia, ciabatta, french baguette, sourdough.

Tasting TIPS

Tasting cheese and beer uses sight, smell, taste and touch. Hold the beer to a light and check its color, clarity and carbonation. Observe the foam, or “head.” Small bits of foam that adhere to the sides of the glass as it empties are referred to as “belgian lace.” Check the beer’s aroma or “bouquet.” Do you notice a caramel, chocolate or toasty bread from the malt? Floral, pine or citrus notes from the hops? Fruitiness from the yeast? Here are a few helpful tips to help you and your guests enjoy pairing cheeses and beers.

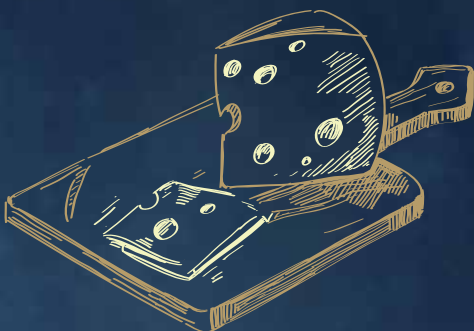
- Start the tasting with lighter styles of beer, like wheat beer, and continue through to the heavier, darker beers, like porter and stout.
- Take a sip of the beer, allowing it to pause for a moment on your palate, inhaling gently. This will bring the aromas up to your secondary olfactory sensors, behind the bridge of the nose. Take note of the initial flavors. Is it dry or sweet? Does it have a thick, creamy mouthfeel or is it crisply astringent?
- A good beer should have a pleasant, lingering aftertaste with the clean taste of hops, or a coffee/toffee flavor.



LIGHT



DARK



- Look at the cheese, noting its general appearance, color, texture and aroma. With semi-soft or firmer cheeses, check the texture by compressing a small piece of the cheese between your fingers. This will also help release the aroma of the cheese, which will be a precursor to the flavors you will experience.
- Taste a small bite of cheese and as it fills your taste buds, note the flavors you detect along the way and at the finish.
- Take another small sip of beer to experience the cheese and beer flavors together, while the cheese is still on your palate.
- Refresh your palate with fruit, bread, crackers and other chosen accompaniments between tastings. Cheese and beer are rich foods and proper accompaniments help balance the flavor experience.

Selecting & PURCHASING CHEESE

Use this guide as a checklist to help select cheese and accompaniments for your tasting, highlighting or checking off favorites as you go.

- Purchase cheese from a store that staffs their cheese department with a sales person and tell them what you are planning to do. Ask for their help, if needed, on cheese selections or amounts to purchase.
- Ask for a taste of any unfamiliar cheese.
- For an appetizer portion, purchase 56 grams (2 ounces) of cheese per person (total, all cheese).
- For a main course portion, purchase 112 grams (4 ounces) of cheese per person (total, all cheese).

Serving CHEESE

- For small groups, place a small knife with cheese so guests can cut their own pieces.
- For larger groups, pre-cut some of the cheese into smaller pieces. Do not cut any more pieces than you need for one taste for each person. After that, they can cut their own pieces.
- Place bread slices and/or crackers on a plate near the cheese.
- Wash and cut fruit into bite-sized pieces or slices. Cut grapes into small clusters, and serve berries whole.
- Place dried fruit, nuts and other accompaniments in small bowls or plates near the appropriate cheese.

Selecting & PURCHASING BEER

Use this guide as a shopping list for recommended beer styles, highlighting your selections as you read along.

- Shop at a store with a large selection, knowledgeable staff and good product turnover. Freshness is important in most beers.
- Purchase at least 59 ml (2 ounces) of each beer per person, which will yield approximately 6 pours per standard 355 ml (12-ounce) bottle.

Serving BEER

- Store beers in a cool, dark place, as heat and ultraviolet light are beer's biggest enemies.
- Temperature is also important to the enjoyment of beers. In general, lagers and wheat beers should be served colder, between 4-10°C (40-50°F), while ales, porters and stouts are best enjoyed between 10-13°C (50-55°F).
- Use real glassware when conducting tastings. Plastic releases chemical aromas that can interfere with the enjoyment of the beer.
- Pour beers carefully into the stemware; pouring too quickly could produce too much foam, or "head," and too slowly could produce no head. This foam is important to the aroma and initial taste of the beer.



U.S. Dairy
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