



Our Beer Making Process

Firstly, we decide what we want to do. Sounds basic, but this is a really important step. Not everything is solved by the addition of yet more late hops. Following this, we need a recipe – we design every beer from the ground up, there is no ‘base’ recipe that we alter slightly according to what style we want to produce. Every ingredient has got to serve a purpose – each malt has to complement not just each other, but also the hops we want to use. Likewise, each hop has to work well with the others and respect the malts. The malts have got to provide the necessary enzymes to break down the starch into sugars, but not so much that the beer is left with no texture or body. The bitterness from the hops has to be in balance with the sugars from the malts. The water needs to have the right balance of minerals to allow the yeast to do its stuff, but also to emphasise the correct areas of the flavour spectrum. The yeast strain needs to be carefully selected to enhance the flavours we are wanting to showcase. How do we do all this? A lot of talking and scribbling, normally. And books. And spreadsheets. Because we have no smaller pilot-kit to trial new recipes, once we brew we’re committed to making nearly 3000 pints – so we spend an awful lot of time making sure the recipe is spot on before we start mashing in.

Next comes mashing in (seamless link to the preceding paragraph, I hear you say). This is where we mix the malted barley with hot liquor (brewing water) to start the process of unwrapping and chopping up those long sugars into stuff the yeast can use. Colour and flavour is also released into the liquor. This takes about an hour, in a vessel called a Mash Tun.

Then we’ve got to move the liquid (now called Sweet Wort) into the Kettle (or Copper) and sparge – spray hot liquor over the malt in the Mash Tun and wash the sugars off the grain. This takes about an hour, using something called an Underback.

Next we have to bring it to the boil. This takes about an hour. Just as the Sweet Wort reaches that boiling point, we add some hops to provide some bitterness.

Now we boil it. This takes about an hour. In the final few minutes of the boil, we’ll add some more hops for a little bit of bitterness and some flavour.

At this stage the Sweet Wort has become bitter, and reflects this by changing its name to Bitter Wort. Bet you didn’t see that coming. Now we’ve finished boiling, we may (or may not, according to what beer we are making) add some more hops. Anyone with an Untappd account will be cheering around about now. The Bitter Wort now has to move from the Kettle to a Fermenting Vessel (FV). This takes about an hour and a half, and we use a Heat Exchanger (or Paraflow) to cool the Bitter Wort from around 99C to about 20C. Once in the FV we can add (pitch) the yeast, and let the magic happen to turn all the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide (plus some other stuff, but let’s not worry about that right now). This takes about 3-5 days. After fermentation, we move the beer (yep, now we can call it beer!) into a Conditioning Tank (CT) for it to mature a little and polish up any rough edges in the flavour profile. This takes anywhere from 1 week to a couple of months, depending on the beer style. After this, and only once we’ve had a little taste to confirm that all is good, the beer will be moved into casks (racking off). From here, the casks go out to your pubs – the rest we’re sure you are familiar with