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[BSHB] Brown Ale Style and Beer Recipes

1 meddelelse

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BeerSmith Home Brewing



Beer Styles and Recipes: Brown Ale

Brown ale is a distinctively English style that has also become popular with microbreweries in the United States. Today we're going to look at the origins of this classic style, how to brew Brown Ale at home and also a sampling of Brown Ale recipes.

The History of Brown Ale

Brown Ale is a English style without a clear starting date. Many of the earliest English ales were likely brown ales, as most malts were kilned over hardwood fires leaving a distinctly brown color as well as a smoky flavor. Brown malt, though almost extinct today, formed the major part of English ale's for at least 800 years.

The formal use of the term "Brown Ale" is tied to the [introduction of Porter](#) in the early 1700's. Brown ale was likely known simply as "Ale" before that since almost all English ales would have been brown prior to 1700. The term "Brown Ale" was also used interchangeably for the next 100 years to describe both Porters and Stouts. Brown was in fact a generic term used to describe the insanely popular Porter of this period. [Ref: [Daniels](#)]

In the early 1800's, some distinction was being made between Stouts, Porters and Milds. In many cases Brown ale was produced by making a Stout or Porter with the first runnings and then collecting the second runnings of the Mash to produce Brown ales.

However, throughout the 18th century "brown" was still used extensively to describe Stouts, Porters and other dark beers brewed primarily around London.

The distinct style of "Brown Ale" we know today is a relatively recent invention, though the close relative "Mild Ale" was very popular in the late 1800's and

A single infusion mash in the 152-154F (67C) range targeting a medium body beer is appropriate for all brown styles.

English brown ales have low bitterness and are therefore lightly hopped. Popular English hops such as Goldings, Fuggles, and sometimes Tettnanger are often used. American browns are much more highly hopped, in some cases approaching levels twice that of typical English browns. Cascade is most popular, though Perle, Williamette and other American hop varieties may also be used. For American browns, hops are often added at several different stages including occasionally [dry hopping](#).

Yeast selection also depends on the style of brown you are brewing. American browns are typically made with dry American Ale or German Ale yeast with a high attenuation. English browns use the full range of UK ales including London, Irish Ale, and other full body English Ale yeasts to add character, esters and the unique mix of English complexity.

early 20th century. Brown ale emerged in the 20th century as a stronger and sometimes darker version of English mild.

Brown Ale Styles

There are at least three major distinct styles of brown ale, excluding Brown Porter which is a [variation of Porter](#). Northern or Newcastle brown ales have an original gravity between 1.040 and 1.052, dark amber color between 12 and 22 SRM and bitterness of 20-30 IBUs. Both malt and bitterness are present in moderate levels, and caramel/malt flavor adds some sweetness. Newcastle Brown Ale is the obvious example, though a number of Nut Brown Ales also fall into this category.

London or Southern Brown ales are malty with relatively low bitterness. They have a sweet caramel flavor, very dark color and some dark fruit (raisin) flavors. They are made with an original gravity between 1.035 and 1.042 and low bitterness level of 12-20 IBUs with dark color of 19-35 SRM.

American Brown ales are brewed with a higher starting gravity between 1.045 and 1.060 with higher bitterness of 20-40 IBUs. Like London Brown, they have a dark color between 19 and 35 SRM. They have medium maltiness and body, are slightly dry, and have higher bitterness and aroma than their British counterparts. Not surprisingly, American hop varieties are often used.

Brewing Brown Ales

Many brewers take an “everything but the kitchen sink” approach to brewing browns, but Ray Daniels argues that superior results can be obtained by focusing on a few key ingredients along with proper yeast and water selection.

Brown ales are made from a base of English pale malt. Crystal malt is almost always used in brown ale, averaging about 10-15% of the total grain bill. Chocolate malt, too, is used but sparingly – making up from 3-6% of the grain bill. Black and roasted malts are seldom used in brown ales, and if used make up as little as 2% of the grain bill.

Homebrewers use a variety of specialty malts to add character including aromatic malt, biscuit malt, wheat malt, toasted malt, special B, oatmeal and others. In some cases these specialty malts can make up as much as 5-15% of the grain bill. However

Water high in carbonates is desirable, especially for the English styles. London was the home of dark ales for the past 250 years largely due to its high carbonate water. Sulfates, however, are undesirable so minimize the use of gypsum. American browns often use lower carbonate water than their English cousins.

Brown Ale Recipes

Here is a selection of brown ale recipes from the [BeerSmith Recipe Site](#):

- [Black Out Brown Ale](#) – Partial Mash
- [Brent's Brown Ale](#) – All Grain
- [Farmhouse 1870](#) – Extract
- [Spotted Dog Brown](#) – All Grain
- [Jay's Crowd Pleaser Brown](#) – All Grain
- [Brown Derby Ale](#) – Extract
- [Dan's Brown Nuts Ale](#) – Extract
- [This Nut](#) – All Grain
- [London Brown](#) – All Grain
- [Matrimoni-Ale](#) – All Grain
- Visit our [Recipe Site](#) for more Brown Ale Recipes

I hope you enjoyed today's article on Brown Ales!

- Brad Smith

commercial browns typically take a simpler approach using only 1-2 dark malts to provide the bulk of color and character.



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