

Fruit Beers

WARNING: DO NOT use an airlock and a glass carboy with fruit added!!! The fruit can clog the airlock, which can either cause an eruption or the carboy to explode. Use either a blow off hose until fermentation has subsided or use a plastic bucket.

DO NOT put the fruit in the primary!!! With all the simple sugars, you are more likely to have a more violent primary fermentation, making for a warmer fermentation and increased chance for off-flavors. It is also more likely to vent off the more delicate fruit aromas. Add any fruit to the secondary. You will not have to worry about an exploding fermentation vessel and it will be a better beer.

Fruit Addition Type and Affect				
	Fresh or Frozen	Fruit Puree	Fruit Juice	Flavor Extract
Sanitization Method	Freeze to kill surface bacteria	Pasteurized in package	Pasteurized in package	Alcohol based; no need to pasteurize
Flavor/Aroma	Fresh fruit flavor and aroma	Cooked fruit (jam/pie)	Wine-like; more head retention issues than with fresh or puree	Aroma more than flavor; can taste artificial
Amount per 5 gallons beer	5 to 10 lbs.	3 to 5 lbs.	½ gallon to 1 gallon	Up to 4 oz
When to Add	Secondary, 4 to 8 weeks	Secondary, 2 to 4 weeks	Secondary, 2 to 4 weeks	Packaging

Recipe Modification Considerations

Added Sugar – For all except extract, fruit will add about 1lb. sugar. Check the USDA nutrition information for the fruit you plan to use for a general idea for how much sugar. Increase main mash rest temp to account for added sugar. For high gravity beers, raising 2°F is sufficient. For lower gravity beers, can raise up to 8°F. Very dry beers (lambics, saisons, etc.) may not need any mash adjustments.

Malts – Added fruit can “thin” the malt flavor, especially when using fruit juice. Adjust malt bill to compensate. Use darker base malt, add dextrin malts or mid-roast malts (Vienna, Munich, Victory). Extract brewers can use a less fermentable extract, add lactose or add malto-dextrin to increase sweetness. Fruit can sometimes affect head retention; Carapils and wheat malts can correct the problem. Keep specialty malt additions to a minimum and in line with the given beer style.

Hops – Be aware of which hops can mimic certain fruit flavors. If the pairing is too harmonious (i.e. Grapefruit IPA with all Cascade hops) it can be difficult to distinguish between the fruit and the hops. Better to use a distinct combination.

Yeast – Consider a less attenuative yeast, but go with a yeast you are comfortable using. If using an American Ale yeast, consider switching to an alt yeast (White Labs WLP011 European Ale yeast or Wyeast 1338 European Ale yeast). These yeasts tend to accentuate fruit flavor.

Competition Considerations

Overriding principles in judging fruit beers are that 1) the base beer is a quality beer and matches the brewer's description 2) the judge can detect the fruit listed and 3) the fruit and beer complement each other and improves the final product. Especially note that the appearance will change in unexpected ways when you add fruit. It is perfectly acceptable for a beer style that is normally crystal clear to be cloudy when fruit is added. I don't ever remember judging a fruit/specialty beer in which clarity was a deciding factor in the ranking.

"The brewer should recognize that some combinations of base beer styles and fruits/spices work well together while others do not make for harmonious combinations."

Fill out the form correctly. **Read the 2015 BJCP Guidelines**; there is a lot of information to help you enter your beer. Biggest problem is not giving the judge useful information in the Special Ingredients section or leaving this section blank. Detail the fruit used and the base beer. If you deviated from a classic style, tell the judge enough to know what to expect. Anything to make the judge's job easier is always appreciated. If it is an uncommon fruit, briefly describe what the fruit tastes like.

Bad example: "A beer that tastes like my favorite chocolate candy" (I have seen entries in real competitions that have Special Ingredient descriptions like this. The judge has no idea what fruit you used and what style to judge the base beer against. No matter how good the beer is, you'll probably get a 20 at best).

Okay example: "Porter with oranges" (The judges now know the base style and the fruit. In this case, the judges will most likely assume it's like an American Porter if it's hoppy and judge to that criteria, and will assume it's an English Porter if it's not hoppy and judge based on that criteria.)

Better example: "English Porter with oranges" (that is, if your beer is easily distinguishable as an English Porter. If it fits a general category but is not easily distinguishable as a specific substyle, don't box yourself in).

Even better example: "English Porter with Valencia oranges. High on the chocolate malt to complement the oranges." (Specifying fruit varietal, when distinguishable, helps the judges know what to look for. Stating distinguishable recipe modifications from a classic style lets the judges know your intent. In this example, an extremely chocolatey English Porter by itself may not score very well as the judges may think that a different roast balance may be truer to style. But by stating you made a very chocolatey Porter on purpose to complement the oranges, the judges can then judge if your choice improves the final product).

Categories: 23F – Fruit Lambic. Enter this one if you have a lambic or gueuze to which you have added fruit.

29A – Fruit Beer. Enter in this category if the base style is not a lambic or gueuze and if the only special ingredient is fruit.

29B – Fruit and Spice Beer. Enter in this category if the base style is not a lambic or gueuze and if both fruit and any Spice, Herb or Vegetable as described in category 30 should be entered here.

29C- Specialty Fruit Beer. Any fruit beer that does not fit the categories above. Typically for fruit beers with an added fermentable (honey, molasses, etc.) in which the added fermentable is detectable and outside the norm for the beer style.

If the added fruit is not detectable, then do not enter it as a fruit beer. Just enter the beer as the original base style.

Cherries!!!

Belgian Single with Tart Cherries

OG: 1.040 before fruit FG: 1.010 IBU: < 10 Yield: 5 gallons

Ingredients:

7 lbs. Belgian Pils malt

0.5 oz Styrian Goldings @ 4%AA (15 min.)

White Labs WLP500 Trappist Ale Yeast or Wyeast 1214 Belgian Ale yeast

8 lbs Michigan tart cherries, pitted and frozen (4 lbs for a more balanced cherry flavor)

Procedure:

Mash @151°F until conversion is complete. Sparge and then boil for 90 minutes, adding hops with 15 minutes left in the boil. Ferment @ 66°F to 68°F for about a week. Place still-frozen cherries in plastic bucket and rack beer on top of cherries for secondary. Leave in secondary for 6 to 8 weeks.

Notes:

As brewed this came out with intense cherry flavor. The intent was to make a beer with huge cherry flavor. I would not suggest doing 8 lbs for this beer; 4-5 lbs would be better. But, I thought I should write the recipe as brewed.

Since a Belgian Single is a style that should be as dry as possible, there was no need to adjust the mash temperature. Hops are very much in the background on this recipe, so substitutions are fine. Just keep hop bitterness and flavor low to let the cherries and the yeast character come through.

Golden Delicious

American Blonde Ale with Apples

OG: 1.050

FG: 1.015

IBU: 25

Yield: 4 gallons before cider

Ingredients:

7.25 lbs American Pale 2-row

0.5 lbs Cara-Pils

0.5 lbs Crystal 10L

0.75 oz Northern Brewer @ 8%AA (First wort hops)

1 gallon apple cider

White Labs WLP011 European Ale yeast or Wyeast 1338 European Ale yeast

Procedure:

Mash @ 156°F until conversion is complete. Add hops to brew kettle before sparging. Boil for 90 minutes. Ferment @ 66°F to 68°F for about a week. Transfer beer to secondary and add apple cider. Leave in secondary for at least two weeks.

Notes:

The Cara-Pils is key in this recipe, as the cider kills the head. The little bit of Cara-Pils restores the head and adds a subtle Pils graininess that is appropriate for this style. You can brew a solid American Blonde Ale with Pils malt and wheat, but not in this case; the base malt flavor will be too weak to compete with the apples. The crystal malt adds a little sweetness that helps people think “fruit”.

As hops are secondary in this style, hop substitutions are fine. Just keep the total hop profile low to let the malt and apples come through.

If you want to use a different fruit and use a whole fruit or fruit puree, then increase the American Pale 2-row to 8.75 lbs., drop the mash temperature to 154°F and brew a full 5-gallon batch, targeting an OG of 1.050 prior to fruit additions.