



Beer and Food

A quick guide to
making matches

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the experience matters



Beer and food

There just seem to be some things synonymous with a beer, Burgers and beer? Sure. Pizza? Well obviously.

And of course a ploughman's, pork pies, sausage rolls and salty bar snacks will naturally make our minds jump to a cold one.

But when does beer suddenly lose its place at the table? At what point do ales, lagers and lambics turn from the most welcome of guests to spectres at the feast?

When we reach a certain price point for food? When we start laying white tablecloths down? Silver service? Michelin-stars?

None of which is anything to do with beer's natural affinity for food so, when you think about it, it's interesting how we arbitrarily draw the line on when beer is and isn't appropriate.

If you really get to know your beer, immerse yourself in the amazing flavours and textures it can offer, begin to understand the scope of exciting interactions you can tease out of the world of brewing, you'll be amazed what can happen with even the simplest of food matches.

However, it's not always easy to know where to start, so here are a handy set of rules (well, more guidelines to be honest, but rules sound better) on how to start and continue, your beer and food-matching journey.

Rule 1 - Know your beer

The better you know your beer, the more successful your matches.

Just as you know your regular customers' peccadilloes; like Bill likes a tulip beer glass, but Hilary favours a dimpled mug. Knowing each beer's flavour profile inside and out will help you better understand which dishes it will be friends with.

On a more practical note, it can also allow you to identify precisely when your beer is not at its best and deal with it accordingly.

Rule 2 - Intense scrutiny

The majority of the time, you're looking to match levels of flavour intensity.

We've all had that experience where we order a wine or cocktail in error, or are recommended it for whatever reason, and whilst the drink itself is sublime it either stamps all over your chosen dish with size 11 hobnail boots or, disappears meekly into the background.

This rule is applicable about 95% of the time, then other times you'll get certain beers, (sours generally being the exception to this rule) where your beer can be a little more dominant, but still work well with a dish.

Rule 3 - Descriptive, not prescriptive

Broad brush strokes make for a clumsy picture.

Just as there are 100's if not 1000's more nuances of flavour in even the most simple of dishes, so are there in the accompanying beers and you need to find your common grounds between them.

Get into the soul of the beer (hence Rule 1) and you can be descriptive enough to get your customers mouths watering about the interplay of; for example, the chocolate and umami interplay of Curious Porter with truffled macaroni cheese or the way that Meantime Yakima Red simply bursts with red berry and peppery nettle notes that joust so well with a passion fruit cheesecake, or consider how the dry, tart and herbal elements of Boulevard Tank 7 offer an exquisite contrast to the sweet, unctuous nature of a prosciutto, goats cheese & pea purée tart.

Rule 4 - Get creative

Your tasting notes should at least make you hungry and thirsty when you write them!

Your first point of contact with your customer could be your drinks menu and it pays to advertise! Entice them, seduce them, woo them with your words... a malty beer with a hoppy finish just won't cut it.



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The four C's of beer & food pairing

Cut, Complement, Contrast and Create.

These four tenets are universal to any pairing, from whiskey to wine, cocktails to beer.

Cut – think about why you pair sharp orange sauce with rich meat like duck or a gooseberry chutney with an oily fish like mackerel, or perhaps lemon in an otherwise very sweet dessert like posset and you get the picture of what 'cut' means.

Complement – this is probably the simplest to spot. Got a beer that's chocolatey or tropical fruit or bready? Pair them with like-minded flavours.

Contrast - a salty blue cheese? Why not try a sweet, fruity beer like Tiny Rebel Cwtch? Or balance out a sweet creamy curry with a big bitter beast like Brewdog Punk IPA? Find the polar opposite of your dish and see whether it will work in harmony.

Create - one of the most simple things I've ever done is put a white chocolate button with a Dunkelweisse, which immediately created banoffee pie, it was amazing. When your whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, you know you've got a winner.

Words by Melissa Cole.





Style / Food	Fish	Red Meat	White Meat	Game
Amber		Grilled Steaks, Hot Dog		
Berliner Weisse	Mussels		Aged Ham	Duck
Blonde	White Fish	Beef Rendang	Pork Chops	
Brown	Oysters	Grilled Steaks, Burgers	Roast Pork, Chicken	Duck, Quail
Double IPA	Spicy Tuna Roll	Roast Beef, Cheeseburger	Fried Chicken, Belly Pork	
Fruit	Smoked Fish		Smoked Ham	Roast Duck
Fruit IPA		Burgers	Pork Tenderloin	
Fruit Pale Ale		Burgers	Pork Tenderloin	
Golden	Beer Battered Fried Shrimp		Roast Pork, Lemon Chicken	
Gose	Mussels			Duck, Vension
IPA	Spicy Tuna Roll	Cheeseburger, Steaks	Pork Tenderloin, Chicken Tenders	Smoked Duck
Lager	Fish Tacos	Grilled Steaks, Burgers	Pork Schnitzel	
NE IPA	Crab Cakes		Pork Tenderloin, Roast Chicken	
Pale Ale	Lobster, Blackened Fish	Roast Beef, Burgers	Pulled Pork, Fried Chicken	Duck, Quail
Pilsner	Shellfish, Steamed Lobster	Grilled Steaks, Burgers	Fried Chicken	
Porter	Lobster Thermidor	Beef Short Rib, Blue Cheeseburger	Pulled Pork, Black Pudding	Venison, Liver
Red Ale	Crab Cakes	Smoked Brisket	Belly Pork, Chicken Wings	Wild Boar Burger
Saison	Clams, Scallops, Crab	Peppered Steak, Lamb with Thyme	Pork Belly	Duck Confit, Venison Stew
Session IPA	Spicy Tuna Roll	Cheeseburger, Steaks	Pork Tenderloin, Turkey Burgers	
Sour	Smoked Fish, Oysters	Cured Meat	Roast Chicken Skin, Pork Crackling	
Stout	Smoked Salmon, Oysters	BBO Meat, Lamb Stew	Bacon Sandwich	Liver
Weissbier	Clams, Scallops, Crab	BBO'd Meat, Weisswurt	Roast Pork	
Wheat	Shellfish, White Fish	Cured Meat	Turkey Burger	
Witbier	Moules & Frites	Steak with Thyme	Roast Pork, Smoked Ham	

Style / Food	Pizza/pasta	Other	Dessert	Cheese
Amber	Mac n Cheese	Jambalaya	Citrus Fruit	Gruyere
Berliner Weisse			Raspberry Cheese-cake	Havarti, Goats
Blonde		Sweet & Sour Chicken	White Chocolate	Feta, Brie
Brown	Spaghetti & Meatballs	Quesadilla	Belgian Chocolate	Gouda, Chesire
Double IPA	Cheese Arancini	Jerk Pork	Rice Pudding	Cheddar, Blue
Fruit			Cheesecake, Crème Brulee	Chevre
Fruit IPA		Thai Green Curry	Carrot Cake	Goats, Blue
Fruit Pale Ale		Cheese Souffles	Apple Pie	Mild or Medium Cheddar
Golden	Seafood Pasta, Mushroom Risotto		Baklava	Mild
Gose			Lemon Mousse	Parmesan, Queso Fresco
IPA	Mac n Cheese	BBQ Anything	White Chocolate, Carrot cake	Cheddar, Brie, Blue
Lager	Spinach Ravioli	Pho	Almond Biscotti	Mild, Manchego
NE IPA		Dim Sum		Goats, Blue
Pale Ale	Pizza	Mexican	Apple Pie	Goats
Pilsner	Spaghetti Carbonara, Pesto Pasta	Onion Bhajis	Shortbread	Goats, Brie
Porter	Pizza, Tomato Based Pasta	Tandoori Lamb Chops	Cherries, Dark Chocolate	Cheddar, Aged Gouda
Red Ale	Pepperoni Pizza, Mac n Cheese	Grilled Aubergine	Poached Pears	Port-Salut, Cheddar
Saison		Falafel	Lemon Ginger Sorbet	Brie, Camembert
Session IPA		Guacamole & Nachos	Carrot Cake	Cheddar, Brie, Blue, Gorgonzola
Sour		Olives	Creamy Desserts	Strong Cheese
Stout	Spicy Sausage Pasta	Mexican Mole	Chocolate Cake	Cheddar, Blue
Weissbier	Seafood Pasta	Creamy Indian Curries	Key Lime Pie	Mozzarella, Brie
Wheat	Seafood Pasta	Thai Green Curry	Fruit	Mozzarella
Witbier	Seafood Pasta	Moroccan Tagine	Panna Cotta	Mozzarella, Mascarpone



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