

Craft Beer

Slide 1 - Intro

Craft beer is becoming more and more common as the industry has boomed. Beer festivals feature more breweries than ever for you to try as you stagger around after downing one too many 7% ABV or higher samples. There are more flavors and styles of beer to choose from than ever now too. So, where did this phenomenon get its start?

Slide 2 - Invention of Craft Beer

Thank China the next time you enjoy an alcoholic beverage because China is responsible for inventing fermented drinks. Mesopotamians were the first to ferment grain to form the origins of what we consider beer. In comparison, the Egyptians significantly improved upon setting up Germany for success to brew what we know as beer today.

Slide 3 - Goddesses of Beer

All hail the original brewer. Women. Brewing beer was the job of women before men took over the industry. Ninkasi is the Mesopotamian goddess of beer. The original recipe for beer is in her hymn. It was sung during this period and passed down through generations by word of mouth. Nephthys is the Egyptian goddess of the home, air, magic, and, you guessed it, beer.

Slide 4 - Witches and Brews

It was said the modern witch occurred because independent women in the 1800s were frowned upon. So the tall black hats and cauldrons of beer made it easy to accuse alewives of being witches. Historians have recently debunked the myth of modern witches deriving from this stereotype. However, women were removed from the brewing industry by being accused of witchcraft.

Slide 5 - Prohibition

Very few breweries could survive prohibition, and finding grain to brew became scarce due to laws. So, rice and corn started to be used to brew lite beer as we know it today. After prohibition ended, it was cheaper for corporations to mass produce beer with rice and corn even though it compromised the flavor. So, your Coors, Natty Lite, Budweiser, and Miller Lite were born and dominated the industry until the 80s.

Slide 6 - Rise of Modern Craft Beer

Fritz Maytag is the man to thank for inventing craft beer as we know it with his Liberty Ale and Christmas Ale. If you like home brewing Jimmy Carter is your idol since he legalized this practice. 1985-1997 was the first rise and fall of craft beer. Beer nerds surfaced in the late 90s. And in 2010, we entered the golden era of craft beer we are still enjoying today.

Slide 7 - Brewing Process Part 1

The main ingredients of beer are grain, yeast, malt (optional), hops (crucial for preservation), and water. Yeast not only affects flavor but also what type of beer is brewed. Ales are made with top-fermenting yeast in a warm environment, while lagers are made with bottom-fermenting yeast in a cooler climate. Lagers take longer to brew, so most beers you drink are ales.

Slide 8 - Brewing Process Part 2

Choose your grain, then prep it through skinning, roasting, and milling. The mash is next and is the fermenting process resulting in the wort. Lautering is the process of removing the wort from the spent grain to boiling it. Hops can be added here or later in the process, depending on the brewed style. Whirlpooling removes any leftover chunks before the yeast fermentation and is followed by conditioning. From here, the beer can be carbonated and served or experimented with.

Slide 9 - Types of Hops

There are a little over 170 different types of hops available for brewers to choose from. The most common you will see listed are Citra, Mosaic, and New Zealand.

Slide - 10 - Hops Continued

The pellets are the dry hops, and wet hops are only available during the wet season, late August through early September. Wet hops contain 80% moisture, so twice as many are needed. If you have never tried a wet-hopped, harvest, green hop, or fresh hop beer as they are called, I highly recommend them.

Slide 11 - Myth of Hoppy IPAs

Contrary to popular belief, Indiana Pale Ales were not created by the merchant ships of the 1700s due to over-hopping the pales ales for preservation purposes. Craft Brewers are responsible for the IPA. Another thing to note, hoppy is not synonymous with bitter. Check your IBUs or International Bittering Units to determine the hoppiness of the beer. IPA simply means the beer has more hops than the standard.

Slide 12 - Containers

Beers can be taken home from a brewery in growlers, crowlers, kegs, and half kegs. Breweries sell and distribute glass bottles and cans. While it may feel cool to drink out of a bottle, this is the less superior container. If you've ever had a bottle fizz over when opening, it's because this bottle was left out in the sun and the fermentation process restarted. Cans block out the sun preserving the integrity of the beer better than a glass bottle.

Slide 13 - Distribution

Each state has its distribution laws, in addition to alcohol laws. This is why it is scarce for an independently owned brewery to distribute across state lines. Creature Comforts, Orpheus Brewing, and Monday Night Brewing are three independently owned breweries that distribute outside of their own state. Sorry to break it to you, but Funky Buddha, Goose Island, and Sweetwater are all subsidiary craft breweries owned by larger beverage companies with the ability to influence mass distribution.

Slide 14 - Beer Glasses

There are 24 different types of beer glasses available to give you the best drinking experience depending on the style of beer you are drinking. Gone are the days of being served every kind of beer in a pint glass. A pint glass is only acceptable to serve a lager or pale ale in. Each glass is crafted to give you the best aroma of the beer before enjoying it since the smell is 80% of the taste.

Slide 15 - Beer Styles

With over 175 different styles to choose from, ranging from your traditional lager to the funky barrel-aged sours, it's impossible to say you don't like beer until you've tried them although, one way to find a style of beer you may want is to tell the bartender at the brewery what type of alcohol you usually like to drink; they should be able to steer you in a direction towards something fitting your flavor palette on their beer menu.

Slide 16 - German Style

It's argued Germans perfected brewing. Their 500-year-old purity laws are taught ONLY in Germany since their water plays into the purity standard. Brewers who train under these purity laws are considered masters of the industry. While beer in America can be brewed to the purity standards, they still would not pass the purity laws. This is why it has to be marketed as German-style beer instead of German beer.

Slide 17 - Beer Flights

One of the best ways to try multiple beers in one sitting without getting trashed is to do a beer flight. The majority of breweries offer a traditional beer flight of 4-6 3-5 oz pours of beer. Other breweries will sell the 3-5 oz pours two at a time per customer. So next time you can't choose just one or want to try a more petite pour, go with the flight.

Slide 18 - How to Drink Beer

Draft beer is the way to go if you can get it because it is exposed to fewer elements and oxygen before hitting your tastebuds. Yes, oxygen affects the taste of your beer; the less exposure to it, the better. A draft is not always available, so you want to choose a can then. The CO2 buildup can cause bloating and gas, so pour that can into a glass. Drink your beer at about room temperature to achieve peak flavor.

Slide 19 - Breweries

About 8,000 breweries, taprooms, microbreweries, and brewpubs make up the beer industry today. Breweries are any facility that produces beer for distribution on a large scale. Taprooms are the storefront you visit and might commonly think of as the brewery. Microbreweries have limited batch beers that regularly rotate on a small number of taps. Brewpubs brew their beer and serve food in a restaurant-style setup. If you've ever done a brewery crawl, the brewpubs become your saving grace because the food truck doesn't always show up to the taproom.

Slide 20 - Wrap Up

Due to COVID, the craft brewery industry has taken a hit, closing multiple breweries across the country. These are usually small businesses. While there is nothing wrong with enjoying a Corona or Bud Light, every time you purchase a big box beer, it takes money out of the pocket of a small business owner. The next time you go out, I challenge you to try something new and drink local.