

# Craft Beer Pairing

## Learning to Pair

Consuming craft beer is not just about having a drink, it's an experience. Brewers perfect their beverages to entice your taste buds and all your other senses. Much like wine, there are foods which pair perfectly with the different types of beers.

Impress the guests at your next dinner party by offering foods that complement their favorite craft beers. Here are some great tips to remember from the American Brewer's Association when you're planning the meal for your next get together.

## Take Advantage of Strengths

The balance between craft beer and food is a fine line. If one or the other overpowers their companion's tastes or aromas, the results will fall flat. Understanding how certain qualities in each item works together will enhance the experience.

- **Hop bitterness and roasted malt:** These features help balance the sweetness and richness to meals. They work best with foods rich in fat. You will also find that these two components emphasize the spiciness in meals. When looking to add an extra punch to your favorite spicy dish, the bitterness in hops will bring it to the forefront.
- **Sweet beers:** Consider pairing these special brews when you're aiming to balance the heat and acidity in meals.

## Pair Your Favorite Type

Understanding the interactions between special brews and their food counterparts is a good start when learning to pair the two. You should also consider these meals when planning an event with your favorite type of craft beer.

- **Pale ale:** Great for dinner or dessert, serve with grilled burgers, cheddar cheese and even maple-bread pudding.
  - **Porter:** Are you a smoked-meat enthusiast? Porter beers offer an incredible pair with barbecue, blackened fish and sausage.
  - **Amber ale:** Serve this reddish beer with spicy foods, chicken or banana-pound cake.
  - **Wheat ale:** This American favorite works best with light meals like salads, sushi and vegetable dishes.
- Don't hesitate to experiment when finding the pairings that impress your friends and hit the mark for your experience. Once you get the hang of it, it can be fun to brew your own recipe that compliment your favorite dish.



A Handcrafted Fort George Vortex IPA paired with Rock Fish Tacos loaded with seasoned rock fish, black beans, shredded cabbage, diced red onion, house-made salsa and tequila jalapeno carrot relish.

## + More pairing tips

### Salt and Ale

Most sandwiches or beef you find in the restaurant will be salted, as will the chips or fries that go with it.

The perfect way to wash that sodium down is a medium-flavored IPA or American ale.

While a light lager won't fully cleanse your palate, a fuller body will work together with the food and your taste buds to enhance your dining pleasure.

### Get Smokey

Not for everyone, smoked beer is a nearly perfect complement to any type of similarly smoked meat.

Whether you prefer barbecue, salmon or beef brisket from the smoker, the varying notes of barley and bitterness from a smoked beer provide quite a one-two punch.

### Go Seasonal with Seafood

Summer is the perfect time to crack into a juicy lobster or bite into a plump shrimp. And with seasonal summer blondes or ales, you have the perfect partner to finish off a delicious seafood meal.

Staying light and seasonal instead of dark and overpowering will help your taste buds stay focused on the task at hand – enjoying that succulent feast.