

The Calgary International Beerfest invites you to discover a beer that suits you or find a new favourite. Here are some tips to help you at the event and beyond.

**CALGARY
INTERNATIONAL**

BeerFest

Pairing Beer With Food.

With the vast array of flavours and styles available, it is possible for everyone to find a beer that they enjoy. One way is to prepare a meal that you would usually pair with wine and try that with an array of beers instead. At the Calgary International Beerfest we have seminars throughout the evening to help you get a better handle on how to choose different beers and what to look for. Thanks to beer's diverse tastes and flavours, there is a style to match any food.

Increasingly, beer is finding a place at the dining tables as more people, including chefs, discover what a delicious and versatile partner it is. Beer pairings are a great way to change things up next time you are preparing a special meal or hosting a dinner.

Some Simple Rules to Follow

We asked Kim Spence, one of our very knowledgeable beer judges, to give us some basic rules to follow when pairing beers with food. Here's what he said.

1. Pair the intensity of the food with the intensity of the beer. The flavor of the beer or the food shouldn't overpower each other.
2. Pair characteristics of the dish with characteristics of the beer.
3. Pair complex foods that have lots of flavor with complex beer with lots of flavor.
4. Think of Ales like red wines and lagers like white wines; pair them with foods that you would normally use wines with.

Why does beer pair so well?

When you think about it, beer is as food pairing friendly as wine, if not more so. Wines are limited in the flavor department by having only one ingredient (grapes). Even with wood barrel aging, there is far less diversity when you compare it to the vast amount of options brewmasters have at their disposal. These beermakers can experiment with barley for sweetness, hops for bitterness, yeast for that bready flavor, as well as spices, nuts, chocolate, fruits, vegetables, and even exotic flavorings like salmon and oysters or sweet treats like maple. Doesn't matter whether you are pairing a raspberry beer with desert or enjoying a seasonal pumpkin ale, beer offers more variety and a greater sense of adventure.

Some potential matches to get you started.

ALE: Pair it with spicy food, pizza, Asian food, BBQ'd steaks, or cheeses like Cheddar or Parmesan

BOCK: Pair it with Cajun food, beef, sausage, seared foods, jerk chicken or cheeses like Swiss or Gruyere.

FRUIT BEER: Pair it with light/white meats, herb driven foods, pickled dishes, fruity deserts, salads with fruity dressings or cheeses such as Mascarpone.

LAGER: Pair it with shellfish, seafood, sushi, grilled pork/chicken, light pasta dishes (without cream or meat in the sauce), Latin food, Mexican food, or spicy food.

PILSNER: Pair it with salads, seafood like salmon, tuna, or trout; Asian food or cheeses such as Havarti, Muenster, or Monterey Jack.

PORTER: Pair it with smoked foods, rich stews, meats, bacon, chili, braised dishes, sausage or just about anything you would put on the BBQ.

STOUT: Pair it with BBQ'd or grilled foods, salty foods, oysters, rich stews, chocolate, desserts (ideally where the beer has a higher sweetness than the dish), roasted foods, or smoked foods.

WHEAT BEER/HEFEWEIZEN: Pair it with vegetarian dishes, sushi, sweet and fruity Asian dishes, citrus flavored foods such as deserts or salad dressings, Vegetarian dishes, light soups or salads, or cheeses such as Feta or Gruyere.

Foods & Beers for Thought

Remember, that all these rules are just guidelines to help get you started. Nobody knows your tastes like you do. Want to have a beer and food pairing that completely contrasts itself in terms of flavor? Go for it! Enjoy pizza? Then grab a beer with lots of carbonization that stands up to the acidity in the sauce and the fattiness of the cheese without overpowering. Maybe give a beer a try at a different temperature to see if it has a different flavor for you. Most importantly of course, realize that there are no wrong answers! Experiment away and find the tastes that make you happy.



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