

BEER & FOOD MATCHING

the 30-second beer

Beer is a natural partner to food and may be a better match for dining than wine. There are many approaches to matching but the simplest is to consider flavour, balance and intensity – FBI for short. Flavours in both beer and food should work together rather than clashing, in a similar way to how ingredients work in a recipe. In terms of balance, neither beer nor food should overwhelm, although a good match may increase the enjoyment of both or emphasize certain aspects of flavour. Intensity refers to the rule of thumb of pairing subtly flavoured beers with simple, lightly seasoned dishes; medium beers with food that shares similar depth of taste, and intense beers with more strongly flavoured foods. It's also a reminder to start subtle and work up to strong flavour if matching several courses. The sheer diversity of flavours, often coming from only four basic ingredients, are key to beer's food pairing versatility, while carbonation is perfect for refreshing and cleansing the palate. Malt naturally echoes many foods from bread and cakes to roasted flavours. Hops have much in common with fruits and spices, but can emphasize spicy heat and bitterness. Yeast can also pose a challenge as it can alter flavours in unexpected ways. The simplest method is experimentation, and taste testing what works, before sharing with others.

3-SECOND TASTER

Matching beer and food needn't be rocket science; they are perfect partners with many more flavours in common than wine and food.

3-MINUTE BREW

A 2003 book by Brooklyn Brewery's Garrett Oliver gave beer and food matching a huge boost. Called *The Brewmaster's Table*, it remains a seminal work. In Europe, most notably Belgium, pairing beer and food is nothing new and it's not unusual to find restaurants suggesting beers to match your meal. The rest of the world is still catching up, but the USA and UK are home to plenty of advocates for the idea.

RELATED ENTRIES

See also
BELGIUM
page 96

GARRETT OLIVER
page 144

3-SECOND BIOGRAPHIES

MARK DORBER

1957–
Pioneering publican, formerly at one of London's most famous beer specialist pubs: The White Horse, Parsons Green. Early advocate of beer and food matching. Co-founder of beer training organization, The Beer & Cider Academy, which accredits beer sommeliers in the UK

MELISSA COLE

1975–
British beer evangelist and author renowned for her beer and food matching skills and knowledge

30-SECOND TEXT

Sophie Atherton

The right beer and food pairing can make both even more enjoyable, a bit like having good company at the dining table.

