

Complete Guide To Home Brew FAQ

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Why You Can't Make Gasoline but You Can Make Beer

In tough economic times, we all look for ways to save money. With gas prices going up constantly, the prices of everything just goes right on up with them. Unlike the government, we can't print up money so anything we can do to cut costs without giving up quality of life is a good move. And if quality of life includes having a nice tasting brew every so often, well then there is definitely something we can do and maybe you are already starting to do that is not only great fun but a very good cost cutting move for you.

The great thing about taking up home brewing that you get three great benefits all in one great hobby. First you get a new passion in your life that will keep you busy and learning a side of beer making that you never knew could be so fascinating. Second, you inherit an entire society of fascinating people who are zealots for this hobby and life style of home brewing. And finally, once you get set up with the equipment and learn the "ropes" of brewing your own beer at home, you can make beer that is 100 times better than anything you can get at the liquor store or in a restaurant. But you can make it for a tiny percentage of what you would pay for retail beer which is inferior to yours anyway.

The great thing about home brewing that in addition to all these benefits, it really is not difficult to learn how to make great beer right at home. It will take some effort and a bit of study or coaching to learn how to use the equipment and what ingredients to buy and store. But because the ingredients are easy and abundant to get, you can set up to make literally gallons of beer for a very small investment. So on top of great fun, that's just sensible economics.

One great way to get some help with this process and make it even more fun is to learn to make beer with a group of friends. You can split the costs and make it even more economical. And each of you can pool your knowledge, your learning and your talents to make each batch of beer better than the last one. Because the process of brewing involves several steps, you need that patience and understanding of the process to do it right. And having friends in the process, each one can be watching for steps that need to be taken. Then when the beer enters the fermentation stage and what you all need is patience not to break into the beer and drink it before its time, you can be a support group to be willing to wait for it because you know how good it will be.

This support group can also be very helpful to be patient if that first batch of beer is not entirely perfect. But you know there are ways to get better. So by being faithful with your learning, joining with other beer brewing lovers around your town, you can and will get better quickly.

But the other value of working together with good friends is that you can eventually get a feel for how much beer you will make with each batch and how much each of you will use in a period of time. Then you can time the brewing sessions so you may even have multiple batches in various stages of completion and coming into use at just the right times so you never have to go to the liquor store again. You will have taken control of this one part of your economy by making your own beer so it's a cost you can control, unlike gasoline.

A Lady's View - Perfect Hobby for that Guy Who Loves Beer

If the man in your life is thinking of getting into brewing beer because he loves drinking different beers, there are some solid reasons to encourage that enthusiasm. Your first reflex might be that he already has a love of beer and that making his own is going over the top. But in truth, making the move toward home brewing has a lot going for it and it is a very creative and productive approach to the love of fine beers.

There is a difference between a true lover of beer as a fine beverage and the average "beer guzzler". Beer actually has a rich history and the diversity of flavors, textures and blends of beers is almost as strong as the wine culture which we know is one where real connoisseurs know what a fine wine is. So the move toward making beer identifies with that side of the beer culture that seeks the finest in flavors in beer and seeks to become part of the way very good beer is made rather than just be a consumer.

By encouraging your beer connoisseur to develop this new found passion for beer making, you are emphasizing the noble and creative side of his love of good beer. And the new social connections that novice beer makers find at retail beer brewing stores and local societies devoted to this hobby will help him become educated in the best way to make a truly fine beer at home. Once that home brewing hobby takes off, the passion to make beer becomes more about improving the quality and taste of the beer he makes even more than just drinking a beer that you made yourself. And that is a productive and creative way to approach his passion for beer.

Along with the creative side of beer making, if you start to produce your own beer at home, there are some economic benefits. Like everything else, beer prices are going up. But the costs of making a batch of beer at home are phenomenally low if you break it down to a per glass cost. Now there is equipment to buy up front. But it's a myth that getting set up for making beer at home costs an arm and a leg. You don't have to set up a brewery on the scale you may have seen when you toured the beer factory in St. Louis last summer. There are beer kits that give you all of the basic equipment you will need and you can usually have a home beer production factory going at home for under \$200. And when you consider you can make many gallons of great tasting beer with that same set up, that's a pretty smart investment.

It's not out of the question that if your beer loving guy develops his abilities as a Brewmeister, you may find a market to sell the beer he makes. There are lots of brew pubs that specialize in quality homemade beers. So if he can develop a unique taste and recipe that can be replicated consistently, you may be able to bottle it and sell it at local pubs. If that beer gets some popularity with the local beer drinking popularity, you may be able to make back your investment in equipment and supplies to make beer and even turn a nice profit from a great hobby.

These are all good reasons for you to encourage that fascination with how to make beer at home in your loved one. And if you jump in feet first and become a beer maker yourself, this new hobby can become a family affair and a wonderful way to share the fun together. And who knows, you may even get to be a bit of a beer connoisseur yourself!

Here's A Little Home Brewing Fun for the Kids

In any family when one person gets excited about something new, everybody gets in on the act. And that is certainly true of children. They love to be active in whatever hobbies mom and dad love to be part of. So if you bowl, the kids want to go and play the video games. If you love Shakespeare in the park, the kids will go and play on the ground nearby. So if you can find a way to give the kids a part of what you are doing, that keeps the family together.

That may seem tough with a hobby like home brewing. After all, the process of brewing is pretty involved and there is boiling water and sterile instruments to think of. That kind of thing really isn't fun for the kids. So if you can find a way to make a "beer" just for them, then they too can enjoy the excitement and feel part of what the adults are doing.

A way to fill this need is to brew up a delicious batch of ginger beer from for the kids. And the nonalcoholic beverage drinkers in the family will love it too! Of course, ginger beer is not real "beer" in the sense of an alcoholic brew although it can be mixed with beer for delightful and very British toddy. But it's so easy to make that the kids can get involved and they will love the beverage that results almost as much as mom and dad love their home brewed beer.

It's a good thing to have the procedures, tools and ingredients for your ginger beer all ready to go on brew day because it's a great surprise to the kids to let them know that they are going to get to make their own beer too! Because the steps for making ginger beer are fast, easy and harmless, the kiddos can have a ball doing it using a very simple recipe and even if they drink it all gone, it's easy enough to whip up another batch.

The ingredients for ginger beer are not exotic and they can be found at any grocery store. They include...

Be ready with 8 plastic bottles that will hold a pint and 4 bottles that will hold a quart and some bowls to mix the ginger beer up with.

Ginger - you can get it fresh at larger grocery stores. Two ounces is enough.

Cream of tartar - about one teaspoon will do.

Two lemons sliced.

A pound of sugar

An ounce of yeast

Boil one gallon of water.

Now it's just a matter of putting it all together. Cut the lemons in big sized rings and combine them in a big bowl with the other ingredients. The only other preparation you need to do besides boiling the water is to crush the ginger so it mixes with the water and other parts of the beer.

Now just chill the mixture to room temperature and add the yeast. Put it in the larger bottles to let it ferment for a couple of days. Once that is done, skim off the residue on top and your ginger tea is ready to enjoy.

Getting Ready To Join A Brewing Society

One of the reasons the hobby of home brewing is so popular is that you are not just taking up a pastime, you are becoming part of a closely knit society of home brewing that has its own culture, language and social structure that is unique to brewers alone.

Of course, the social aspect of drinking beer is well known. The infrastructure of pubs and bars that offers to patrons a place of comfort, friendship, fun and relaxation is about a lot more than just tipping back a delicious drink,. It is a part of our social fabric that goes back to revolutionary times when our most important documents were hashed out over a beer. And the importance of sharing a beer is just as powerful today as we all enjoyed thinking about that bar where "everybody knows your name" called Cheers.

So just as the social aspect of enjoying a beer with others is strong and well entrenched in our culture, so too is the art of making beer a deeply rooted part of society that goes back generations. That popularity has regular revivals and we are seeing a surge of interest in brewing today as all over the country brew pubs are springing up around delicious home

grown beers that in many cases are far better than the mass produced beers that are heavily advertised during the Super Bowl.

This well developed and sophisticated brewing subculture not only will be of great help to you as you start to learn about becoming a home brewer yourself, it will become a society that is a lot of fun to be part of and where you may make friends for life as you share with others your love of making your own beer. In America the grass roots level subculture of home brewing is growing fast. This is no small concern to the big retail brewers who cannot possibly make the quality and rich kinds of beers that can be made at the local level. But this is a natural evolution as we follow our cousins in the UK where keg beers made locally dominate the world of beer consumption in a culture where pubs are a central part of the fabric of society.

One reason home brewing has such an appeal is the tremendous diversity of beers you can produce and the control you have over flavor, consistency and alcohol levels. In most cases, once you have your basic equipment for brewing beer, it is cheaper to make your own beer. And there is something satisfying about brewing up a big batch of beer to put back to ferment as you enjoy a five gallon batch you made last month. Beer brewers can become quite obsessed with flavor, color and "punch" and always be looking for new ways to become better at this fun and interesting hobby.

Whatever level of involvement in beer making appeals to you, you can probably find new friends in the beer brewing society that you can share your hobby with. There are beer brewing radio stations and ham radio channels devoted to helping amateur brewers share their secret recipes and solve each other's problems. And there are homemade beer competitions that can really put some challenge that all on you to make that blue ribbon beer that rally makes the judges sit up and take notice.

So as you find yourself getting more and more enthusiastic and "caught up" in the fun of home brewing, don't be embarrassed by that because you can find a diverse assortment of other beer making enthusiasts to share your hobby with. So have fun, make friends, make good beer and above all, share your beer and your knowledge with others. Because beer is about more than good drink. It's about good times with good people as well.

What You Need To Know Before Leaping into Home Brewing

Whenever you start a major new hobby, its best to take a few minutes and think about what you are getting into. A lot of new hobbies require a significant investment of time and money. This is certainly true of golf, skydiving, scuba and home brewing. So along with a plan on how to get started, it's good to have a good plan for getting ready to plunge into home brewing full scale. If you have a road map for "checking it out", you can determine if home brewing will fit into your lifestyle and your budget.

"Looking before you leap" means that you find out what it means to be involved in the hobby or sport as a full time member of that hobby

community. When it comes to home brewing, that will only happen when you too can make your own beer at home. And when that time finally gets here and you can play with the recipes and make the taste of your own beer very unique, that will be an exciting moment for you. But a mature approach to this very adult hobby means checking it out and knowing the investment of time, money and space in the home before you spend your first dollar to get set up as a home brewer.

An easy and fun way to ease into the hobby of home brewing that doesn't cost a cent is to begin to network with those who are already well into their passion for making beer. You can find forums online to use to learn more about getting started. And there are almost certainly a number of home brewing societies and clubs in town that you can find out about online or through your local retail brewing supply store. These social connections will be people who are very much "evangelists" for home brewing because they know the fun of it. So you will get plenty of chances to sit in with a new friend to step through the brewing process and not only learn what equipment you will need but how it is used as you get training from an "old pro" in home beer making.

Once you have gotten some basic training the free route through home brewing gurus, the time will come when you are ready to consider buying your own equipment and taking a stab at it yourself. But you have already witnessed that home brewing is a big event in the house filling up the kitchen, the refrigerator, making a mess sometimes and requiring places to store, refrigerate and ferment the beer in the various stages from ingredients to finished product.

So it is important that the hobby of home brewing not just be your solitary passion but if at all possible you get the family into the act. If they can attend meetings at the home brewing club or go to competitions or other events that are all about home brewing, they can catch the same enthusiasm you have. That enthusiasm will be very important particularly in your significant other because each brewing session will be a major event in the house involving the kitchen with lots of pans and bottles and equipment. So having your wife or husband fully onboard with the process and even working on it together makes the fun of home brewing even more fulfilling.

Another area of looking before you leap is to plan out not only how you will use all of the equipment you will buy but how you will handle issues of storage. It's a very pragmatic concern but if you bring in this arsenal of beer making equipment. Between batches it is going to have to be somewhere. And while you will enjoy that equipment a great deal, you don't want it to dominate the home.

By getting a feel for the equipment when you are preparing to start your home brewing hobby, you can prepare a storage space for the equipment when it is not in use. Think ahead about storage for the fermentation phase of brewing as well as storing up to five gallons of beer per finished batch. But by thinking ahead, when you become a very active home brewer, you will have your family and facilities all ready for the changes. And that is looking before you leap into the exciting world of making and enjoying your own home made beer.

Getting Set Up to Make Beer At Home

The hobby of brewing your own beer at home is growing steadily as more people discover how much fun they can have making their beer at home and how great absolutely fresh beer can be. There may be no more gratifying moment for a home brewer than to serve your own fresh beer to your guests iced down in your favorite beer mugs and hear the rave that your beer is as good as the store bought beer they like best or maybe even better!

Part of the reason for the huge popularity is that getting set up to make beer and finding good supplies and equipment is neither difficult nor overly expensive. You can find or create the equipment fairly easily or get it discounted from others who have retired from the brewing business. And right now there is probably a home brewing store in your town ready and able to provide you with the ingredients as well as instruction books and recipes for all kinds of wonderful tasting beers you can make right at home. And with the explosion of web sites, ebooks and articles out there on the internet about home brewing, all the help you could ask for is at your fingertips to help you get started.

The reason different people get into home brewing vary. Some love the social aspect as you join a large local and international community of brewers. Another reason is that it is just great fun to assemble the equipment, learn the recipes and take a stab at making your own home grown batch of tasty beer. Even if you "botch" a batch of beer, it's all in the spirit of learning and it just drives you on to learn from your mistakes to make even better beer next time.

A third great reason is you have so much more control over your beer when you brew it yourself. Because you are not dealing with a beer that is mass produced and shipped from hundreds of miles away, you can control the taste, the consistency and even the level of alcohol to make your beer as strong or mild as you want it to be. And you can make changes with each batch with virtually endless variations on the recipes that are available to the home brewing community.

The supplies you will need to get started are easy to find and not very expensive either. Probably the best way to get a feel for what the best equipment is and who are the suppliers to favor would come from becoming a regular at home brewing clubs and gatherings and making some friends there. If you make it well known that you are a "new recruit" and need some mentoring in how to get set up, you will be overwhelmed with offers for you to sit in on a brewing session or two to get a feel for the process. If you take advantage of their zeal to help you get started, you will be way ahead on the game when you go shopping for the stuff you need to get set up to make your own beer at home.

The equipment you will need is pretty much only used for brewing beer so you will need to think of storage. The pot for boiling your initial wort and the equipment to handle the beer, filter it and ferment it are all made in sizes and at prices to encourage the home brewing markets. You can find them at retail prices at your home brewing retail outlet in town. You can use the internet and shop second hand shops to get better

prices. But many like to patronize the home brewing store that helped them get their start just to make sure they stay in business to keep selling you great fresh ingredients.

That same retail outlet will be a good source for the grains, yeasts and hops you need for the actual production of beer. Freshness is the key so communicate with the management of the store to learn of just how fresh those things are. As with the equipment, you can buy these things from the internet and that is fine. But get to know your supplier whoever you use and make sure you are confident you are getting the highest quality materials to make your home made beer. It will make a big difference.

How To Get that First Batch of Beer Brewing

Beer is such a popular beverage because it has such a deep earthy flavor and because the variety of flavors, brands, colors and textures of beers is so diverse that you can explore a new brew each and every time you want a beer and never get bored. And yet most of us pretty much settle on one taste and stick with it. That is until we discover brew pubs. That is when our eyes are opened to the idea that we don't have to depend on Budweiser and Miller for good beer. It can be made right at home.

Some of the finest beers you could hope to taste are not made in the big commercial factories but in small brew pubs all around the country. So if you have discovered some particularly flavorful home brewed beers, it isn't long before you might decide to take a stab at brewing a batch yourself. Be careful because once you start experimenting with brewing your own beer, you may become hooked into an addictive hobby that will provide hours of fun as you tinker with your recipes, get new and better equipment and become a true beer expert in brewing your own custom blends for the best flavored beer.

But it all starts with that very first batch. You might approach that moment when you decide to make your first batch of beer with some fear and trembling. But keep your spirit of adventure and experimentation because, after all, if you bought good equipment, you will get the hang of it. As the wise man said, that the journey of a hundred miles begins with the first step. So too your journey toward becoming a master brewer starts with your first batch.

The process of brewing that first batch is pretty simple actually. Here are the steps to go through to get your first brew underway.

Gather the ingredients to have them on hand as you step through the brewing process. You don't want to have to stop and go dig something up so have them ready to go when they are added in as the brewing process is underway.

It all starts with water. One gallon of good water will do. You don't need specialty water as tap water in most areas of the country does well due to a good combination of minerals that actually makes the beer taste better. So get a gallon of water boiling in a large pot capable of holding 2-3 gallons of water. You need that extra space for adding ingredients.

The first ingredient to add to the boiling water is the brewing yeast that you bought just for this purpose. The yeast will have specific instructions but in essence you will mix the yeast with piping hot tap water and stir it in a separate pot or pan until it becomes a thick paste.

You can prepare the yeast while the water boils and when it's ready, add the mixture to the water.

Once the yeast is mixed in well, add the malt extract that you bought for this brewing process. Make sure the malt is mixed in well and dissolved before moving on.

Hops will come as pellets when you bought them from the supplier so add them when the water is boiling again and allow the entire mixture to boil for another five minutes.

During this preparation time, get your fermenting equipment sanitized and ready to go. As the brewing process approaches completion, fill the fermenter about three quarters full with cold water from the tap.

The strong beer you have boiled is called the "wort" which is now ready for fermenting. Pour the hot wort into the cold water in the fermenter. What you are looking for is an end result of five gallons of mixture in the fermenter so if you don't find you are at that level, add more water.

The brewing process is done and you can follow the directions for fermenting that are provided with the equipment or that you learn from other resources about the fine art of fermenting beer. Now it's just a matter of letting nature do what it does to ferment your beer. Enjoy the anticipation as you allow the fermenting to continue and then enjoy the flavor of your very own first batch of home brewed beer.

When To Go to the Source to Learn Home Brewing Skills

The time between when it first dawns on you that you could start learning to brew your own beer at home and when you actually take a stab at it is often a long one. For one thing, it takes a pretty significant learning curve to even begin to visualize that it possible to make beer at home. Oh, you may have heard about home breweries but to think of doing it in your own home setting is a leap of understanding that takes some time to get through.

The internet is often a source of information that we go to start learning more about a new area of life like home brewing. Perhaps that is how you found this article and that's good. That means you are off on the right foot and using free information from people who have already learned a few things about brewing at home to get your orientation to what it would take for you to learn to brew your own beer at home.

As often happens with any new area of interest, if your fascination with how to brew beer at home starts to get some momentum, it's a good way to go to log on to the major home brewing web sites and begin to get

oriented to the methods, the equipment and the process of brewing beer at home. Do be aware that some of these sites get very technical and it's easy to get intimidated.

But if you can just get an understanding about the equipment and the ingredients and some basic ideas of how the process would go if you were the one doing the brewing, that is a good start. Because online articles and web sites mix expert knowledge with newcomers orientation, if you do stumble into a section of those sites that you don't understand, just surf on to pages that are intended to help you where you are and understand that when you get to that level that that technical sophistication, you can always come back to these pages. Just build a good bookmark library because it will serve you well.

But to pick up speed on learning the real details of what brewing is all about, you don't have to depend just on reading or books. Because brewing beer in your own home is more than just book knowledge, it is handling of equipment and ingredients, the more direct exposure you can get to the brewing process, the better. But it is also very likely that you developed your interest in home brewing while enjoying a good brew at your local brew pub. Most towns have brew pubs where homemade beers are sold in just about every flavor, color and texture. Many times these brew pubs grew up out of a home brewing hobby that just got bigger and bigger until it became an enterprise and a money making business

That is why most brew pub owners are more than happy to give tours and lessons in home brewing. This is probably some of the most value exposure you can get to how the process of home brewing works. By walking through a brewery where the beer you make is made, you can step through the process to get a feel for how you will proceed. You can see the boiling pots, how the strainers are used and the filters and fertilizers and everything that is needed to take beer from raw materials to the finished state of a fine brewed beer. In fact, with a little charm and by working for free, you may be able to apprentice in the brew pub making beer. This time will be tremendously valuable to you to help you learn the ropes of making your own beer.

You combine this hands on knowledge with what you are learning on line and from other training sources along with what you can learn by networking with other experienced home brewers and you have a powerful source of knowledge that will pay you well when you start making your home beer yourself. And that knowledge will result in some great tasting beers from your kitchen so you will be glad you took the time to learn all you can before taking the plunge.

Home Brewing - Great Grains for a Great Beer

One of the great reasons for learning to brew your own beer is to learn more about the various grains and ingredients that makes one beer better than another one. When you first start your hobby of home brewing, you no doubt got connected to a local club or association of home brewers. They can help you learn the lingo and how to tell what the best grains are to use in your beer. But before you go to the first meeting, it might speed things up if you knew the basics.

The use of malts is at the heart of how grain contributes to a great beer. The difference between a light beer that doesn't have a heavy malt taste and one that virtually tastes like a loaf of bread all go back to what malts you pick and the process that is used during the malting and brewing of your beer. There are actually a big variety of different grains that people commonly use when brewing their own beer and you may have to take some time to brew up a few batches using different grains to see which ones capture what to you is the perfect beer taste that will make your home made beer unique. But understanding how malting works is a good first step.

Now as a home brewing enthusiast, you will probably not actually take grain through the malting process yourself. But you should become familiar with how malting works and why there is so much variety to the outcome of the malting process. In that way you can use that knowledge when buying the malts for your beer so you can get a malt that will give you the flavor, color and intensity of beer that you are looking for.

The malting process starts with the grain to be used. The most common grains are barley, wheat or rye but others can be used from time to time. The grain is used from the seed form and steeped and germinated which gets the active part of the malting and brewing process underway. Germination, which from your high school science class you know is what happens when a seed sprouts out to become a plants, releases the store energy of the seed that was put there to jump start the growth process. We are going to use that energy and convert it into malt mash that you can use to brew your beer.

What happens during the germination process of those grains is that the stored energy in the seed is changed as it is released. When the starches in the seeds changes into sugars by the enzymes that are active part of the germination process, those sugars give us one of the core ingredients for great beer. It is at that exact moment that the germination process is suspended using kilns to dry the grains and all of that good sugar and enzymes that became active remain in the malt for use during the brewing process.

Obviously this description of the basic malting process is simplified but for our purposes it gives you a background into what happens before you buy the malts you will use in your home made beer. But based on this description, you can go on to get a feel for the wide variety of malt types. The more you know about malt, the better informed you will be about what malts you wish to use when you brew your beer. And those decisions will have a big effect on the taste of your beer. So for great tasting beer, use great malts and knowing one malt from the next is the key to knowing which to use for the best homemade beer possible from your home brewing efforts.

Home Brew Kegging

When you first learn the craft of home brewing, one of the big steps is the transfer of the beer into larger bottles for fermentation and then smaller bottles for storage and to serve guests your delicious brew.

This can be messy but it is an important step along the path to great tasting beer. And learning the beer transfer and bottling skills will be a big step as your sophistication at home brewing comes along.

There comes a time though that you can consider the next big step in becoming more skilled in your home brewing talents. And that next big step is into kegging your home made brews. But before you make that step, it's good to know what you will need and the costs and efforts involves so you go into the kegging step with eyes wide open.

For one thing, kegging your own beer can get a bit expensive. There is another level of equipment including CO2 storage tanks, the kegging canisters and even a kegerator that can all add another level of cost to your home brewing hobby. But hopefully if you have been making your own beer for a few years before you make this step, you can see that the money you have saved on beverages has been significant enough justify making the next big step into kegging.

The first step perhaps of moving into kegging is to get the family on board, especially your spouse, as you may have done when you first started brewing in the first place. A natural progression, though, is to start your hobby of home brewing for the fun and the savings and then to go toward brewing when you become a serious home brewing zealot and you know the quality of your beer demands this step. So if your family has evolved and you are a home brewing family, they will be as excited as you are to learn this next step.

Along with the costs get a good feel for the additional storage space kegging will add to your beer making needs and requirements. Along with the equipment for kegging, you will also need additional refrigerator space. This might be the time to consider the purchase of a specialized refrigeration unit called a kegerator that is made just for chilling and serving your fine beer from the kegging setting. But if you entertain a lot and you are getting those rave reviews for the quality of your home made beer, such a purchase is a slam dunk decision.

The upside of kegging is that it does reduce much of the fuss and mess of using bottles and always having to clean and make sterile those bottles for the next use. And kegging gives you a lot of control over the levels of carbonation in your beer. That gives you even more options and freedom to adjust carbonation to use in the creation of unique styles and tastes in your beer. That is just one of many ways kegging improves the overall quality and diverse flavors you can achieve with your home made beers.

Of course there still will be a place for bottling your beer even if you have overhauled your storage and at home serving method to move to kegging. There is a real fun and pride when you can serve family and guests great tasting ice cold beer directly from a keg like you could get it in the pub. But you will want to keep some bottles around to create bottled beer for gifts or to take with you to a social outing. When you show up for that next big barbeque with bottles of your own home made and kegged beer, you will be the hit of the event.

When To Leave Your Beer Alone to Become Great Beer Master

To become a real "master" of brewing beer, you have to understand every aspect of what happens during the brewing process. When you get home from the beer brewing supply store with your kit or your little baggies with the supplies to make a fresh batch of beer, it is sometimes hard to imagine that those raw materials will result in a delicious batch of beer that you made yourself. But by understanding each step, you can become quite adept at making beer at home.

The cycles of making beer are each important as you take them order. From sterilizing your equipment, to purchasing the supplies and then on to boiling and brewing and fermentation, each step is important. But that last step, fermentation and aging is unique from the rest because it is the step that calls for you to not be interacting with your beer, adjusting the equipment or preparing the brewing ingredients. It is the step that calls for you to use patience and tender loving care to leave your beer alone as it ferments. But the fermentation process is just as crucial if not more important than any of the preparation steps. That is because it is fermentation that genuinely turns the mixture you have cooked up on the kitchen stove into a wonderful tasting beer you will be proud to serve to friends and family.

There are two phases of fermentation which is the primary stage and the secondary stage. Both are important. During primary fermentation, the yeast and the sugars that are in the wort you so carefully prepared go through a long chemical interaction which releases carbon dioxide as a byproduct. Now during this phase, you want to get that CO₂ out of those fermentation bottles because if you leave them in there, the bottles will explode.

The need to get that carbon dioxide out of the fermentation bottle without opening up the fermentation to outside air entirely is one good reason to buy specialized fermentation equipment because they will come with air release devices that will utilize an airlock system to release the CO₂ buildup but keep a level of separation between the outside environment and your fermenting beer.

Once you have the bottles prepared and the wort in place, it's time to find a cool dark place in the house to place the fermenting bottles. Don't give in to the urge to put them in the refrigerator because that will just stop the fermentation in its tracks. A room that sustains a constant 65-75 degree temperature is good. Now that the fermentation process is underway, you do what is often the most difficult maneuver for any home beer zealot. You leave the beer alone and let the ingredients make magic in those bottles for about two weeks.

Secondary fermentation is the next and final phase except if you choose to age your beer to enhance the flavor. But the second fermentation is where you add some additional sugar and you strain out the sediments from the primary fermentation and trap the mixture in sealed bottles this time. The CO₂ build up is not as extreme so the danger of exploding beer bottles is gone and the carbon dioxide creates that bubbly attribute to your beer that will give it a wonderful head and taste. Both phases are

necessary and you will give your beer another couple of weeks in this stage before it will be ready to drink. But after you have a little taste, if you want to let the beer continue to process and age, maybe even in wood containers to add a rich flavor to the brew, this is just you being the Brewmeister that will result in wonderful tasting beer to serve to your friends and family.

How To Make Your Beer Crystal Clear

Beer is about a lot more than just a great tasting beverage. The fact that a culture has grown up around the joy of making and enjoying fine beer testifies how much beer has become part of how our culture works. The drinking of the beverage is only partially about the taste of the brew itself and very much about where you have your beer, what you drink it out of, how the beer looks in the glass and who you are drinking it with. And while you as a homemade beer brewer cannot control many of those factors, you can control the quality and ambiance of the beer you make so it not only tastes great but is visually appealing as well.

If you pour a commercial beer from a bottle or a can, you may not be aware of how much those beer makers put into not just the taste but the effect of other senses have on the beer drinking experience. The way the beer pours, the aroma as you pour it, the head that wells up in your mug and how the beer looks in the glass all are just as important as the taste itself. The emphasis the big beer producers put on ascetics is so extreme that they even make the sound the can makes when you "pop a cold one" to be unique because they know that sound alone can prepare you to receive the taste of a great beer drinking experience.

The truth is none of that will change whether the beer itself is of high quality or is good to drink. But visual appeal matters. One area of visual appeal that you have some control over when making your own beer at home is clarity. Clarity simply refers to how the beer looks in the glass. If you can see through the beer and it is a consistent beige or amber color, that is visually appealing. But if things are floating around in the beer, even if they are perfectly harmless byproducts of the brewing process, that can diminish how inviting your beer is to enjoy and even diminish how enjoyable the beer is to drink even if the beer itself is of high quality.

A lot of the "stuff" that floats around in beer comes from the yeast that is crucial to the fermentation process that makes beer beer. Some yeasts are better than others about settling out of the beer during fermentation. Another source of visible material in the beer comes from what is referred to as non-microbiological particles or NMPs which are a byproduct of the brewing process. Again, none of these visible materials are harmful to consume nor do they reduce the value of the beer. They just look bad and hurt the clarity of the beer which is one way beer is measured for quality.

Many of the NMPs are introduced during the initial creation of the wort which is phase one of any brewing operation. The wort is boiled at a high temperature for a significant enough period of time to cause the proteins in the ingredients to break down and become part of the fluidity

of the wort rather than remain in a substance state or a "floc" which remains visible in the finished product. To avoid this make sure your boil sustains a temperature of 215F for 90 minutes to assure complete processing of the proteins.

Another important brewing step that you can do to reduce visible agents in your beer is to cool the wort very quickly. By bringing the temperature down rapidly, the clarity is vastly enhanced as is the flavor and overall quality of the beer. The best way to accomplish such rapid cooling is to move the wort quickly from the brewing process to a very cool environment or using a specialized wort cooler to quickly bring that temperature down and eliminate many of the flocs that might be there if the cooling goes more slowly.

Seeking beer clarity can become a major passion of yours as a home brewer and there is a whole science to using clarifying agents such as Irish Moss to enhance beer clarity without diminishing beer quality or taste. Learning good techniques for making your beer clear and appealing is just another step in your ongoing quest to become the best amateur beer making possible. And that is a quest worth pursuing.

Easy Steps To Be A Budget Brewmeister

For a beer lover, one of the most enjoyable hobbies you can pick up is to brew your own beer at home. Once you get set up with the equipment and basic supplies, it's a fairly affordable hobby and you will get a lot of entertainment out of going through the brewing and fermentation process. Then once you start bringing out your own home brewed beer, you get the sense of pride because this beer made entirely by you, not to mention the enjoyment of sucking down that hearty blend that you created yourself.

One of the hold ups that may have kept you from getting into making your own beer may have the cost issue. If you have ever taken a tour of a brewery and you see the huge machines and storage tanks, it's hard to see how you can do that in your kitchen with just a few simple devices. But there is an entire home brewing subculture that has risen up based entirely on being able to make beer yourself at relatively low costs. Its legal, it's fun and brewing beer can become a major hobby as well.

All that said, it's true that the initial costs can be pretty intimidating. The cost of the pots, fermenters and other specialized equipment can run into several hundred dollars. It's risky to sink that kind of money into a new hobby before you even know if you will enjoy making beer, whether the beer you make will be drinkable or if you will stick with it. And during a time when we need most of what we earn just to get by, that is a risk that may be holding you back from getting into the hobby of home brewing.

Of course one natural solution is to get your first exposure and training in making beer with someone else's equipment. Once you start poking around home brewing web sites and places where the equipment and supplies to make beer are sold in town, you can find out about clubs and societies that are full of people who have taken the plunge and are making beer all the time right at home like you want to do.

These people not only love home brewing, they can become real evangelists for their hobby and with very little encouragement, you can enjoy some Saturdays in their shop or kitchen learning how to brew beer with someone that already knows how. This kind of experience is priceless because you learn what to look for in equipment and what is essential and what is optional. You can go through the brewing process and learn a lot about how to make actual beer that is drinkable and what pitfalls to avoid. Meanwhile, you may not have spent any more money than to buy your new friend lunch or to bring the pretzels for the tasting party when the beer is done.

But then when you are ready to get started, your knowledge of what you really need will pay off big time. You still don't have to pay top dollar for the equipment to get up and running. Lots of people get started with making beer and for many reasons, their hobby stops suddenly. The outcome is that there is a pretty brisk used home brewing equipment market out there. You can find discounted equipment in new or like new condition out on eBay or Craigslist all the time. But don't overlook the local sources as those home brewer clubs and associations may have bulletin boards with listings of people who want to sell their equipment. Pawn shops in the area are another great resource.

Another great way to save money is to go together with a friend and buy the equipment together and split the costs all the way down the line. This makes brewing beer more fun and social and each of you can have the equipment and supplies home at different times to get to know it and learn to make good beer separately so you can make great beer together. And who knows, you may get so good at it that you start selling your beer to local pubs. And when the big bucks come rolling in from that, your investment in learning to brew beer will really look good to you.

Learn To Know The Heart of a Great Brewmeister

In any big area of focus and specialization, there are those who go on to greatness in that passion and those who only go so far, lose interest or get discouraged and quit. We see that in sports, business and art to name just a few areas. So it makes sense that the hobby of making beer at home will be subject to the same laws. Many people get interested in how to make beer at home, buy the equipment and may go as far as to make a batch or two of beer. But then after a while they lose the persistence to getting really good at making beer and they give up.

But in this very popular and growing field of home brewing, there are a few who go on to greatness as makers of fine beers at home. It's from this group that you commonly see the finest of home brewing being produced and the beers that consistently win prizes at home brewing contests that are held each year. And it is from this group that you most often see amateur beer makers make the leap over to begin selling their beer commercially and maybe go on to owning their own beer pub in town and realizing an entirely new career doing what they love to do, making beer all the time.

Those that reach that level of success have the heart of a true Brewmeister and they exhibit all the traits of someone who is destined to create some wonderful and delicious beers. So what characteristics are in the personality of someone who can push on to that level of success brewing beer? It's helpful to think this through to see if perhaps you have the heart of a true Brewmeister as well.

Someone who will succeed at brewing beer has a high attention to detail. At first, you have to learn the ropes of making beer by following the instructions that come with your beer kit or equipment and learn all you can about the step by step process of making a very basic batch of good tasting beer. The future Brewmeister wants to learn the basics and get them down very well so his foundation is strong once the time comes to innovate and use some brewing creativity to make some truly new and interesting blends.

The Brewmeister also is a virtual fanatic about cleanliness and sanitation. Most often when you taste homemade beer that is flawed, it comes from lack of attention to sanitizing the preparation equipment and maintaining an almost operating room level quality of sanitation throughout the brewing process. To the one who is a Brewmeister through and through, there is no such thing as "good enough" when it comes to how clean his beer brewing facilities are. Only perfectly sanitary is good enough.

Another basic personality trait in a person who is devoted to making only the finest of quality beer is patience. This patience shows itself in a number of ways. It shows itself in the willingness to shop without tiring to get the finest ingredients for the next batch of beer he makes. It shows itself in the willingness to only buy enough materials for one batch and then go out and buy a completely new set of materials each time just to make sure his ingredients are perfectly fresh.

Above all the true Brewmeister will wait as long as it takes for that beer to go through the weeks of fermentation and aging. And if he takes that beer out after a cycle is done and tastes it and it isn't up to his high standards, he can wait another month or two or more until it reaches a level of high quality that will be acceptable to anyone who drinks the beer he makes.

Finally that one Brewmeister in a hundred who goes on to greatness in making the best beer imaginable from a home brewing setting is impossible to discourage. The idea of giving up because one batch of beer didn't come out right or something else introduced a set back to the effort is out of the question. It is that kind of persistence combined with patience, attention to detail and creativity that is the perfect personality blend that makes a great Brewmeister who will go on to greatness in this wonderful passion of home brewing.

What Is The Heart of Great Hops

There is no denying that a great beer has a unique flavor that is unlike any other beverage in the world. That artful blend of bitterness and the rich grain flavors can give you a beer that is bold and stout or one that

is mellow and smooth. And while every component of the brewing process contributes important things to that unique flavor, the hops can make a huge impact on the outcome of your beer. That is why it's good to understand the role hops plays in the brewing process and how you can control the taste of your home brewed beer by controlling the hops.

Hops are a natural ingredient that is actually a flower of the hop vine. One reason that hops give you so much flexibility as an amateur beer maker is that the varieties and origin of hops is very diverse. So you can find different hops to experiment with until you find one that gives you the perfect flavor for your beer.

How hops affect your beer is different depending on where the hops came from and how you use them. Some hops can introduce bitterness to your beer which is not a bad thing if it is part of the overall flavor. That "dry" flavor that many really enjoy in a good beer can come from the bitterness of the right kind of hops. But hops also give beer its deep rich aroma that is a flavor treat all by itself. So it's good to research which of these flavors the hops you are buying will add to your beer and to keep some records so you know which hops work best for you.

Now when you go to the brewing supply stores in town or order from the internet, you can buy hops unprocessed and prepare them for brewing yourself. But usually when you are starting out, it's easier to buy them pressed and packaged into pellets in the right measure to add to your brewing process at the right time. You don't need a lot of hops to make a five gallon batch of beer flavorful and rich. About two ounces per batch is plenty. So be careful you don't buy too much. For one thing, as a perishable item, unused hops could go bad before you get them used up. But also you may wish to buy very small quantities of hops so you can experiment with different ones to find the flavor you want.

Besides the origin and type of hops you buy, the way you use hops during the brewing cycle has the greatest effect on the changes to the flavor of your beer. Hops used to bitter a beer are usually added during the boiling process very early in the beer preparation cycle. This ensures that the boiling will take out any aroma from those hops and leave only the bittering effect that you want. Hops used for the flavor and aroma aspect can be added later in the boiling cycle or during fermentation. The later in the brewing process that aroma hops are introduced, the more the beer that is the outcome of brewing will have that strong hop flavor. To get a beer with the strongest flavor of hops, add dried hops late in the fermentation process and none of the original flavor will be taken out of the final beverage. But this can be a very strong beer so be advised.

Hops give you a lot of ways to experiment with the home brewing process to get new and interesting flavors. And the continuous growth and development of your home brewing skills and finding new ways to make your beers flavorful and rich is one of the things that makes home brewing so satisfying. And hops can be a big part of that fun.

Keys To The Heart of Great Home Brewing

Can you remember the moment you first got the idea in your head to take up brewing your own beer at home? For many it is a tour of a brew pub or some other behind the scenes exposure to all that happens when good beer is made. Before that one pivotal moment, you may have never even thought about beer being made at all. The origin of beer was the liquor store or the market and that was that. But when you realized that not only does beer go through a fascinating transformation from grains, hops and malts to this delicious brew you enjoy but that you can make your own beer if you want to, that is when the idea of becoming a home brewer started to become a reality in your mind.

For others that moment of realization that home brewing could be a whole new world may have happened when you first were exposed to "real" beer, as the home brewing enthusiasts call it. That is when you sampled a brew that was not made by one of the big retail beer makers like Budweiser, Coors or Miller and you discovered what beer tasted like when it came directly from the brewing process to your glass. That may also be the day you found out what an amazing diversity of beer types, textures and flavors there were. And for many when you realize that you can find a diversity of beers that is almost as extensive as in the wine world that it is often very difficult to go back to boring old pasteurized beer again.

So if you are about to "make the leap" to become a home brewer yourself, you are about to step into a rich and full world that is full of history, culture, tradition and new friends and associates. You won't just take up the hobby of brewing beer, you will "become" a home brewer which is a unique kind of individual indeed.

It isn't hard to "define" home brewing because the term is self-explanatory except to go on to say that it is entirely possible for you to make high quality beer right in your own home with a small investment in equipment, the base ingredients that are readily available as well and the love and patience it will take to learn the process. But the process is not difficult which explains why home brewing is a passion and a hobby that is growing in popularity more and more every year. You might be surprised who you know who has a love of brewing beer because it is not just the hard core beer drinker you might know. Because brewing beer at home is as much about the art and the craft of making a quality beverage, home brewers come from every walk of life there is from bartenders to ministers and from college professors to librarians.

The heart of home brewing is the fun, the excitement and the fulfillment creating your own batch of delicious beer can bring. But what transforms home brewing hobbyists to lifelong makers of beer is the challenge of always finding new blends, new methods and new ways to make their beer even more flavorful than the last batch.

Be forewarned that a zeal for becoming better and better at home brewing can be habit forming. But if you get hooked, you will meet thousands of others in your town and around the country and the world who have the same addiction as you. It's a wonderful addiction that you will never regret catching because brewing beer at home can provide decades of fun

and enjoyment making your own blends of beer. But it provides something else just as good which is really great tasting beer. So enjoy.

What You Need To Know About The Malt of Beer

We tend to think of "malt" as a thing. Of course there is the candy malt and there is the old fashioned "malted" that was the staple of 1950s "malt shops" which in our mind is more like a modern day milk shake. But when it comes to beer, just about anyone, even people who are not involved in home brewing can list the ingredients as hops, malt, and grains. So as part of our quest to become more familiar with all of the aspects of beer making, it's a good idea to explore more deeply what exactly the malt in beer is all about.

When you hear the word "malt" in regards to the brewing of beer, the reference is actually to malted barley. Malt is the outcome of the process of malting which starts with pure barley grain, the same grain you might use to make muffins or barley soup. That is a good way to ground the concept of malting to something very familiar.

But even then the term "malted barley" is not specific enough. Malting gets right to the heart of how beer is made because the core ingredient of beer are what results when the sugars from malted barley are fermented. Those sugars are scientifically named maltose, hence malt. So the malt used to make beer is the outcome of fermenting the sugars from malted barley whereas the candy or desert form of malt are those sugars themselves, unfermented. That makes good trivia for the new home brewers club meeting. But what makes brewers malt so useful in beers is that there are a wide variety of types of maltose sugars that result from the fermentation. And each of these can be brewed into a very unique beer.

How malt is produced can make for even more interesting trivia. And it gives you insight into how the malts you use in your home brewing come to be. The process of malting barley begins with jump starting the germination process that is nature's way of preparing the barley plants to grow from seeds into sprouts. The barley is soaked and then they are drained fairly soon so the seeds will be stimulated to begin to germinate. The part of the germination process that is interesting to brewers happens when certain enzymes are released by germination. These enzymes are powerful chemicals that convert the stored sugars and starches in the seeds which become food to power the germination and growth of the plant. But it is those enzymes that the brewer is looking to capture.

The entire objective of malting is to activate those enzymes in the seeds and release them so the brewer can capture them for the brewing process. So as soon as the germination process starts, the grain is quickly dried so the enzymes are captured in that raw state to be processed into malted barley. Once the brewer has the malted barley in the condition we just went through, that malt is saturated in hot water. This stimulates and activates the enzymes and puts them to work again. Under the controlled conditions of the brewing process, the enzymes do their job of converting the starches in the barley to sugars. And as those sugars go directly

from conversion to be boiled with hops and then combined into fermented yeast, the result is this little thing we call -- beer.

Now this is all good information but most of us who are making beer at the amateur level. For our purposes, malt extract that is sold by your home brewing supplier is a great way to have all of that skilled preparation at your disposal without you having to do all the work. By buying the malt in extract form, it is ready to go into your boiling water and join the home brewing process in full swing. As you add the malt, those enzymes will kick in and the chemical reactions needed to create great tasting beer will be well underway.

Maybe there will come a time when you will get more involved in the more complicated procedures of brewing or at least visit a brewery where the malting process is underway. But since our love of home brewing is about learning all we can about how beer is made by making it ourselves, getting a feel for the malting process is both educational and fascinating as well.

What Is The Right Home Brewing Kit for You

There is always an urge when you get started in a great new hobby like home brewing to go out and buy the most expensive equipment and supplies and dive in head first. That instinct may come from watching an "old pro" at home brewing working his or her own elaborate set up to make some great beer. So naturally when you start learning how to brew beer at home yourself, you want to strive for the best which is to make beer as good as the old pros make. But the instinct to over commit should be resisted.

The home brewing industry is a big one and it has gotten much more able to support new recruits to this exciting hobby and passion to get you just what you need when you need it. And if you go out and spend a fortune on equipment that is just not right for you starting out, not only can you get frustrated but if your love of home brewing doesn't "stick", you can end up feeling badly about such a huge investment. So, as is true of a lot of hobbies, its best to start out slow, use some very basic "starter equipment" and get a few batches of beer under your belt and grow from there.

That is where getting started with a home brewing kit is a good move. In that way, with one purchase, you can bring home the basic equipment you need, the supplies for your first few batches of beer and, probably most importantly, some instructions on how to get started making beer. You can find a pretty wide variety of beer making kits to choose from just to get started. And because the diversity of the types of starter kits that are out there, it's good to know what you want as you start shopping the web sites, catalogs or at the local beer brewing retailer.

As with everything else, you can find low priced options when you are buying a beer brewing kit and other kits that have a lot more accessories and supplies to offer. The things to look for in the way of equipment in your very first kit are sanitizers and bottles as well as containers for fermentation once the brewing process gets underway. Keep in mind that

once the beer is in production, you will be moving it from container to container and you will have the opportunity to step in and remove unwanted residue from the last step. So various siphons and strainers can really help you as the master brewer of this batch of beer to purify your brew as it moves from the boiling pot to the fermentation containers.

So don't just buy the first home brewing kit you see. Take some time and evaluate what each one has to offer to determine if the more expensive ones come with a more in depth assortment of supplies which can keep you from having to run out and supplement the kit fairly early in your beer making career. Those kits might cost a bit more but compared to buying each of those items one by one, it's usually a very good deal.

In addition to the assortment of brewing tools and accessories, look at the physical size of the equipment you get. The best size for any batch of beer is a minimum of five gallons. Brewing in that quantity gives the wort a sufficient room to brew well. So make sure you read the fine print that the pots and storage containers you are getting with your kit will allow you to make batches that fit your expectations. But also keep in mind storage issues as you don't want equipment so large, it's hard to keep it all handy for your next brew.

How To Use a Good Beer Making Kit

Lots of time the urge to finally take the plunge into home brewing comes when you went to the brew pub and paid ten dollars for an imported beer of one that was brewed in their pub. And even if that beer is good, it's easy to start to suspect that you could do as well making beer and that your beer would be perfectly fresh and would cost a lot less than ten dollars a glass to enjoy this flavor all the time. When that thought crossed your mind, the home brewer in you is born.

The community of beer lovers is very large as documented in the huge beer sales that stay consistent around the world. That is why it is almost a shame and a crime when beer is mass produced and bad beer is sold so widely. It's a crime because it is so easy to make really good beer. If you have that desire to enjoy the finest of this ancient recipe and maybe crossing the line to want to BE a maker of great beer, you will find that getting started on this great hobby is far easier than you may have thought. And yes while you will have to learn a few things about the process of making beer, it will be more fun than any class you took in high school for sure because you are learning to make something you love and you get to drink your final exam!

Unlike school though, once you get down the basic process of home brewing, the variety of "right answers" to how to make a great beer are diverse and fun to play with. You can try different grains, hops and yeast combinations. You can adjust when each ingredient is added and learn how to balance the bitter flavor with the hops flavor to give you a deep rich blend or a light beer and all using the same equipment and much the same ingredients. So with that enticement to the fun and endless variety you can find in a hobby of home brewing, it's just a matter of getting started.

It's very easy to fall under the influence of "beer purists" who will advocate very expensive and complicated equipment and using exotic ingredients to make a beer of very high quality and taste. If you make it a practice to socialize at the home brewing retailer or at home brewing clubs or web sites, it's easy to pick up that side of the home brewing community that is very particular and advanced in the craft of home brewing.

But it is important to remember that just starting out that you are not a home brewing purist yet! And it's best not to try to be one because starting out, its best to let others help you get some very basic equipment so you can learn the craft of home brewing and develop your skills easily and without so much pressure. If you spend thousands on very elaborate and hard to operate equipment too soon, you will be frustrated and if the outcome is not just right, you will be disappointed. So cut yourself some slack and buy just the basics and just learn to make a very down to earth starter batch of beer. If it is drinkable at all after you step through the process a few times, you are doing great. And you have all the time in the world to learn your craft and grow until you can afford to be a "beer purist" and be fussy and particular too.

So don't be ashamed to buy a basic beer making kit at the beer retailer store or online to get you started. These kits come with all you need in equipment and supplies to step through making your first few batches of beer. It's important you give yourself the time to use these starter kits to learn your basic skills. Then once you have the basics, it will be great fun to buy different types of grains, hops and yeasts and experiment to refine your skills. That is a natural way to learn and away to become a long time beer making enthusiasts and enjoy this wonderful hobby for many years to come.

Learning Tricks of the Trade for Making Great Beer

Assembling the equipment and the ingredients to make beer is a cut and dried operation. The process of making beer at home isn't really a mystery. That is one of the reasons that home brewing has become so popular. Because you can get set up to brew beer at home with a relatively low investment in equipment and ingredients, it's easy to get started on making your own beer. And when you finish that first batch and it is stored away to be sampled in a few weeks, the excitement that you soon will be drinking your own beer is a unique feeling and one you want to repeat often.

Once you have confirmed that you can indeed make beer, the next question comes up is - can you make GOOD beer? When you tasted that first batch, you were pretty excited because it really was beer. But you may have noticed some aspects of the beer you would like to improve. The beer may have been too bitter or have too strong a hops flavor. The clarity of the beer may have been imperfect or you could see stuff floating around in your beer.

But these flaws are acceptable at first because they drive you to want to become a better beer maker. You want your beer to be so flavorful and enjoyable to drink that your guests say it's as good or better than store bought beer and that it even lives up to the quality at the local beer pub. That's a tall order but part of the fun of brewing beer at home is to strive for those goals. To get there, some of the tricks that the old pros of home brewing know will help a lot. Some of their wisdom can help you move from a rookie beer maker into the ranks of people and actually know what they are doing.

Most recipes for making beer at home call for making a batch of five gallons of beer. That's a lot of beer. So sometimes home brewers try to cut the batch to make less beer. It's done with good intent. It's hard to store five gallons of beer. And if you don't drink your own beer up pretty fast (or give it away), the beer can go stale or bad which is hard to see watch happen to "your" beer. But old pros tell us don't cut the batch and go ahead and make beer up five gallons at a time. You need that quantity to get the full value out of the brewing process. And it's hard to adjust the recipes for a smaller batch which means that there is a good chance you will end up with a beer that does not have the right balance of malt, hops and yeast. The outcome can be a beer that is difficult or impossible to drink and it all gets thrown out. Better to make five gallons of good beer than three gallons of undrinkable brew.

The more you study and learn about beer making, the better you will become at home brewing. Don't just go from the instructions that come with the equipment. Sink your teeth into learning all you can. The beer you make will benefit from the homework you do. And you will have more fun too.

Just as it's not advisable to cut the size of any batch of homemade beer you produce, also avoid cutting corners in terms of time or clean up. Sometimes it seems that boiling the beer in progress which is called the "wort" for an hour to an hour and a half seems like a lot. But the long boiling time helps the ingredients mesh in just the right way. It also boils off bad elements of the mixture that you don't want in the beer and it brings out the flavors of the malt, the grains and the hops so you are getting the best of those ingredients. Finally, don't be worried about being too fussy about cleanliness. Keeping your boiling pots and fermentation tanks absolutely clean and sterile assures that nothing will get into the beer except that pure wort that you so carefully brewed. So go ahead and be fussy. The beer you make will be better if you are.

Using Patience To Wait for Your Home Made Beer is the Hardest Part

The rock music artist Tom Petty had a hit song that went, "The waiting is the hardest part". And when it comes to brewing your own beer, maybe the most difficult step of them all is the fermentation and aging process. After all, the steps leading up to the time when you wait for beer to mature is full of activity. From shopping for new equipment and ingredients, to cleaning and preparation to boiling the wort to cooling and preparing for fermentation, it's a fun process. And that is what you want from a great hobby.

But once you have used all of your skills (so far) to make a great wort that is ready to ferment and age, storing and waiting for that process to finish seems to take forever. If this is one of your first batches or if you tried a new grain or hops, you are eager to see how good the beer will taste. And you are eager to serve ice cold homemade beer to friends and family. But you also know that if you break in and interrupt the process too soon, the beer you drink will be unsatisfactory and not nearly as rich and flavorful as how it will be when the aging process is done. So you wait, sometimes impatiently.

One way to continue enjoying the "fun part" of home brewing is to have fresh batches of beer in production each week. If you went that route, you would eventually end up with a lot of beer in various stages of fermentation and aging and you would have to date and mark the storage bottles so you know which beer is ready to use and which needs more time to reach maturity. And when you consider that an average minimum size of a home beer brewing cycle results in five gallons of beer, that can mean you will have a lot of finished beer around unless you have a big audience of beer drinkers to help you drink up the stuff.

The time between when beer is bottled after the brewing process is complete until it is ready to taste can be anywhere from six weeks to six months if you include both fermentation and aging. The actual aging process is pretty fascinating and understanding it helps you develop patience for nature to take its course. During fermentation, the yeast will work to change the structure of the sugar that was part of the brewing process. As the fermentation continues, carbon dioxide is created and this gives your beer that bubbly quality that is a big part of the appeal of the beverage.

Fermentation also pushes sediments from the yeast and proteins and these sediments would hurt the taste of your beer if the cycle were interrupted. It's worth it to let the process naturally cure the beer so these unwanted byproducts naturally work their way out of the finished product. It does take a lot of patience to be a brewer, even a home brewer because allowing the aging process to produce perfect beer may take over a month or even longer. But this waiting is just as much a part of making great beer as the boiling and fermenting so you have to nurture the patient side of yourself to get a great outcome.

Part of your preparation for brewing is preparing a place for your beer to be housed in optimum conditions for fermentation to work its magic. As opposed to perhaps your impression before you became a home brewer, you will not store the beer in the refrigerator during this phase because colder temperatures actually stop the fermentation process. That is why you keep milk in there.

Instead plan to set up a "fermentation room" that will stay at a constant cool temperature between 65 and 75 degrees any time of the year. This should be a room where you can achieve some temperature control so the beer stays in a stable environment to reach a perfect flavor. It is also a room you won't feel the need to go to and interrupt the fermentation process. You can draw some of the beer out as early as 4 weeks from the start of fermentation. But for the best possible taste

for your beer, you should give this process two to four months for adequate aging.

What Every Potential Beer Making Gurus Should Know

The great thing about brewing your own beer is that you can be good at it starting out and get great at it over time. You can make each and every batch tasty and enjoyable but at the same time always be driven to make a better brew. Part of the function of home brewing contests and being part of your local brewers club is that you get those tips and learn from the old pros at brewing so month by month and year by year, your beer gets better and better.

One important thing that the real beer gurus know is what great chefs know and that is the quality of beer comes down to the freshness of the ingredients you use. One area you can improve on freshness is with the yeast you use for fermentation. A dry yeast is simply not as fresh as liquid yeast so that is where one small change can dramatically affect the freshness of your beer. Use this same approach with the grains, the hops and all the perishable ingredients that you need for a quality home brewed batch of beer.

But just as even if you buy fresh flour for bread, you freeze it to delay it getting stale and use proper refrigeration for all of your brewing ingredients. First of all, only buy the ingredients when the day you are going to brew is very near. And use as much as you can up in one batch. You will get a natural instinct for how much of each ingredient you need for a single run of brewing and eventually get to where you can buy enough, use it up the next day with little or no left over and in that way always be brewing with absolutely fresh ingredients. But even then, make some room in your freezer and refrigerator to slow down the aging of the things that make up your beer. Grains and yeast can go in the refrigerator and the rest in the freezer for a short time. Use your ingredients up quickly. Don't stock pile.

Temperature control is a central issue with all home brewing gurus who seek absolute control over the quality of their product. That first step of brewing which is the boiling of the grains and hops to make up the "wort" is a heat intensive operation. But once the time of your boiling phase is done, bring the temperature of the wort down very quickly. By dropping the temperature from boiling to cooler temperature at a very fast pace, you will reduce the contaminations in your beer and your final product will have a vastly better clarity which is a sign of a great beer. This is one little trick of the trade that may take some effort and maybe even specialized equipment like an immersion chiller for your wort but it will be worth it in the quality of beer that results.

Keeping the temperature of your finished beer constantly under control during fermentation is also a central issue with beer making gurus to make sure their beer is of the highest quality. If you are a devoted home brewer and want to buy a refrigerator just to devote to fermentation, that would be the best situation because you could carefully control the temperature.

But there are other methods many home brewers use to assure their fermenting beer stays at a steady temperature. You can select the best spot in the house where the beer will remain relatively cool all day. Then wrap the fermenter up using wet towels and then put a fan on the wrapped beer. This uses the humidity of the water and the coolness that comes from the fan to keep the beer in the best possible environment to create truly great tasting beer.

What Is Zymurgy And Home Brewing

The fun of any private hobby or passion is knowing the secret language that goes with it. So if you had someone come to you and say, "You are really into that zymurgy stuff, aren't you", you may not know whether to thank him or slap him. But if you are beginning to get excited about the art of making beer at home, not only are you getting into "that zymurgy stuff", you probably know a few major zymurgists as well. Zymurgy, for the trivia buffs, is the art of fermenting that leads to the production of beer.

There is a lot of fun in the hobby of making beer. Not only is it not a difficult process to learn, it's rewarding to bring out bottles of rich tasting beer for your family and friends that you made yourself. And since most batches of homemade beer produce five gallon brews, you will have plenty of beer for a small fraction of what you would pay for commercial beer.

But there is another level of fun about becoming an amateur brewer and that comes from discovering this whole new world of other brewers who are out there spreading the gospel of home brewing far and wide. The network of people who love to brew their own beer is extensive and well organized. Zymurgy is actually an international passion that goes back for thousands of years and reaches into just about every society. So by now as you begin to just discover the huge social world of brew makers, you are going to be amazed at the diversity and size of this culture that has existed right under your all this time.

The first group you should become a part of to become connected to the larger world of home brewing is the American Homebrewers Association. They operate an interesting, informative and up to date web sites about home brewing at <http://www.beertown.org/ba/index.html>. One of the best things you will discover on the AHA's web site is a list of upcoming home brewing events all around the country. The odds are that somewhere in your geographic area there is an event being planned to bring home brewing enthusiasts like you together to trade methods, share recipes and generally celebrate this exciting hobby together.

As soon as you get connect to the AHA's web site, your knowledge of beer making and the amount of information that is available to you will go through the roof. In fact, you will no doubt quickly want to get the AHA's bimonthly magazine coming your way. Not surprisingly, that magazine is called Zymurgy. Through Zymurgy magazine and by surfing [beertown.org](http://www.beertown.org), you will also find out about special days set aside just to celebrate the big community of home beer enthusiasts such as National Homebrew Day held the first Saturday in May. Congress actually set aside

this day to celebrate the love of home brewing. No doubt a few senators and congressmen brew up their own blend at home as well.

Along with publications and festivals, there are regular beer brewing competitions you can keep up to date on through the AHA and through a local affiliates as well. These competitions are great fun but you may feel timid about entering your newest beer concoction to be judged. But it's all in fun and by striving to make your brew genuine competition quality, it just makes the excitement you already have for home brewing even more fun and engaging between contests.

But perhaps the greatest service the national organization can be to you is to point you to local contacts to help you move along more quickly in developing your love of home brewing. This is the kind of networking you need to find the best local brewing supply shops so you can get stocked up on the grains, malts and hops you will need to make your next big batch of homemade beer.

But more importantly, you can connect with the home brewers association in your own community and become part of this very active and fun loving community. And as you learn the insider tricks and taste their blends, you will move along much more quickly toward making your own beer that will really taste the way you want it to. So get out there and have some fun with people who love home brewing just like you do. You will never regret it.

Here Is The Fast Track Way to Making Beer at Home Quick

There are a lot of people who have taken the plunge to buy all the equipment and get started making their own beer from scratch at home. But the odds are that just as many people are curious about brewing beer at home but are pushed away by the challenge of buying all this stuff and figuring out how to do it and then the problem of the mess and the storage of equipment and beer in different phases of fermentation and completion.

For many, what is needed is an easy way to give home brewing a shot without having to go to all the effort of buying a complete set up of equipment, all of the ingredients and the bottles and storage just to find out if you like it. What is not generally known is that there is such a fast track way to making beer at home. By buying a simple device called a beer making machine, you can easily make a batch of beer right in the home

The good thing about a beer making machine is that it is basically a plug and go situation. This takes a lot of the intimidation out of buying many individual units of equipment and going through each step of brewing and fermentation by the seat of your pants. The brewing machine goes a long way to take the preparation over so you can do all the steps using the resources of the machine. When you buy the machine, it comes with the ingredients and instructions.

The entire design of a beer making machine is based on the idea of reducing the mess and fuss of beer making for that first time home brewer

who needs to have some of the joy of making their own brew but not as much of the work and the worry. You certainly don't have to be a beer making guru to use these user friendly machines because the instructions are clear and written in an understandable way and the ingredients come measured and ready to go.

But as with any readymade solution for discovering something as great as home brewing your own beer, there are pluses and minuses to breaking yourself in on a beer making machine. Probably one of the biggest pluses is that they are a onetime use machine that you can use and throw away. This gets the problems of cleaning and sanitation out of the loop entirely. All of the ingredients are prepared and ready to add in premeasured amounts so the fuss and worry about going from completely raw materials is removed as well. It is just about as user friendly as you can make home brewing be.

The down side of using a beer making machine to break into the craft of home brewing is that because it is completely set up when you buy it as a kit, you don't get the chance to play with the ingredients and enjoy the creativity and experimentation that is a big part of why beer making is so fun. You go through the steps and make one good batch of beer. But you don't have the chance to make it a great batch of beer because you cannot make changes to the ingredients as you go.

Also a beer making machine is sold to make one and only one batch of beer and then you, in theory, are to throw it away. This may seem like a big waste and you might try to clean it up to use it again. But the real idea of the product is as a starter experience. It really isn't the kind of thing intended for you to buy a new kit every month and continue making that same kind of beer each time.

But keep the perspective that it is not really designed to be your total and final solution for beer making. By breaking into home brewing with the beer making machine, you get some of the experience of making and fermenting your own beer and then bottling it to serve a few weeks later as a genuine product of your little at home brewery. And the fun of that may be a great way for you to start making beer and then grow into a hobby that may last a lifetime.

There Are Many paths To Rome, So Are The Many Paths to Great Home Made Beer

Before you really get oriented to what home brewing is all about, it's easy to think it is a process that is set in stone and there is only one right way to do it. And it is true that the brewing and fermenting process has some steps that must be followed with some discipline if you wish to enjoy a great homemade beer. But one of the reasons that home brewing is such a passion to many people who enjoy this way of making beer is that there are so many varieties of recipes and styles of making.

You can easily get a feel for what a huge variety there is in ways to brew beer and in recipes for ingredients when you visit your local beer supplies retailer, go to home brewing web sites or sit in at home brewing club meetings in town. And the great thing about the social side of the

home brewing culture is that you will come home with a notebook full of ideas of things you can try on upcoming batches of beer. The odds are you will have months of ideas to try out and you may never run out of new approaches, blends and recipes to try to make your home made beer interesting and tasty for yourself, your family and your friends.

For that first time home brewing recruit, one of the best ways to help him have the fun of making beer at home without so much investment and mess that will come in due time is to go with a home brewing kit or machine. Beer making machines literally take all of the thinking and planning and risk out of trying out home brewing to see if you want to make the investment in a full set up. The machine comes with a full set of ingredients for one batch of beer and the equipment is automated so the novice home brewer can make the beer and move it through the fermentation and aging process and know the fun of having real homemade beer a few weeks later.

Similarly kits simply the process of buying and using the equipment and ingredients to get started in home brewing. Unlike the beer making machine which is used once and discarded, the beer maker's kit gives you the basic equipment which will be the beginning of your collection of the tools of a beer maker to be used over and over many times. But the kit provides the ingredients and the instructions to make the process of learning to make your own beer easy and fun to learn.

Even for seasoned home beer makers, there are variations on the home brewing method that will give you more flexibility and range of choices that will affect how unique your beer will be. But each may have a greater investment of work and effort to use effectively so it's worth getting familiar with them in advance so you know your investment of time and effort and what you might expect with a new brewing method.

Probably the most common brewing method most amateur brewer's use and the one that is taught in most home brewing guides is the extract method. And even though it is well known, because you are truly brewing beer yourself as opposed to using a kit or a machine, you can alter the consistencies and flavors of your beer and get a wonderful brew each time you use this approach.

You can settle on the extract method for a long time or perhaps use it exclusively for your brewing career and get great beers with it every time. But if you want a greater challenge and the possibility for even more unique beers as a result, you can explore the Mini-Mash method and the Full Mash Brew styles of home brewing. Each is more complex and takes longer to finish the brewing process. But they also give you a lot of flexibility and even more ability to make your own beer unique and distinctive.

It's up to you where to start in your beer brewing hobby and the paths you take. You can explore new approaches through networking with other brewers. But you will never get bored brewing beer at home because the variety of methods and ingredients are virtually limitless.