

Part Seven: Grains and Adjuncts

As I said in Part Two, the main ingredient for most home brewed mashed beers is Pale Ale malt. This is true whatever style and colour of beer is intended; the variations are achieved by the inclusion of smaller proportions of other grains or other materials known as adjuncts.

All the authors I have reviewed agree on this, except for H E Bravery¹, who produced some bizarre recipes. A point on which they are unanimous is that malting at home is not really sensible. Dave Line⁵ says that to attempt this you must be a thoroughbred purist, drunk or seeking grounds for divorce.

Raw barley is not suitable for brewing, consisting mainly of unfermented starch. It must be soaked in water to start germination. Growth is then carefully controlled via temperature and humidity, either by spreading and turning on a traditional 'floor', or in large, slowly rotating drums. At a critical point of growth, the germination is halted by drying in warm air followed by 'kilning' at 140° to 160°F, depending on the type of malt.

Lager malt is kilned at the lowest temperature and retains a very pale colour, whilst Pale Ale malt is slightly darker. Even higher temperatures produce Mild Ale, Amber and Brown malts. As the kilning temperature increases, the enzyme activity is reduced; thus lager malt has a high activity whilst amber malt is quite low.

When I first started home brewing (in 1969), these darker active malts were not available to the home brewer. However, in the mid-nineties some suppliers, notably Brupaks¹², listed Mild Ale malt (EBC6) and Amber malt (EBC90) amongst the many grains they supply in half-kg, 3kg and 25kg packs. These include some interesting German malts for making specific continental beer styles.

The EBC is a European unit of colour measurement and grains can range from as low as 2 EBC (Pilsner malt) to 1550 EBC (Roasted Barley). I have yet to try a brew using Mild Ale malt as the main ingredient, but Amber malt at about 25% made a good Brown Ale. However, most British beer styles can be produced using pale malt as the source of most of the fermentables, whilst various grains and other adjuncts in small amounts ring the changes in terms of flavour and colour.

It is useful at this stage to list the more common grains along with typical EEC values where appropriate. These are: Pale Ale Malt (5), Wheat Malt (3), Mild Ale malt (6) Amber malt (90), Crystal Malt (120), Chocolate Malt (800), Black Malt (1400), Roasted Barley (1550), Flaked Barley, Torrefied Barley, Torrefied Wheat, Flaked Maize, Flaked Rice, Flaked Wheat, Sugars range from white household (sucrose) to dark sugars and caramel,

Next time I will discuss the effects of some of these adjuncts.

References

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| 1 | Home Brewing Without Failures | by H E Bravery. Max Parrish, | London |
| 5 | The Big Book of Brewing | by Dave Line, | Amateur Winemaker/Argus Books |
| 12 | Brupaks, (suppliers to home brew shops) | 2 Kennedy Avenue, Fixby, | Huddersfield HD2 2HJ |