

Top Five Beer Cocktails

Lagers, ales, and stouts add flavor and carbonation to mixed drinks. Below are five tasty tipples, in order of complexity.

Text by Camper English, photos by Heather Tyree

Many beer enthusiasts, like oenophiles and Scotch lovers, believe in the purity of their drink and don't welcome dilutions. Let them live in their gated communities. More open minds, and palates, recognize the simple pleasures of a Black and Tan (combining stout/porter and lager/ale) and a Snakebite (hard cider and lager). The whole is greater than the sum of its parts in each of these cases. The union of flavor begets a wholly original taste sensation. This has not been lost on better bartenders, who have been experimenting with beer in recent years. In addition to making the aforementioned classics, they're going to beer for effervescence, much like cocktails calling for a touch of Champagne or ginger ale. For this roundup, we chose to focus on beer-forward beverages that prove the stubborn purists wrong. The following drinks include some oldies-but-goodies, a few reinterpretations, and a couple of brand-new cocktails created by the nation's top mixologists. Hoppy days are here again.



Liquor-Free Cocktails like [the Black Velvet](#)

The most common beer "cocktails" contain no hard alcohol at all, they are simply equal parts of two types of beer or cider layered on top of each other in a pint glass. This includes a dark stout like Guinness with a light-colored ale in the Black and Tan, and lager beer and hard apple cider in the Snakebite. We'd also put the Black Velvet in this category, a mix of stout and Champagne best poured as follows: Fill glass halfway with bubbly, then pour stout over a spoon, slowly, to create a layered effect.

Appetizer Pairing:	Brunch Pairing:
Classic French Fries Fries and beer are an obvious (Belgian-inspired) pairing, but Champagne's bubbles work well with fatty foods too.	Sausage and Potato Breakfast Casserole The meaty oils in this breakfast casserole beg for the richness (and carbonation) found in sweeter sparklers and beers.



[Happy Mich](#)

The Michelada is a refreshing cocktail, originally from Mexico, made with beer, lime juice, and hot sauce, served in a salt-rimmed glass over ice. Cocktail consultants The Tippling Brothers created several variations of the Michelada, including the Happy Mich, for Mercadito restaurants in New York. It retains the spicy/soothing format of the original beer cocktail, and brings some interesting hot seasonings, cooling watermelon, and hibiscus flavors into the mix.

Party Snack Pairing:	Entrée Pairing:
Chili-Lime Tortilla Triangles Both cocktail and chips feature lime, spiciness, and salt. The crispness of the chips offers a textural counterpoint.	Chicken Cheddar Quesadillas with Corn Salsa The hot salsa and chili powder in the dish match the drink's heat; the beer stands up to the strong cilantro, cumin, onion, and cheese flavors.



[Shandy](#)

Popular in the U.K., where it's also known as a Shandygaff, this drink mixes equal parts beer with either ginger ale, ginger beer, or carbonated lemonade (some folks even use Sprite or alcoholic sodas like Smirnoff Ice and Mike's Hard Lemonade). If the drink has multiple sources of alcohol, it's called a TurboShandy. In the following recipe from Gourmet, fresh lemonade and mint are used instead of bottled products.

Side Dish Pairing:	Entrée Pairing:
Spicy Sesame Noodle, Green Bean, and Carrot Salad The light, lemony shandy pairs perfectly with spicy food. Try it with any hot Asian dish, such as this noodle salad.	Peruvian Grilled Chicken The lemonade in the shandy makes it a go-to choice for barbecues; the chicken recipe can be prepared year-round.



[The Cure](#)

Bartender Gina Chersevani developed this cheeky beer cocktail as a "cure" for the economic recession: It sells for the discounted price of \$5 on her menu at PS 7's in Washington, DC. It combines a light, value-priced beer such as Miller High Life with a splash of juice and ginger liqueur.

Game Day Pairing:	Sandwich Pairing:
Buffalo Chicken Wings Light beer and lemon will take the heat off these classic chicken wings.	Monte Cristo Sandwiches The ginger in the drink is spicy like the mustard in the recipe and holds its own against the smoky meats in the sandwich.



[The Stout Diplomat](#)

Yanni Kehagiaras of San Francisco's Nopa restaurant created this dessert drink for a beer-cocktail competition. "The rum is in there to give this short beer cocktail a bit of a punch," he says. You could make it with a white rum instead of a dark or aged one and still focus on the beer, but the Diplomatico rum that Kehagiaras favors offers a caramel flavor and slight sweetness (instead of a spicy or funky rum) that seems less likely to clash with food flavors. The approach, like the drink, is likely to win fans on both sides of the beer/cocktail divide. It's a smart drink with wide appeal, befitting its name.

Dinner Pairing:	Dessert Pairing:
Fish and Chips Kehagiaras designed this cocktail to be a dessert drink, but the weight and flavor of the stout will also stand up to the salt and oil of fish and chips.	Chocolate Bread Pudding with Irish Cream Sauce Pairing a chocolate dessert with a chocolate dessert cocktail may seem like too much, but that's never stopped any chocoholics we know.



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