

Amber Ales

Amber ales (sometimes known as Red Ales) are a somewhat uniquely American invention that started in the hop-loving Pacific Northwest. Coming from hop growing regions as they have, many American Amber Ales have a distinctly bitter or hoppy flavor to them. Although other countries brew amber colored ales, they mostly fall into other beer style categories such as Belgian Style beers.

The Pacific Northwest is America's largest hop growing region and approximately 24% of the world supply of hops is grown there. (About three quarters of hops grown in the US are from this region.) Some beers from that region have a distinct hop flavor, though Amber Ales are typically well balanced with a notable caramel malt character.

One of the key characteristics of Amber Ale is, of course, its distinctive amber color. Amber malt is typically the malt used to create Amber Ales and amber malt can be made by simply baking pale malt at low temperatures until it reaches the desired color. (This process also works to create brown malt for Brown Ales.)

American Ambers

American Amber ales are closely related to American Pale Ales and to some extent, American Brown Ales. In some cases, it is hard to tell the difference between an American Amber and an American Pale Ale as the hops can be very similar and even the colors can be the same. The key difference is that the American Amber is usually more balanced between malt and hops, with the American Amber having a stronger malt character than the Pale.

American Brown Ales are typically darker and more chocolaty than their American Amber cousins, but can otherwise be similar in recipe.

Altbiers & California Common Beers

Altbiers are hybrid beers that cross the line between ales and lagers. Altbiers, including the Northern German Altbier and the Dusseldorf Altbier, are often much like ales in character. Altbiers are usually brewed at cooler ale temperatures and fermented like lagers, but ale yeast is often used.

California Common (or Steam Beers) are typically brewed with lager yeast though they look and taste like ales in many cases.

Cuisine

Amber Ales pair well with many different foods including pizza, poultry, beef and fish.

Drink Amber Ales in a pint glass.