

## Stouts

Stouts evolved from the Porter style during the later part of the 19th century in England. Frequently referred to as "Stout Porter," the Stout style of beer promoted as a healthy drink and was often recommended by doctors for nursing mothers and athletes, who were told that Stouts would help to replenish their bodies. Today, claims about the health benefits of Stouts are much more limited, but they are still an extremely popular style of dark beer. And contrary to some perceptions, Stouts are usually quite pleasant tasting, easily drinkable and much less harsh on the palate than their color leads people to believe.

Stouts are often confused with Porters and in many cases, it can be difficult to tell the difference between the two styles. In general, Stouts are usually a little bit darker in color and heavier in body than Porters, but my own perception is that Stouts generally have more of a roasted or even burnt grain character than most Porters.

### More about Stouts -

**Stouts** are brewed with roasted barley malt, which gives them their characteristic dark black color, as well as their roasted flavor. Stouts are top fermented ales, brewed with ale yeast. They often taste of chocolate or coffee, both of which are sometimes used to enhance the flavor. *Drink them in a pint glass!*

**Stouts** are great with many of the same foods and cheeses as Porters (see above), but they are also great with game meats and shellfish.

**Dry Stouts** were the first style of Stout and are also called **Irish Stouts**. Porters were already extremely popular at the time this style was invented. In fact, this type of beer was intended to be stronger, richer and creamier version of a Porter and that's how the name Stout came about. At its introduction, this beer style was known as a "Stout" Porter, referring to its stronger flavor and alcohol content. These days, Stouts are not necessarily stronger than Porters, however.

**Sweet Stouts** are just that, Stouts that are brewed to be sweeter than their counterpart Dry Stouts. Sweet Stouts were sometimes brewed with sugar or milk lactose (an un-fermentable sugar that retains its sweetness through the brewing process) to create a sweeter flavor. These same Stouts are sometime referred to as **Milk Stouts** due to the use of milk lactose.

**Oatmeal Stouts** were a variation on Sweet Stouts that used oatmeal instead of milk lactose to provide additional body and sweetness. Very popular today, these Stouts often taste a little nutty or earthy due to the addition of oatmeal, but they are also incredibly smooth and drinkable! The oatmeal is added to create a smoother beer and Oatmeal Stouts are usually quite pleasant and drinkable. In many cases, the oatmeal itself is very difficult or impossible to taste.

Like other Stouts, **Foreign Export Stouts** also have a name that describes them accurately. These Stouts were brewed in England for export to foreign markets, like the Caribbean. Because they had to be more durable and hardy to stay fresh during transport

and in sometimes high heat, they are usually stronger and higher in alcohol than the Dry or Sweet Stouts they are based on.

**American Stouts** are Stouts that are brewed to be more appealing to American palates. American Stouts are notable for their roasted malt flavors and often taste of coffee or espresso. American Stouts are close to the Foreign Export Stout style, but are usually hoppier and more bitter, as many American beer styles tend to be.

Lastly, a very popular style of Stout known as the **Russian Imperial Stout** is not for the faint of heart or tongue! Like other Stouts, Russian Imperial Stouts also originated in England, but were rumored to be very popular in the Russian Imperial court in the days of the Tsars. Certainly, British brewers exported a lot of their Russian Imperial Stouts to Tsarist Russia. Make sure that you're already sitting down when you drink one, as these Stouts start at about 8% alcohol by volume (double the strength of many other Stouts) and they can go even higher!