

Hefeweizens

Julius Echter Hefe-Weiss

(jUlius Esh-tar Hefe-veiss)

Würzburger Hofbräu AG

Würzburg, Germany

Availability: Year-round in 500ml bottles, Draft

ABV: 4.9%

Weihenstephaner Hefe-weissbier

(Vine-shte-fanner Hefe-veiss-beer)

Bayerische Staatsbrauerei Weihenstephan

Freising, Germany

Availability: Year-round in 500ml bottles, Draft

ABV: 5.4%

IBUs: 14

Ayinger Brau-Weisse

(Eye-ing-gr Brau-veiss)

Privatbrauerei Franz Inselkammer KG

Aying, Germany

Availability: Year-round in 500ml bottles, Draft

ABV: 5.1%

Paulaner Hefe-Weizen

(Pau-lana Hefe-Weizen)

Paulaner Brauerei GmbH & Co. KG

Munich, Germany

Availability: Year-round in 500ml bottles, Draft

ABV: 5.5%

Schneider Weisse

Hefe-Weizen- Original

Weisses Bräuhaus G. Schneider & Sohn GmbH

Kelheim, Germany

Availability: Year-round in 500ml bottles, Draft

ABV: 5.4%

Live Oak Hefeweizen

Live Oak Brewing Company

Austin, TX

Availability: Year round, Draft only in TX.

ABV: 5.2%

History (from BA)

A south German style of wheat beer (weissbier) made with a typical ratio of 50:50, or even higher, wheat.

A yeast that produces a unique phenolic flavors of banana and cloves with an often dry and tart edge, some spiciness, bubblegum or notes of apples. Little hop bitterness, and a moderate level of alcohol. The "Hefe" prefix means "with yeast", hence the beers unfiltered and cloudy appearance. Poured into a traditional Weizen glass, the Hefeweizen can be one sexy looking beer.

Often served with a lemon wedge (popularized by Americans), to either cut the wheat or yeast edge, which many either find to be a flavorful snap ... or an insult and something that damages the beer's taste and head retention.

Average alcohol by volume (abv) range: 4.0-7.0%

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BJCP Style Notes:

Aroma: Moderate to strong phenols (usually clove) and fruity esters (usually banana). The balance and intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced and fairly prominent. Noble hop character ranges from low to none. A light to moderate wheat aroma (which might be perceived as bready or grainy) may be present but other malt characteristics should not. No diacetyl or DMS. Optional, but acceptable, aromatics can include a light, citrusy tartness, a light to moderate vanilla character, and/or a low bubblegum aroma. None of these optional characteristics should be high or dominant, but often can add to the complexity and balance.

Appearance: Pale straw to very dark gold in color. A very thick, moussy, long-lasting white head is characteristic. The high protein content of wheat impairs clarity in an unfiltered beer, although the level of haze is somewhat variable. A beer "mit hefe" is also cloudy from suspended yeast sediment (which should be roused before drinking). The filtered Krystal version has no yeast and is brilliantly clear.

Flavor: Low to moderately strong banana and clove flavor. The balance and intensity of the phenol and ester components can vary but the best examples are reasonably balanced and fairly prominent. Optionally, a very light to moderate vanilla character and/or low bubblegum notes can accentuate the banana flavor, sweetness and roundness; neither should be dominant if present. The soft, somewhat bready or grainy flavor of wheat is complementary, as is a slightly sweet Pils malt character. Hop flavor is very low to none, and hop bitterness is very low to moderately low. A tart, citrusy character from yeast and high carbonation is often present. Well rounded, flavorful palate with a relatively dry finish. No diacetyl or DMS.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body; never heavy. Suspended yeast may increase the perception of body. The texture of wheat imparts the sensation of a fluffy, creamy fullness that may progress to a light, spritzzy finish aided by high carbonation. Always effervescent.

Overall Impression: A pale, spicy, fruity, refreshing wheat-based ale.

Comments: These are refreshing, fast-maturing beers that are lightly hopped and show a unique banana-and-clove yeast character. These beers often don't age well and are best enjoyed while young and fresh. The version "mit hefe" is served with yeast sediment stirred in; the krystal version is filtered for excellent clarity. Bottles with yeast are traditionally swirled or gently rolled prior to serving. The character of a krystal weizen is generally fruitier and less phenolic than that of the hefe-weizen.

History: A traditional wheat-based ale originating in Southern Germany that is a specialty for summer consumption, but generally produced year-round.

Ingredients: By German law, at least 50% of the grist must be malted wheat, although some versions use up to 70%; the remainder is Pilsner malt. A traditional decoction mash gives the appropriate body without cloying sweetness. Weizen ale yeasts produce the typical spicy and fruity character, although extreme fermentation temperatures can affect the balance and produce off-flavors. A small amount of noble hops are used only for bitterness.

Commercial Examples

Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier, Schneider Weisse Weizenhell, Paulaner Hefe-Weizen, Hacker-Pschorr Weisse, Plank Bavarian Hefeweizen, Ayinger Bräu Weisse, Ettaler Weissbier Hell, Franziskaner Hefe-Weisse, Andechser Weissbier Hefetrüb, Kapuziner Weissbier, Erdinger Weissbier, Penn Weizen, Barrelhouse Hocking Hills HefeWeizen, Eisenbahn Weizenbier

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About the Reinheitsgebot

(from Wikipedia)

The Reinheitsgebot is a regulation about the purity of beer. The regulation started in Ingolstadt, in Bavaria, in Germany, in 1516.

The regulation says several things:
It says what can be part of beer, and what can not.
Beer may only contain water, barley, and hops.

It gives a price to beer. This is important for taxation. The price is set to 1-2 Pfennigs per Maß.
Some people talk about the Bavarian Reinheitsgebot, or the German Reinheitsgebot. They all mean the same thing. There are similar acts in the other states which later became known as Germany.

The Reinheitsgebot is no longer part of German law. It has been replaced by the Provisional German Beer Law [1], which allows things prohibited in the Reinheitsgebot, such as wheat malt and cane sugar, but which no longer allows unmalted barley.

Yeast was not a part of beer until Louis Pasteur discovered what it did during fermentation. This was around the year 1800. Brewers (the people brewing beer) usually re-used some of the sediments of the fermentation. They took some sediments of an older brew and added those sediments to the next brew.

Hops were added as a method of preservation (to stop the beer going bad quickly). Hops were allowed to stop other things (like adding certain mushrooms to the beer, which was done in the Middle Ages) being done to preserve beer. Other herbs, like stinging nettles had been used. The stinging nettle is part of the same plant family as hops.

A brewer who broke the Reinheitsgebot was punished: The beer barrels were taken by the state and destroyed and he/she did not receive any money for the loss.

Even today, many brewers are proud of the Reinheitsgebot; most German breweries say they follow it. Some only use it as a marketing tool. The Reinheitsgebot' says that beer is made of barley, so all wheat beers were not allowed by the original Reinheitsgebot).

Belgian beers are different. The brewers often add sugar (to boost fermentation). Nevertheless, Belgian beers have a brewing tradition at least as long as those of Germany. They taste totally different from the German ones.