



## HERE'S TO BELGIAN BEER

Thank you, Belgium, for making my favorite beer. Not only have you given us fries, waffles, *Tin Tin*, and roller skates, you've also given us a world renowned beverage that pairs nicely with all of these things. Well, maybe not the roller skates.

Loving Belgian beer could mean different things to different people. To a purist, it could mean loving beer brewed exclusively by Belgian monks. To an enthusiast, it could mean enjoying a brew made in the style of a Belgian beer. To me, it means not being disappointed.

When I'm stuck trying to decide what to drink from a ginormous beer list, I usually go the way of a Belgian. It's the complexity and depth of flavor in a Belgian brew that keeps me coming back. And sometimes it's the high alcohol content that holds me there. Belgian beers typically range

anywhere from 4% to 13% ABV. It's always fun to try something new, and sampling different styles is one way to make things more interesting.

But first, let's disambiguate Trappist beers from Abbey beers. Trappist beers are brewed in monasteries by the Trappist order of monks and there are only ten of these breweries in the world. Abbey beers are brewed under license to an existing or abandoned abbey, and the monks aren't necessarily the ones doing the brewing.

Belgian ales run the spectrum from blonde, amber, and brown and all have distinctly different flavor profiles. Dubbels, tripels, and quadrupels are other common centuries-old styles worth exploring. They can be barrel aged in oak, bottle conditioned, or double fermented like Champagne. Some styles

improve with age while others are meant for today. Belgian beers offer up rich, sweet, wine-like, and occasionally hoppy flavors.

They also come with their own unique glassware. Every Belgian brewery designs a special glass to bring out the best in their beers. Be prepared, though. Some of these goblets, flutes, and chalices can look pretty ridiculous. One of the more elegant types is the tulip glass. A tulip glass helps to trap the aroma and aids in maintaining a nice foamy head, presenting the beer as the work of drinkable art that it is.

So, if you're standing on the sidelines of the craft beer game knowing bitter IPAs and bland lagers aren't doing it for you, have a seat and try a Belgian. And maybe get an order of fries with that. 🍷