

The Queens of Hop mini beer guide

Welcome to Belgium! With 180 breweries, more than 1800 different beers and hundreds of years of brewing tradition, we can proudly say that Belgium has a standing reputation when it comes to quality craft beer.

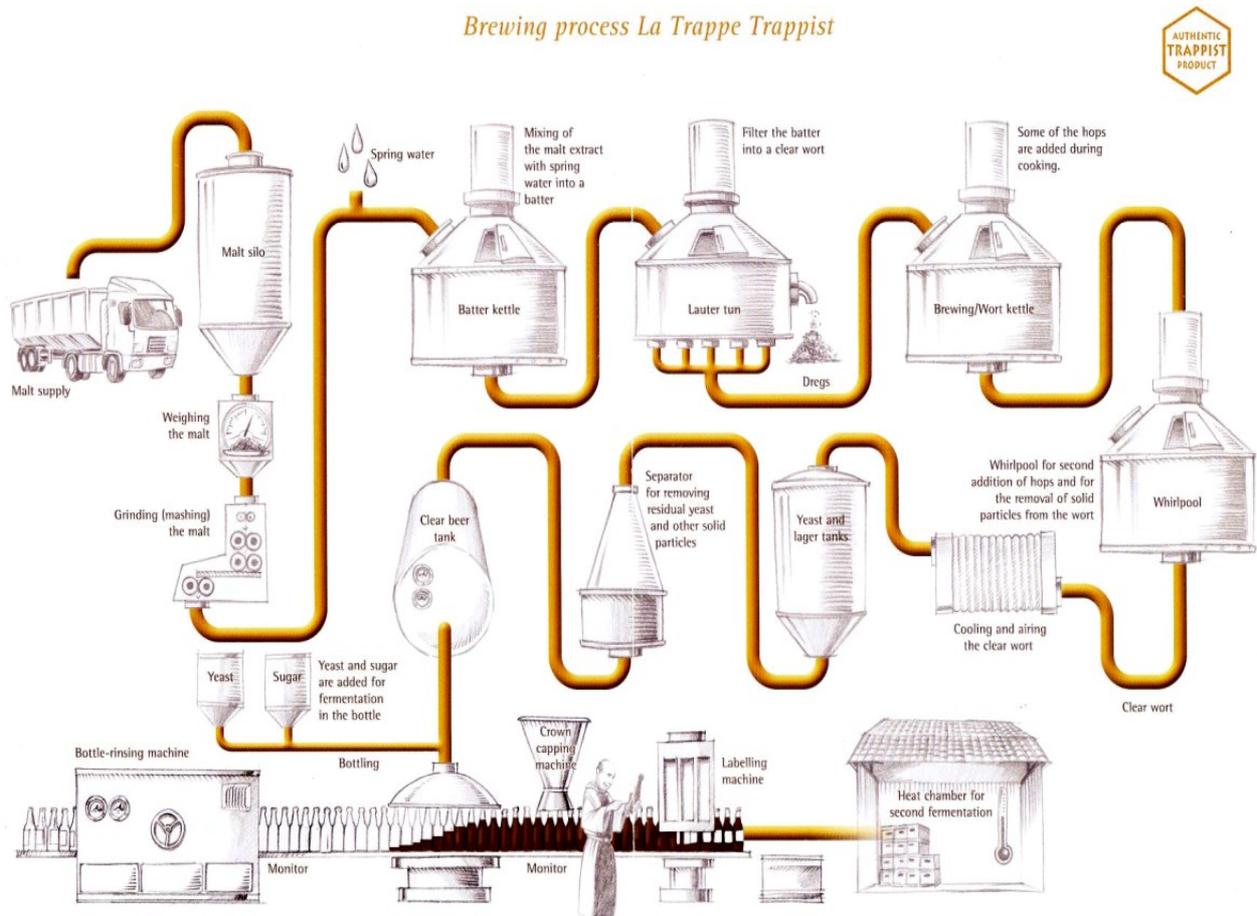
During this short trip through the magnificent world of Belgian beers, we will let you taste three different yet 100% Belgian beer styles and help you discover some more while you are visiting.

This guide will explain you what the main ingredients of beer are, how beer is made and give you some more insight about the three beer styles you are about to taste. After each beer style, you will find a list of similar beers to discover. Most of them are beers that are easily found in our local pubs.

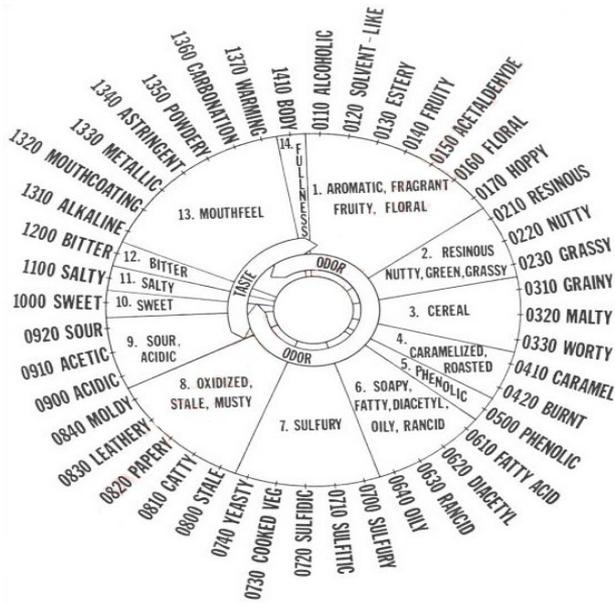
We hope you will enjoy this tasting!

Katie & Bo
Queens of Hop

The brewing process



The beer flavour wheel



Three different but typical Belgian beer styles

1. The strong blonde / triple

The first triple beer ever made was the trappist triple of Westmalle in 1934. From then on, brewers both in and out of monasteries have been developing blond beers which have a high alcohol level and are meant for enjoying "at ease". There is almost no difference between a strong blond beer and a triple: both styles are quite similar.



The Waardamse Tripel from the Stokhove Brewery in Oostkamp (close to Bruges) is a nice example of a traditional triple beer. It is made only with the four basic beer ingredients and without addition of herbs, spices, chemicals, ... The taste comes mostly from the malts and the hops used, giving the beer a full body, a nice bitterness but als a good fruitiness to balance it nicely. The beer won the prize for best beer on the Bruges Beer Festival (first weekend of February every year) three years in a row. Knowing that there are more than 80 breweries and 400 beer present, the title means quite a lot in the brewery world..

Food pairings: steak béarnaise, salmon, pheasant, grilled chicken

If you like this beer, try these:

Westmalle Tripel
Tripel Karmeliet
Gouden Carolus Tripel

Omer
Duvel
Cornet

Straffe Hendrik
Chimay Triple
Augustijn Grand Cru

2. The quadruple

This quite heavy dark beer contains a high level of alcohol, sometimes even more than 10%. Therefore sometimes the term 'barley wine' is used. This beer uses larger amounts of the basic ingredients, especially malt, giving this beer a creamy, malty taste, a full body and a warm feeling.

Although not mentioned on the bottle, most of the dark trappist beers are quads. Trappist beer are beers made by monks of the Cisterian order, and can only be named a 'trappist beer' when the following conditions are met:

1. the beer has to be produced inside the monastry walls
2. it has to be made by the monks or under supervision of the monks



3. the profits of the beer need to be used for the monastery itself or given to a good cause

Worldwide there are 11 trappist breweries, of which 6 are in Belgium: Achel, Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Westmalle and Westvleteren. There are 2 Dutch trappist breweries, 1 Austrian, 1 American and 1 Italian. A 12th trappist brewery is coming soon in Spain.

The Chimay 'Grande Reserve' (75cl bottles) or blue Chimay is the strongest of four beers that are made by the trappist monks of the abbey of Notre-Dame de Scourmont in Chimay in the south of Belgium. The taste evolves over the years and the beer can be kept for years and years. The beer is best drunk at a higher temperature (around 10 to 12°C). It was originally launched as a Christmas beer, but because of the great success the trappist monks decided to permanently brew it.

Food pairings: meat stews (Flemish carbonade), chocolate, grilled meat, blue cheese

If you like this beer, try these:

Westvleteren 12
Sint Bernardus Abt 12
Rochefort 10

Straffe Hendrik Quadrupel
Gulden Draak 9000
Pannepot

Blue Monk
Kasteel Donker
Urthel Samaranth

3. The Flanders red ale

The Flanders red ale is purposely infected with the *Lactobacillus* bacteria, producing a sour, lactic acid. The beers need a long period of aging, often in oak barrels to get their specific taste. Red malt is used to give the beer its colour. Older, matured beer is often blended with younger beer to maintain the balance and roundness in the flavour.



The Rodenbach Vintage, made in the town of Roeselare in the province of West-Flanders, is a beer that has been ageing for two years in large, wooden barrels called 'foeders'. Each year, the 'foeder' producing the best beer is selected and the beer of this barrel is bottled into a limited edition 'Vintage'.

The taste of the Vintage is very complex, and almost wine-like. It has a sourness of green apples combined with caramel, honey and oak with a hint of vanilla, cherry and liquorice.

Food pairings: goat cheese, beef stew, shrimp, red fruits, lemon cake

If you like this beer, try these:

Luchesse de Bourgogne
Rodenbach Vintage
Cuvée des Jacobins

Rodenbach Caractère Rouge
Vanden Ghinste Oud Bruin
Rodenbach Grand Cru

Bourgogne de Flandres
Liefmans Goudenband

If you really like the sour taste of this beer, do not hesitate to try some old lambic beers too!

