

India Pale Ales

Born of necessity:

1. Regular pale ales and bitters could not survive the voyage from England to India as there was no refrigeration
2. Couldn't brew decent beer in India due to climate
3. Soldiers and expatriots of the British Colonial Company wanted, even demanded beer

Solution

1. Brewers new that hops and alcohol acted as preservatives
2. Brewers in the Burton on Trent area of England were able to brew an ale that was very highly hopped and higher in alcohol content that would survive the voyage in good condition. The generally cooler temperatures in the ship holds and the rolling action of the ship at sea resulted in highly attenuated beer.
3. The geography of the Burton on Trent area as it relates to the hard water and proximity to both the grain and hop growing regions of England were key elements
4. Proved to be popular at home as well as through out the British empire.

What are the characteristics of an India Pale Ale or IPA? (taken from BJCP style guide)

Aroma: A prominent hop aroma of floral, grassy, or fruity characteristic typical. A caramel-like or toasty malt presence may also be noted, but may be at a low level. Fruitiness, either from esters or hops, may also be detected.

Appearance: Color ranges from medium gold to deep copper, with English versions often darker than American ones. Should be clear, although some haze at cold temperatures is acceptable.

Flavor: Hop flavor is medium to high, with an assertive hop bitterness. Malt flavor should be low to medium, but should be sufficient to support the hop aspect. Despite the substantial hop character typical of these beers, sufficient malt flavor, body and complexity to support the hops will provide the best balance. Fruitiness from the fermentation or hops should add to the overall complexity. Some alcohol warming may be sensed in stronger versions.

Mouthfeel: Smooth, medium-bodied mouthfeel without astringency, although it has moderate carbonation combine to render an overall dry sensation in the presence of malt sweetness.

Overall Impression: A decidedly hoppy, moderately strong pale ale.

Notes:

British versions use traditional hops such as East Kent Goldings or Fuggles.

American versions tend toward the more citrus American hops such as Cascade, Centennial, Columbus and Amarillo.

Hard water should be used. Many places offer "Burton" water salts to both make the water harder and to lend an air of "Burton on Trent" authenticity.

Use Marris Otter or Golden Promise 2-row pale ale malt for a more traditional British touch. Even if making an American version of IPA, these are excellent malts for IPA's.

Brewers Best kit available at All Seasons makes a nice middle of the road American Style IPA.

If making an extract or partial extract recipe, try adding 3-5 oz. of Malto-Dextrin to increase the mouth feel and body of the beer. (This works for all extract or partial mash recipes).