



Alcohol hot topic

Beer experiences a flavour revolution

The alcohol industry is experiencing a flavour shake-up, and beer is first in line. Here, we provide a snapshot of what's happening and what's ahead in beer flavour innovation this year and beyond.

The rise in popularity of craft beer in recent years has led to a whole new generation of beer drinkers – including an increase in the number of female consumers. Craft breweries now account for 21% of market share in the US when it comes to sales, worth \$22.3bn in 2015*.

In order to tap into this emerging market, brewers (big and small) around the world have been flooding the market with new products at an unprecedented rate. In order to rise above competitors, their focus has been firmly on flavour innovation.

Launches of flavoured beer products almost doubled between 2010 and 2015, up from 15% to 27%* respectively. This has led to an increase in beer consumption – with 57%* of beer drinkers saying they are drinking more because of the wider variety of flavours on offer.

So what kinds of flavours have been hitting the market?

New flavours fall broadly into five categories:

1. Citrus

Shandies and radlers are gaining popularity, particularly among US consumers. Shandy has seen a 336% growth on US menus in the past 4 years while radler is up a colossal 964%*. And it's easy to see why. Both types of citrus beers are known for their refreshing flavour profile, appealing to 78%* of consumers who say they drink beer for refreshment.

While lemon and lime dominate, more unusual citrus flavours including blood orange and grapefruit have been gaining attention.

2. Fruit

Demand for fruity, sour beers (especially berries) has been increasing and leading innovation in the beer industry. They've proved particularly popular as seasonal drinks – whether that's summery strawberry rhubarb, autumnal pumpkin or spicy winter cranberry.

Apple flavoured beer is leading the way – sales were 4.5 times greater in 2015 than in 2013 [Nielsen, May 2015].

3. Coffee

Coffee beers are an exciting intersection in craft beverages and can provide a gateway to coffee lovers looking to develop a taste for craft beer. The number of coffee flavoured craft beer launches increased by 300%* between 2011 and 2015. Examples of new launches include coffee milk stout and espresso ale.

4. Cocoa

Chocolate flavoured brews are the ultimate in indulgence for beer drinkers. And that's how they are marketed – as one-off, decadent treats with rich and distinctive flavours. Chocolate beer has experienced a 240% growth from 2013 to 2015 [Nielsen, May 2015], and this looks set to increase with mainstream brewers jumping on the trend.

5. Spice

Millennials tend to be braver when it comes to flavours: they get bored easily and are more likely to seek out new, unusual or adventurous flavours. That's where spice comes in. Ingredients such as juniper, cinnamon, nutmeg, habanero, ginger and cassia are cropping up in craft beers everywhere.



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What challenges do flavoured beers present to brewers?

Flavour and flavour freshness are the key quality aspects of beer. For example, adding citrus – which is prone to oxidation – can create off-notes and flavour deterioration. We know that many radler and beer mix products have poor flavour freshness. The challenge brewers face is to improve and prolong the citrus freshness of the beverage.

At Kerry, we understand the challenges of creating innovative new beer flavours. We have many cutting-edge technologies which can help brewers to achieve their desired taste profile.

Talk to Kerry's alcohol experts about:

- Stable citrus technology
- Flavour modulation (masking, sweetness optimisation)
- Flavour systems (FTNF, emulsions)
- Extracts, distillates, essential oils
- Organic certified ingredients
- Fruit and vegetable powders
- Brewing ingredients (enzyme portfolio, yeast nutrients, beer clarification systems)