



10 Factors to Making Better Hopy Beers

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Water

Consider using some gypsum to add some sulfate- this will bring out more hop character. Also, consider using some lactic or phosphoric acid- you can trade out a little hop bitterness for acidity.

Crystal Malt

Crystal malt and American hops (those found in American IPA's) do not mix. At the most, use 5% crystal (45 lov.) malt in an IPA or Double IPA- I prefer 3.50% - 4.00%.

Dextrin Malt

A moderate amount of unfermentable sugar is your friend when making a hoppy beer. These dextrin sugars will allow you to add more hops. Remember though, too much dextrin malt and you'll have too high of a finishing gravity. Also, some brewing equipment will make more (or less) dextrin malt, thus, you may need to experiment.

Mash Temperature

Don't mash at too warm of a temperature. Too many unfermentables due to a high mash temperature will yield a sweet beer than doesn't meld well with the hops.

Yeast Strain

Pick a yeast strain that finishes dry, doesn't flocculate too fast, yet, will fall out if a cold temperature is applied. English yeast strains do not work well in an American IPA or Double IPA.

Yeast Pitch Rate

Your pitch rate is one of the most critical factors when brewing an IPA or Double IPA. Too much yeast and you could end up with less bitterness due to the fact that the yeast takes up bitterness from the beer.

Gravity (Original & Terminal)

Consider lowering your original gravity a little, this will yield a lower terminal gravity, thus, creating a drier, more drinkable beer. Remember, drinkability and balance are two different things! Finish your hoppy brews at 1.012, that is the highest finishing gravity for an IPA or Double IPA. Anything above that, and you'll have too much sugar competing with the hops. With your Double IPA's, consider using some dextrose (corn) sugar to give the yeast something simple to work on.

Yeast Removal

The more yeast you remove, the more beer surface area you'll have exposed to the dry hops.

Post Fermentation Oxygen Pick-up

Purge everything with Co2 that your beer comes in contact with- buckets, hoses, bottles, kegs, etc... Oxidized hops is a terrible flavor!

Relax, Don't Worry, Have a Homebrew

After all these years, Charlie's words still hold true! At the end of the day, remember, it is just beer, and you will get another chance to make a batch of beer- just be thankful that you are not a winemaker who only gets one chance a year.