



Beer cocktails make a splash

By [Amy Zavatto](#) Published July 22, 2013

FoxNews.com



The latest, coolest ingredient in culty cocktail culture may already be in your ‘fridge.

Beer is busting out from your average Shandy territory and getting into the world of crafted cocktails.

When you hear those in the know talk about it, it makes a lot of sense, according to Brooke Arthur, professional bartender and cocktail consultant for House Spirits in Portland, Oregon.

Arthur says beer does quite a few things in a cocktail. For one, it acts as a lengthener.

“Much like soda water, wine, aperitifs, and digestifs, beer has a lower ABV than all base spirits. This means it can extend or lengthen a cocktail as a substitute for many of the above ingredients in many classic cocktails,” like the soda water used in a Tom Collins or the Champagne in a French 75.

Arthur makes a gorgeous riff on the former that she’s donned the Rob Collins, which uses Aviation Gin, fresh lemon juice, simple syrup, and 2 ounces of Widmer’s crisp Hefeweizen. An even more simple concoction along these lines comes from the Mexican brewery, Bohemia, who offers up a Bohemia Mimosa, making the traditional orange-juice based cocktail with their light pilsner.

Beer also acts as a balancing source of bitterness via their hops, the budding, vinous plant that is a vital ingredient in beer.

“Hops are used as a flavoring and stability agent in beer, in which they impart a tangy and bitter taste and were originally fermented for medicinal purposes,” says Arthur.

That quality can be to balance the sugar- water-spirits ratio of a cocktail. Not to mention add flavor.

“There are more than 80 different hop varieties around the world today, and many more are being developed. Each maintains a different taste and aroma,” she says. “Just like anything you can add to a cocktail such as liqueurs, fruits, and herbs, different types of beer can add flavor.”

A great example of this is the creative Summer Beer Flip at gastropub the Dandelion in beer-loving Philadelphia, which combines Bacardi rum, apricot marmalade, chocolate bitters, an egg (just like your grandpa used to shake ‘em), Prima Pils (a German Pilsener style beer), and cinnamon.

Without that pilsner the drink would fall flat, but with it, it becomes a balanced bit of brewed beauty.

Also in this arena, the Caulfield in Beverly Hills simply titled Beer Cocktail is a kind of tangy twist on a Manhattan, using rye whiskey, Luxardo cherries, mint, and balsamic vinegar, and subbing in a hoppy IPA for the bitters that would normally be part of the Big Apple’s famous cocktail.

At Raven & Rose in Portland, Oregon (where July is craft beer month) bartender David Shenaut’s aptly named, sunset-colored Panache is a bright mix of St. Germaine liqueur, Byrrh Grand Quinquina, lemon juice, and Logsdon Farmhouse Ale’s Seizoen Bretta, which all combines to make for a sweet n’ sour, slightly spicy, floral scented sipper that you won’t soon forget (in the good way).

But none of this, mind you, should detract you from making a good, ol' Shandy – that ultimate classic beer cocktail combo of suds and lemonade.

Arthur does a great take on the classic in her Ruby Red Shandy, which combines Aviation gin, fresh grapefruit and lemon juices, a touch of vanilla syrup, a dash of Angostura bitters, and that Widmer Hefeweizen she's fond of.

And for the super-sour loving set, Ely Key and Garrett Riffle make an interesting concoction called Switchel, an old-fashioned non-alcoholic sipper that combines cider vinegar, maple syrup, and fresh ginger.

For them, Switchel and beer are a match made in thirst-quenching heaven.

“Switchel and beer are really good friends,” says Garrett.

For their Switchel Shandy, they simply mix one-quarter and three-quarters beer of choice.

“It surprisingly lends itself well to most ales, lagers and pilsners,” to which he loves to add a lemon or lime wedge and even a bit of ice. Ahhhh.