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## SIPPING TIME

Written By, Matt Goettsch



### What Is Hard Seltzer?

So many seltzers! It seems like every company that produces beer, wine, or liquor is coming out with their own version of the alcoholic seltzer. Relatively fast and cheap to produce, the **high profit** margins offered to the brewer by these products is almost irresistible. The **low carbohydrate** and caloric content make them very appealing to consumers. But what is the difference between a beer and a seltzer?

The short answer: grains. Both beer and seltzer use **yeast to ferment sugar** which produces alcohol. The difference lies in what is being fermented. In the August newsletter we explained what “malt” is and its place in the process of making beer. With beer, malted grains or “malt” are mashed to make a wort (**pulling out sugars** in the process). The wort is then mixed with water and boiled, hops are added, and then cooled where the yeast is introduced and the whole mixture turns into the tasty beer that you know and love.

The process for brewing a hard seltzer is very similar, however simplified. **Sugar is added to water**, eliminating the costly step of extracting sugars from cereal grains, and fermented with yeast producing a clear alcohol. This clear alcoholic beverage is a **blank slate** giving brewers free reign to add whatever flavoring elements they desire. Flavoring elements can be anything from liquid flavors to dry spices to fruit juices depending on what the desired outcome is. Carbonation is added post-fermentation.

Hard seltzers can be vastly complex or ridiculously simple. They can be no more than unflavored, fermented sugar water. Most are just a step beyond this, adding a single concentrated liquid flavor made from juice like mango or lime. Others take craft brewing hard seltzers to a whole new level. They add actual juices from multiple fruits, spices like ginger or cinnamon, and a multitude of other flavors to create the perfect cocktail.

Using nothing but **sugar and water** for the fermentation process also allows the brewer to control the carbohydrate and calorie content. Most spiked seltzers contain 2 grams of carbs or less, are about 100 calories, and tend to hover around 5% ABV. In contrast, a beer of around 5% ABV can range anywhere between 8 and 30 grams of carbs and 150 to 200 calories. Since sugar is added directly to water to make a seltzer can also be a **gluten-free** alcoholic option, though not all seltzers are gluten-free.

The important thing to remember is that seltzers are fermented from **cane sugar**, while beer is fermented from sugars extracted from **malted grains**.

**Fun Fact:** Hard seltzer is not new; in fact, it's been around for almost 3 decades. In 1993 Coors introduced a hard seltzer as a response to the popularity of low-calorie options of the time like wine coolers. They called it **Zima**. Zima had a 15-year run until its waning appeal made it disappear from shelves in 2008. Despite a brief resurrection in 2017 it is no longer in production except in Japan.



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Written By, Tana Wold

## Beaujolais Nouveau Day 2021

Beaujolais Nouveau Day is marked in France on the third Thursday in November with fireworks, music and festivals. Under French law, the wine is released at 12:01 a.m., just weeks after the wine's grapes have been harvested. Parties are held throughout the country and further afield to celebrate the first wine of the season. This year it will be released on November 18.



Beaujolais Nouveau is a cherry-red colored vintage that's best served chilled -- is clearly not for wine snobs. This fresh and fruity red is the result of a quick fermentation process that ends up with a tasty, clean wine that is enjoyed by palates the world over. The interesting thing about Beaujolais Nouveau is that age does matter, but not in the way you might expect: It's meant to be consumed quickly, not aged. In fact, legend says that if you drink Beaujolais Nouveau in the year in which it was bottled, you'll have good luck all the following year.

The Gamay grapes that go into Beaujolais Nouveau are handpicked in the Beaujolais province of France. Beaujolais Nouveau owes its easy drinkability to a winemaking process called carbonic maceration, also known as whole-berry fermentation. This technique preserves the fresh, fruity quality of the grapes without extracting bitter tannins from the grape skins.

Two of the most popular Beaujolais Nouveau wines at Lakeville Liquor are George Duboeuf and Mommessin. These wines are a perfect pair with turkey, ham, appetizers, and deserts. These wines are available for a limited time so get them while you can.

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Written By, Jessi Rogers

## Brandy



We have all seen the depiction of the rescue St Bernard dog in the Swiss alps with a barrel of brandy tied around its neck to carry to avalanche survivors. Not only is this a myth, it would be a terrible (and potentially deadly) practice, but this image has helped make brandy a winter cocktail staple.

Where most distilled spirits are made from grains, all brandy is made from fermented fruit. The category of brandy includes all fruit-distilled spirits, such as eau de vie, armagnac, cognac, and pisco. Cognac has driven the rise in popularity of brandy worldwide in recent years. Because of the high demand, as well as production constraints, cognac is experiencing a worldwide shortage. There are no estimates for when cognac production will be able to meet demand.

The most common fruit used in brandy production is grapes, however pears, apples, and other fruits are also commonly used. The fruits are fermented into wine, then distilled, generally using pot stills, into brandy. Often, the next step is to age the brandy in barrels, anywhere from 2-30 years. This gives brandy many of the same color and flavor elements as other aged spirits like whiskey and rum, however since the base material is fruit rather than grain, the finished spirit is subtly sweet and fruity.

Small craft distilleries in the US are beginning to make their mark in the brandy world. In MN, several local distilleries such as Dampfwerk, Tattersall, and Crooked Water make their own brandy from locally grown apples. Many apple brandies are not aged, which means they are a clear spirit with heavy apple notes and a lot of alcohol heat. Aged apple brandies have a cider quality, and the alcohol burn has been mellowed with the aging. Aged apple brandies can take the place of whiskey in many cocktails or are great sipped on their own.

One of the earliest recorded cocktails is brandy milk punch, which is still very popular, particularly in New Orleans bars.

#### Brandy Milk Punch (Wine Enthusiast Recipe)

- 2 ounces brandy
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 11 ounces milk
- Freshly grated nutmeg, for garnish

#### Directions

To prepare the cocktail: Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously.

To serve: Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice. Garnish with a light dusting of freshly grated nutmeg. Serve Immediately. Makes 1 cocktail.