

Amber Lagers

The two basic types of beers are ales and lagers. Ales are fermented at warmer temperatures with yeast that thrives at those temperatures and that do most of their work at the top of the fermentation tank, hence the term "top fermenting" is used when discussing ales. Lagers, on the other hand, utilize yeast that work at cooler temperatures and do most of their fermenting near the bottom of the tank, hence the term "bottom fermenting" is applied to lagers.

The origins of modern lagers date to Austria (Vienna) in the early nineteenth century. Anton Dreher is credited with brewing the very first lager in 1836. Prior to that time, all beers being brewed were ales, but Dreher was able to isolate a strain of yeast that fermented at lower, lager temperatures and created a beer that was brewed entirely with that yeast. His creation eventually became the Vienna Lager.

German brewers quickly adopted Dreher's creation and brewed Vienna lagers in Bavaria for years, though very few Vienna lagers can be found in Europe today. In the late nineteenth century, German brewers started brewing the Marzen, or Oktoberfest style of beer which quickly became more popular than the Vienna Lager. German brewers also created a dark, rich lager known as the Munich Dunkel which is still popular in Bavaria and through many parts of the world today.

Food Pairings

Amber Lagers are wonderful beers to drink on cool, Fall days. Their malty richness and pleasant, sweet flavors also tend to pair well with a variety of foods. Most of them are also strong enough in flavor to stand up to spicy dishes, barbecue and other flavorful foods.



Vienna Lagers

Around 1836, lagers were discovered when Anton Dreher, of Vienna (Austria) was able to isolate the lager strain of yeast. Dreher started to brew lagers in his family brewery and his lager beer became known as **Vienna Lager**. Though very little of it is still brewed in Vienna, Vienna Lagers survive in Mexico and other countries that the Dreher family brewery exported to. Negro Modelo is an example of a **Vienna Lager** from Mexico, while Sam Adams Vienna Lager is a fine example of an American **Vienna Lager**.

Unfortunately, there are precious few examples of Vienna Lagers today, but in later years, the Oktoberfest style built on the **Vienna Lager**.

Oktoberfest

The first Oktoberfest was held in the year 1810 in honor of the Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig's marriage to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The festivities began on October 12, 1810 and ended on October 17th with a horse race. In the following years, the celebrations were repeated and, later, the festival was prolonged and moved

forward into September.

Oktoberfest beers (also called Marzens) are a very important part of the celebration and they have evolved into a distinct style of beer. They are lagers (bottom fermented) that tend to be dark gold to deep orange-red in color. The taste often has an initial malty sweetness, but the finish is moderately dry. They are usually medium bodied with a creamy texture and very smooth.

Their origin is credited to Gabriel Sedlmayr II (a good friend and travelling companion of Anton Dreher) when he brewed the first official **Oktoberfest** beer in 1872, based on an adaptation of the Vienna style developed by Anton Dreher. Typically brewed in the spring, they signal the end of the traditional brewing season and are stored in cold caves or cellars during the warm summer months. They are served in autumn amidst the traditional Oktoberfest celebrations.

Oktoberfest beers are typically maltier than their cousin, the Vienna lagers. Both the Oktoberfest-Marzen and Vienna lager beers are part of the overall beer style that is generally called European Amber Lager, though we are referring to them here as Dark Lagers.