

Basic Brewing Instructions for Beginner's Kits

Courtesy of *HomeBrew Den*

www.homebrewden.com

The following instructions are a brief overview of the brewing process when using a malt extract ingredients kit. We also recommend reading the first chapters of either *The New Complete Joy of Homebrewing* or *How To Brew* as well. The instructions are slightly different, but the basic ideas are the same. Use whichever set of instructions you wish or use a combination of the two.

The brewing process is fairly forgiving except in one vital regard. You must sanitize your equipment. To emphasize again, **SANITIZING** is **CRITICAL**. But, fortunately, it is not difficult. Essentially, you want to sanitize anything that touches your beer after the boiling stage - fermenters, spoons, hydrometers, thermometers, siphoning equipment, bottling bucket, bottles, etc. A weak chlorine bleach solution - (2 to 3 oz of plain chlorine bleach in five gallons of water) with 20-30 minutes contact time makes an effective sanitizing solution. If you prefer a non-chlorine solution, alternatives are available at your local brew shop.

10 easy steps

1. Begin by putting 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 gallons of water in a large stockpot. Turn the heat on the stove to begin heating the water. Add your malt extract (usually 5 to 7 pounds or so of liquid or dry malt extract.) Be sure to stir well as you add the malt so that it does not burn on the bottom of your kettle.

2. If you are using a hopped extract, you should boil the "wort" (as the mixture is now called) for 15 - 20 minutes. If you wish, you may add some hops for "finishing" for the last 5-10 minutes of the boil.

3. After the boil is through, it is time to put your wort into your fermenter. If possible, try to cool your wort in the kettle before pouring into the fermenter. To do this, you might try covering your kettle and placing it in an ice and water bath. Do not put ice cubes into the wort. Freezers and refrigerators are notoriously "germy" places.

4. If you are using a plastic fermenter, you may pour the wort directly into it (even if you have not previously cooled the wort). Then top it up to the five gallon mark with cold water. If you are using a glass fermenter, you will need to be careful not to pour hot wort directly into the fermenter. It will break!!! If you can not cool the wort, then you should put a couple of gallons of cold water into the fermenter first, then pour the hot wort into that cold water.

5. After filling the fermenter, seal it from the outside world with your airlock. Fill the airlock halfway with water first, then place it in the grommetted hole of the lid of the plastic fermenter, or the drilled rubber stopper for the glass carboy.

6. When the wort has cooled to 75 - 90 degrees F., you may add the yeast. Remove the lid or stopper, add the yeast, then replace the lid or stopper. Within 24 hours, you should notice a stream of bubbles flowing through the airlock. This is the carbon dioxide produced in the fermentation process.

7. If you have a secondary fermenter, you should "rack" (siphon) the liquid from the primary fermenter to the secondary when the fermentation activity has slowed to a bubble per minute or so (approx one week.) For siphoning, use the j-shaped racking cane and the flexible tubing. Let sit in the secondary for another week or two or three until the beer looks clearer and you have time to bottle. If you do not have a secondary fermenter, you can bottle whenever fermentation has stopped (bubbles every five minutes or less), but you should try not to

leave your beer in the primary fermenter for more than 2 weeks, if possible.

8. When ready to bottle, siphon using your j-shaped racking cane and the flexible tubing from your fermenter into the bottling bucket. Mix in 3/4 cup of dextrose and stir well to evenly distribute the dextrose throughout the beer. (It is best if you dissolve this dextrose in a pint of water and boil for five minutes first.) Then connect your flexible tubing to the spigot in your bottling bucket. Attach your spring-loaded bottle filler to the other end of that flexible tubing and fill your clean, sanitized bottles.

9. Attach bottle caps using the bottle capper.

10. Wait patiently for about two weeks. Then place a beer in the fridge until cool. Pop the top, pour all but the last 1/4 inch or so into a glass. Look at it, smell it, drink it, and smile at it. It's all yours!!!