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How to Make the PERFECT BEER BRAT

By: Josh Agate



Nothing says summer in Wisconsin like beer brats. It combines two of the things that most people in the Midwest hold truest to their heart: beer and pork. My family and friends have spent many hours debating what makes a beer brat perfect. Based on my years of research and careful tasting, here is what goes in to making the quintessential beer brat.

Ingredients:

Package of 12 uncooked beer brats
2 cans/bottles of dark beer
2 cans of the cheapest light beer you have on hand
1 red onion
3 cups of sauerkraut
1/2 cup of dark beer
1 Tablespoon of sugar
Hotdog buns

Serves: 5-12 people depending how hungry they are

Time to prepare: 1 hour

Preparation:

When picking up brats, make sure you grab uncooked and unseasoned brats. This will give you greater control to impart your own flavor onto the brats. Precooked brats can be used, but the flavors will not come through as strongly. In a large pot, pour in 2 cans of dark beer and 2 cans of light beer. For dark beer, just find something with some color: porter, amber, stout. In general, stay away from Belgian varieties because the fruity characteristic from the yeast. Also, don't use IPAs or Double IPAs because the bitterness would be another flavor you wouldn't want carrying over. I always recommend to people, if you pick up a 6 pack of beer that you just don't like, store a couple bottles in a dark cabinet and use it the next time you make brats. The perfect use for bad beer. I recommend a 1:1 ratio of dark to light beer and anything cheap and light will do.

Add the brats and sliced red onion to the pot and let it cook on a low simmer for approximately 30 minutes. This is the perfect time to get your charcoal grill started (or gas if that is all you have). After 30 minutes your brats are cooked, but they have not reached their full potential. Throw them on the grill at a very low temperature 300°-350°F. Your goal is to give them a bit of grill flavor and also some nice color. The key is DO NOT let the casings bust open. This will let all of your flavors out. The brats should be on the grill for 10-15 minutes. Once they have some nice color on them, transfer them back to the pot with the beer and onions and let them hold at serving temp. The beauty of this process is that they can sit in the warm beer for 30 minutes to multiple hours and only great things will happen the longer you wait.

Brat Condiments:

The only must have condiment for a brat is sauerkraut. I recommend a beer braised kraut personally. To prepare the kraut, drain the kraut and give it a light rinse. Put it into the pan with 1/2 cup of dark beer and 1 Tablespoon of brown sugar. Let this simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes and it will be ready.

As far as additional condiments, do what makes you happy, but don't take away from the greatness of the brat. Mustard and Stadium Sauce (for the Brewer fans out there) make nice additions to the flavor profile. I discourage the use of ketchup because of the acidity really distracts from the flavor.

Lastly, don't buy brat buns. All that bread again distracts from the brats. For those of you that are worried the kraut and mustard are going to overflow and make a mess...I never promised you this was going to pretty, but I can promise you it will be delicious.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josh Agate- Lifelong resident of Southern Wisconsin and lover of all things beer. Homebrewer under the moniker of Third Tier Brewing. I started writing about beer because it allows me to engage in conversations and meet people I might not have had the opportunity to otherwise.

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