

"Chocolate releases the same dopamine chemicals in the brain as romantic love does," says Rogue Ales Public House manager Russ Menegat, "and beer tends to reduce social inhibitions. If that doesn't sound like the makings of an interesting evening, I don't know what does..."

Generally, the beer should be sweeter than the dessert with which it is matched. If not, the sip taken following the bite of cake or pudding will be dominated by the sugars of the dessert, causing the beer to taste sour and thin.

Where chocolate is concerned, the rules change a bit. Because chocolate, like beer, has an element of bitterness to its taste--think gourmet chocolate bars of 70 percent or more cocoa content--the range of beers that will pair with it is considerably broader. So, for intensely chocolaty desserts, suggest very dark beers from porters to Imperial stouts, many of which actually have an element of chocolate flavor to them. Other good choices are such hoppy styles as malty IPAs, American barleywines and even so-called double IPAs, with their forceful dose of bitterness balanced by equally generous lashings of malt and considerable, warming strength.

Cream or sweet stout, imperial stout. These are made for chocolate, and imperial stout pairs especially well with dark chocolate. Also try chocolate-and-fruit desserts, such as stout cheesecake with raspberry sauce, or something with caramel or pecans.

Old ale, barley wine. Most foods don't stand up to these stronger beers, and you'll probably lose the maltiness in the beer as well. Try a really strong cheese or a piece of super-dark chocolate,

Stephen Beaumont also favors beer and chocolate cake, writing: "Chocolate cakes also afford a great opportunity to pull out a few bottles of beer. For a dense, flourless chocolate cake, try a strong, abbey-style or Trappist ale like Rochefort 8 or Ommegang Ale; vintage bottles of Samichlaus pair marvellously with rich, dark chocolate mousse; and a simpler chocolate pudding or lighter, airier chocolate cake will be nicely complemented by a bottle of two of a sweet, lightly spicy ale such as Gouden Carolus or La Choulette Ambrée."

Lucy Saunders: I love barleywine with bittersweet dark chocolate desserts, since that big alcohol nose cuts through the toasty aromas and intense, fermented flavors in the darkest chocolates. Porters and stouts seem to me to taste best with milk chocolates or desserts that blend chocolate with nuts, caramel or other berry fruits. Fruit beers, such as cherry or raspberry lambics, are also good choices.

The Association of Brewers chimes in with a press release quoting Tom Nickel, head brewer for Oddie's Pizza and Brewing Co. and co-owner of O'Brien's Pub in San Diego. "It is no surprise that beer is often a better accompaniment with food than wine. There is almost nowhere that this is more evident than with chocolate," he said. "A rich dark stout [beer] will stand up to the most intense dark chocolate. A tangy raspberry ale or lambic, like the popular New Glarus Brewing Co. Wisconsin Belgian Red pairs perfectly with semi-sweet chocolate.

"When pairing food and beverages you want to consider three points - does the beverage cleanse, complement or contrast the food. A light brown ale can clean a sweet milk chocolate aftertaste from your tongue. The long coffee finish of an imperial stout complements more bitter chocolates and rich desserts like flourless chocolate cake. Fruit beers provide an amazing contrast to dark and semi-sweet chocolates that reminds one of dipping fresh strawberries in melted chocolate. The possibilities for good beer and dessert pairings are endless."

Chocolate loves a dark beer. Milk chocolate is wonderful with Belgian-inspired strong dark ales. Flourless chocolate cake or truffles call for an inky imperial stout. Fruit beers have an obvious affinity for fruit desserts, but they can be magic with chocolate as well.

Generally, the beer should be sweeter than the dessert with which it is matched. If not, the sip taken following the bite of cake or pudding will be dominated by the sugars of the dessert, causing the beer to taste sour and thin. That unpleasant downward spiral will continue with the beer having a negative effect on the flavor of the dessert and vice versa.

Thus, particularly sweet beers such as high-alcohol bocks and doppelbocks, Belgian and Belgian-style strong ales, Scotch ales and non-hoppy barleywines are best with desserts. With the exception of the aforementioned bock family, ales work better than lagers, as the natural fruitiness of ales makes them more inclined to play well with sweets.

Fruit beers are also logical choices for dessert, but again, care must be taken to make certain they are sweet fruit beers. Certain North American examples of fruit beers can be rather subtle in their fruitiness, while others, particularly traditional lambic fruit beers from Belgium, sometimes identified as "oude," or old, can be quite tart in character. These will obviously be more limited in their last course appeal than will those fruit beers generously sweetened with sugar or unfermented fruit juices.

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In general, when picking a beer to pair with a dessert, it's better to think complement than contrast. Balance the sweetness or tartness of the dessert with that of the beer, so that neither overpowers the other. Light, fruity beers often work well with lighter desserts, such as fruit dishes. Chocolate desserts, however, are wide open for experimentation. They're generally sweet and heavy enough to nicely complement a cream or imperial stout, while contrasting nicely with a dry stout. As most chocolate lovers will swear, chocolate really does go with everything.

Not all beers will pair well with food. Sweet lambics may be outstanding with fruit or chocolate, but a sour lambic may be too overwhelming and best be served alone. Old ale and barley wine also are strong beers that are better enjoyed without food, although you might try them with very strong cheese or dark chocolate.

So challenging with wine, dessert works beautifully with beer. Rich, full-flavored beers are needed to balance the sweetness of most desserts. American small brewers love to produce such styles, so there are plenty of choices. Fruity desserts can be paired with a strong pale tripel. Caramelly bread pudding or nut tart demands something with similar qualities—old ale fills the role beautifully. Super-sweet items such as cheesecake, crème brûlée or carrot cake can create a memorable experience with highly hopped beers such as double IPAs. Spice and citrus qualities in many beers work well with desserts that highlight similar flavors.

Sweeter bocks, such as doppelbocks, can complement heartier, spicier desserts, such as pumpkin pie or spice cake.

Read more: http://pairing-food-alcohol.suite101.com/article.cfm/pairing_beer_and_food#ixzzOXPyxWU
<http://www.samueladams.com/promotions/foodandbeer/FoodChoice.aspx>
<http://www.beertown.org/education/pdf/beer&food.pdf>

Dessert

Bananas Foster <i>Weizen</i>	Flourless chocolate cake <i>Imperial stout</i>
Cherry pie <i>Kriek</i>	Lemon meringue pie <i>American wheat ale or weizen</i>
Chocolate cheesecake <i>Scotch ale</i>	Plain Belgian chocolate <i>Belgian abbey ale</i>
Chocolate pudding cake <i>Sweet stout or barley wine</i>	Raspberries Crumble <i>Raspberry wheat beer</i>
Chocolate pudding or mousse <i>Oatmeal stout</i>	Trifle <i>Strong fruit ale</i>
Christmas pudding <i>Strong, spiced ale</i>	

Beer and Chocolate Pairing

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In general, when picking a beer to pair with a dessert:

- it's better to think complement than contrast.
- Balance the sweetness or tartness of the dessert with that of the beer, so that neither overpowers the other.
- Generally, the beer should be sweeter than the dessert with which it is matched.
If not, the sip taken following the bite of cake or pudding will be dominated by the sugars of the dessert, causing the beer to taste sour and thin.

Chocolate desserts, however, are wide open for experimentation.

- Bitterness of chocolate in tandem with its sweetness lends itself very well to beer
- As most chocolate lovers will swear, chocolate really goes with everything.
- They're generally sweet and heavy enough to nicely complement a cream or imperial stout, while contrasting nicely with a dry stout.
- suggest very dark beers from porters to Imperial stouts,
 - many of which actually have an element of chocolate flavor to them.
- Other good choices are such hoppy styles as malty IPAs, American barleywines and even double IPAs with their forceful dose of bitterness balanced by equally generous lashings of malt and considerable, warming strength.

AHA site has a great beer and food pairing pdf – <http://www.beertown.org/education/pdf/beer&food.pdf>

Our tasting:

- 1) taste-tested 10 or 12 chocolates with various beers
 - 2) have 5 different types of chocolate and beers – most beers are dark or bigger brews
 - 3) Recommend a sip of beer, bite of chocolate, sip of beer.
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- 1) Founder's Dirty Bastard Scotch Ale with milk chocolate and caramel covered macadamia nuts
 - a. Caramel aspect goes well with caramel notes of beer
 - b. Milk chocolate subtle sweetness enhanced
 - c. Contrast of salt and sweet actually works well here
 - d. Beer might be a bit hot, high ABV, and a little to bitter for style but still works OK
 - 2) Highland Oatmeal Porter with dark chocolate coconut clusters
 - a. Toasted aspect of coconut goes well with black malt
 - b. Creaminess of oatmeal blends with dark chocolate & chocolate malts
 - 3) Stone's Smoked Porter with molasses chips
 - a. Subtle smoke of porter and smokiness/burnt aspect of molasses goes well
 - 4) Victory Storm King Imperial Stout with dark chocolate raspberry truffle
 - a. Intense chocolate aspects of malt blend with dark chocolate
 - b. Fruitiness complements the chocolate
 - 5) Harpoon's Leviathon Double IPA with dark chocolate covered orange peels
 - a. Citrus Wow! Hop flavor and bitterness with orange peel complement
 - b. Chocolate and malt balance, complement each other