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Best Bitter/ESB Kit Instructions

Ingredients:

5.5 lbs (Best Bitter) or 7.5 lbs (ESB) Pale Liquid Malt Extract
1.5 lbs 20° L. Crystal Malt, 0.1 lbs Chocolate Malt - Crushed
Willamette Hops in a multi-pak marked "Bitter"
(weight varies according to alpha acid/oil content)
Irish Moss pre-mixed in the package with bittering hops
10 gms Nottingham Dry Yeast (2 packets) or Wyeast 1968 Liquid Yeast (optional)
3/4 Cup Corn Sugar for priming

Specifications: This kit makes an English style Bitter, or a stronger Extra Special Bitter when more malt extract is used. The Best Bitter has an OG of around 1.045, the ESB around 1.060, about 33 IBUs of bitterness, a medium hoppiness and has a copper color. The Best Bitter will typically contain around 4% alcohol by volume, the ESB typically around 5%.

Important: If you're not planning to brew right away, it is best to store this kit in the refrigerator, and if your brew date is potentially a month or more away, take out the hops package and store that in the freezer (but don't freeze anything else in the kit). If you keep the kit in the refrigerator, warm the malt extract bucket in a sink of hot water before use to make it easier to pour.

Instructions:

These instructions assume you are doing a partial boil of approximately 3 gallons in a 5 gallon pot and then adding water after cooling to bring the volume up to 5 gallons. If you are doing a full 5 gallon boil, start with about 6 gallons of water and you shouldn't have to add any later.

Begin by putting 2.5 to 3 gallons of water in your boiling kettle (to speed up the boiling time, you can use hot water). Put the crushed malts into a grain steeping bag and tie it loosely at the top making sure the grains have plenty of free space around them. Put the grains into the water as you start to heat the water. When the water reaches 180°F, remove the grain bag but let all the water drain from the grains back into the kettle. You may want to dip the grain bag a few times as if it were a teabag as the water comes up to temperature and again right before you remove it. When the water comes to the boil turn off the heat and add all of the malt extract (if you have an electric stove, take the pot off the burner). To help get all of the malt extract out of the bucket, dip the bucket in the water and swirl it around to dissolve the extract, repeating until you get it all. Stir the extract in well, making sure it is all dissolved and there is none on the bottom of the pot before you turn the heat back on. Bring the liquid to the boil. Once it starts boiling, turn off the burner (or remove the pot) and add the bittering hops. These are the hops in the section of the package marked "B" (for bittering). There is also Irish Moss in with these hops to help the proteins coagulate. The reason we turn off the heat is that when adding the hops there is a tendency for the kettle to boil over and removing the heat prevents this. Turn the heat back on. When the kettle starts to boil again, start timing 60 minutes. (In the initial stages of the boil, the

kettle is most vulnerable to boiling over so pay close attention. Also the initial foaming tends to leave hop particles on the sides of the kettle. Using your brew spoon, wash these particles back into the liquid.)

Five minutes before the end of the boil (55 minutes from when you started timing), remove the heat and add the aroma hops. These are the hops in the section of the package marked "A" (for aroma). Stir in well and continue to boil for the remaining five minutes and remove the heat.

Cover the kettle and chill the wort. Usually this is done by putting the kettle in a sink full of ice water. You may have to replace the ice at least once. It also helps to swirl the kettle's contents to make it cool faster, but do not remove the lid to stir.

If you have a settling tank, pour the wort into the settling tank. Add cold, sterile water to bring the level up to 5 gallons and let the wort settle. If your settling tank has a spigot, let the wort settle until the level of the trub is below the spigot. If it never gets that low after 3 hours, then go ahead and transfer the wort anyway. The little bit of sediment that you'll get won't matter that much. If at the end of the transfer you start to pick up more sediment, shut the spigot off as soon as possible. This is the sediment we really want to avoid in our fermenter.

If your kit contained dry yeast, it will need to be rehydrated. Ignore the instructions on the yeast packet and do the following: 15 minutes before you are ready to pitch the yeast, rehydrate it by putting about 4 ozs of room temperature tap water (or preferably bottled water) into a sterile glass and then pour the yeast packet into the glass and stir well with a sterilized spoon. Cover with plastic wrap or foil. Do not let the yeast rehydrate for much longer than 15 minutes. If your kit contained liquid yeast, you must pop the packet 6 to 12 hours prior to brewing, following the directions on the packet.

Transfer the wort to your fermenting tank, aerating it as much as possible by "fanning" the wort down the sides of the container. Pitch the yeast and stir well to mix and aerate the wort. Put the lid on the fermenter and attach the airlock.

Once the wort has fermented and cleared (usually about 2 weeks), transfer to a bottling bucket leaving as much sediment behind as possible and trying to minimize the amount of air pickup by doing a gentle transfer. Boil about a pint of water and add the priming sugar stirring until it is dissolved. (This kit includes 3/4 cup of priming sugar which will provide a normal amount of carbonation. If you like your beer a little less carbonated, use only 1/2 cup.) Pour the liquid into the bottling bucket (there is no need to cool it) and stir thoroughly but gently. Bottle and cap the beer.

Leave the beer at room temperature for three days to a week and then place in the refrigerator for a few days to allow the CO₂ to get fully dissolved in the beer. Now drink and enjoy!

Questions or problems? Give us a call on our advice line: 925-875-0246. Hours: Monday through Friday 10am to 5pm Pacific Time.