

DESTINATION PHILADELPHIA | MAKE YOUR OWN CHAI | HOW THE COCKTAIL GOT ITS NAME

# imbibe

LIQUID CULTURE

## Brave New World

Your Passport to Coffee Nirvana



**PERFECT BEER & FOOD PAIRINGS**

**MODERN MOONSHINE**

**RIESLING'S REVIVAL**



**Q: Where does the oil that sometimes appears on top of a fresh-poured cup of coffee come from and why does the amount vary between styles of coffee? Does it have to do with the type of bean, style of roast, age of the coffee?** —H.H., Hilo, Hawaii

**A:** These oils exist in both green and roasted coffee. It is the roasting process that releases the oils from within the bean. Many physical and chemical changes take place simultaneously during roasting, but it is largely the degree to which a coffee is roasted that determines how much oil you will see. During the brewing process, water acts as a solvent and allows the oils to be released from the coffee grounds. The oils are insoluble and float on the top of the brewed coffee. A paper filter will grab many of the oils before they make it into your cup, while a press pot preparation will allow the oils to pass through. —Barth Anderson, green coffee buyer, Barrington Coffee Roasters

**Q: I understand the basic concept of pairing wine with cheese, but I'm totally lost when trying to pair cheese with beer. Where's a good place to start?**

—M.L., Madison, Wisconsin

**A:** Pairing cheese and beer is a matter of taste—the taste of the cheese, the taste of the beer and, most importantly, the taste of the consumer. And it depends on whether you are looking to achieve a pairing that complements or contrasts. Complementary pairings take similar flavors—let's say a hoppy IPA, like the Green Flash West Coast IPA from California—and a sharp cheddar—like Shelburne Cheddar from Vermont—and combine them to emphasize the dominant flavor elements. Take that same hoppy IPA and pair it with a soft, tangy goat cheese—like the Haystack Mountain Snowdrop from Colorado—for contrast, and you will discover new flavors in both the beer and the cheese.

Try to match the intensity of flavor so that neither the beer nor the cheese will be overwhelmed. A nutty, firm sheep's milk cheese, like the Cave-Aged Marisa from Carr Valley in Wisconsin, naturally lends itself to a nutty brown ale like the Ithaca Nut Brown from New York, but you could choose to pair it with a Flemish sour, like the Kelso Flemish Red from Brooklyn, for a totally different taste.

To help your local cheesemonger, describe the beer you are trying to pair in terms of flavor. (Most cheesemongers will not find it helpful if you mention ABV or IBUs or the kind of hops used.) Choose a cheese shop that encourages you to taste before you buy. At your local beer shop, the same thing applies, but you will need more description for your local cellar manager since preliminary sipping is highly unlikely.

Palates are totally, incredibly and indelibly personal. Line three people up at my cheese counter, give them all the same cheese, and reactions can range from love to boredom to disgust; the same goes for beer. Pairings should be suggestions, points of departure for the individual palate. —Daphne Scholz, owner, Bierkraft, Brooklyn, New York

**Q: I've seen two versions of crème de cacao, one that's clear and one that's dark. What's the difference, and how do I know which kind to use if a recipe doesn't specify? While you're at it, do you have a good recipe that calls for it?** —K.R., Columbia, South Carolina

**A:** Depending on the manufacturer, crème de cacao is the infusion and/or distillation of cacao beans with a touch of vanilla in a spirit base. While it is not a cream-based chocolate liqueur, it still adds a distinct, clean and aromatic chocolate taste to cocktails. It is available in two colors; the more common of the two is white or clear, and the other is dark chocolate brown. The liqueur's color doesn't affect its taste; the white is the final product of distillation, while the dark has had natural colors added. When a recipe calls for crème de cacao, the best option is to go with the white version, as it has always been more available than the dark. Don't forget dark crème de cacao, though: This rare version can be used in creamy cocktails and cocktails meant to look "chocolaty," like the one offered here. —Shawn Soole, [theliquidrevolution.com](http://theliquidrevolution.com)

**Theobroma**

- 1 oz. cachaça infused with jalapeño and vanilla bean
- 1 oz. dark crème de cacao
- 1 oz. chilled espresso
- Ice
- Tools: shaker, strainer
- Glass: snifter

Combine ingredients in a shaker, shake and strain into glass. To infuse the cachaça, place one split jalapeño pepper (with seeds) and three split vanilla beans into a full bottle of cachaça. Strain after one week.

**Want to ask our drink experts a question?** Send an e-mail to [editorial@imbibemagazine.com](mailto:editorial@imbibemagazine.com) with "Distilled" in the subject line.