

Extra Special Bitter

Extra Special Bitter, commonly known as ESB, represents the best of English bitters. Despite the name they are not very bitter, although tradition records them as more bitter than standard pale ales. Our ESB pays tribute to Best Bitters with malts giving a bronze hue and a sweet biscuit aroma. Our careful selection of Thames Valley yeast remains true to style while minimizing the fruitiness, buttery slickness, and esters common in some bitters.

Ingredients

6.6 lb. Muntons Extra Light Malt Extract
½ lb. Munton & Fison Crystal Malt 60° L
½ lb. Briess Victory Malt 20° L
1 oz. Phoenix (Bittering)
1 oz. Kent Goldings Hop Plugs (Finishing)
Wyeast # 1275XL Thames Valley Ale Yeast

Statistics

Original Gravity	1.050
Final Gravity	1.013
Alcohol Content	4.6%

Procedure

A few hours before you begin to brew, prepare your liquid yeast according to the package instructions. We assume that you are familiar with basic homebrewing techniques, so these procedures are abbreviated.

1. Divide the cracked grains between 2 of the muslin bags (no more than ½ pound per bag) and add them to your brew kettle along with 1½ gallons of cold water. Heat slowly.
2. Steep the grains in hot water (about 145° – 160°F) to extract flavor and color — do not allow to boil. After about 30 minutes, remove the grain bags and then bring the water to a boil.
3. Remove the pot from the heat and add the cans of malt extract. Keep the kettle off the burner and stir until the malt extract is *completely* dissolved.
4. Put the pot back on the burner and bring it to a boil. Once boiling, place the bittering hops into muslin bags (no more than 1 oz. per bag), add them to the pot, and set your timer to boil for 1 hour. Keep an eye on the pot to avoid boil-overs.
5. After 45 minutes of boiling, add ½ teaspoon of Irish moss, or 1 Whirlfloc tablet, to help clarify your beer (optional).
6. After 58 minutes of boiling, add the finishing hops (in a muslin bag) and boil for 2 more minutes.
7. After 60 minutes of boiling, turn off the heat. Put a lid on your pot and cool it in an ice bath (use your sink) for about 30 minutes. Remove the hop bags from the kettle.
8. Pour 2 gallons of cold water into your sanitized fermenter, add the cooled wort (the stuff in your pot), and top up with additional water to 5 gallons. Aerate the wort with vigorous stirring, rocking the fermenter, etc.
9. Make sure the wort is below 80°F before adding yeast. Take a hydrometer reading if desired. Add the yeast.
10. Store the fermenter where the temperature will be a fairly constant 65° – 70°F. Active fermentation may take only a few days, or it can last up to 2 weeks. A hydrometer reading is a great way to determine when the fermentation is done. Keep it in the primary fermenter until active fermentation is complete (no signs of active fermentation for the last 2 to 3 days).
11. When ready to bottle, siphon beer into your sanitized bottling bucket, leaving sediment behind. Boil the priming sugar in 1-2 cups of water for a few minutes, gently stir into the beer, and bottle as usual.

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