

Russian Imperial Stout

Rich, oily thick, chocolately, roasty, sweetness is balanced with bitter hops and lots of warming alcohol. Originally brewed in the 18th-century London for Catherine II of Russia, this complex, high-strength beer is perfect for sipping on a cold winter night or paired with chocolate dessert.

Ingredients

8 lb. Alexander's Pale Malt Extract
3 lb. Muntons Amber Dried Malt Extract
1¼ lb. Briess Crystal Malt 80° L
½ lb. Muntons Chocolate Malt 338° L
½ lb. Muntons Roasted Barley 675° L
¾ lb. Thomas Fawcett Pale Chocolate Malt 20° L
1 oz. Yakima Magnum Hop Pellets (Bittering 1)
½ oz. Centennial Hop Pellets (Bittering 2)
½ oz. Centennial Hop Pellets (Flavoring)
2 oz. Willamette Hop Pellets (Finishing)
Wyeast # 1028 XL London Ale Yeast

Statistics

Original Gravity	1.090
Final Gravity	1.022
Alcohol Content	9.2%

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 among 6 of the muslin bags (about ½ pound per bag) and add them to your brew kettle along with 2 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. *Do not add the dried malt at this time.* 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 to a boil. Once boiling, place the first bittering hops into a muslin bag, add to the pot, and set your timer to boil for 90 minutes. Keep an eye on the pot to avoid boil-overs.
5. After 45 minutes of boiling, add the second bittering hops (in a muslin bag).
6. After 70 minutes of boiling, remove the pot from the heat (you do not have to stop the timer) and add the bag of dried malt extract. Keep the kettle off the burner and stir until the extract is *completely* dissolved. Bring back to a boil.
7. After 75 minutes, add the flavoring hops (in a muslin bag). Add ½ teaspoon of Irish moss (or 1 Whirlfloc tablet) to help clarify your beer (optional).
8. After 88 minutes of boiling, add the finishing hops (divided between 2 muslin bags) and boil for 2 more minutes.
9. After 90 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.
10. 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.
11. Make sure the wort is below 80°F before adding yeast. Take a hydrometer reading if desired. Add the yeast.
12. 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 the beer in the primary fermenter for two weeks until active fermentation is done (no signs of active fermentation for the last 2 to 3 days).
13. This beer will benefit from a secondary fermentation (optional). This extended aging should be done in a glass carboy for an additional 4 to 8 weeks before bottling.
14. When ready to bottle, siphon beer into your sanitized bottling bucket, leaving the 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. Then be patient—this is an intensely flavored beer that will improve dramatically with age.

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