

## **Gluten Free Beer, give it a try!**

For most of recorded history, beer has been made with grains like barley and wheat. However, for many people, this is a problem. That's because these grains contain gluten, and those with a gluten-intolerant condition can become very ill from consuming it. For those with gluten-intolerance, consuming products that contain gluten can start an autoimmune reaction that leads to serious problems. Therefore, traditionally brewed beers cannot be enjoyed by those with this medical condition. Does that mean that they can't pop open a cold one and enjoy it? Well, that may once have been the case, but there are some innovative breweries out there that are giving these folks more options.

Gluten-free beer is available through a handful of breweries (though more and more are joining the trend). These beers are not made with traditional components like wheat, barley and rye. Instead, they use products that do not contain any gluten. These include buckwheat, sorghum, rice, corn and some other cereals. Does that mean that any beer made with these ingredients can be considered "gluten-free"? Well, not exactly; the definition of gluten-free varies from brewery to brewery and nation to nation, actually.

Many breweries use sorghum and buckwheat for the majority of their gluten-free beers and a small portion of wheat or barley. These beers are generally marketed as being low-gluten or gluten-free even though they may still contain trace amounts of this poisonous substance (poisonous to those with a gluten intolerance). There is also a debate about what level should be considered "safe" for those with celiac disease and others who suffer an autoimmune response to consuming gluten.

For those interested in giving a gluten-free beer a shot, there are several brands out there. Redbridge is one of the more readily available brands (Budweiser). You can also find Hambleton Ales ale and lager in gluten-free varieties. New Grist and Greens also produce gluten-free beer, and St. Peter's Sorghum Beer is also free of gluten.

There are even gluten-free home brewing kits available on the market today for those who want to brew their own beer without the addition of wheat or barley gluten. Of course, these kits are a bit pricier than their conventional brethren, but they are excellent options for those who cannot drink regularly brewed beer without the risk of harming themselves by ingesting gluten.

If you are a beer connoisseur it is not a bad idea to try this type of beer to round out your knowledge of beer in general. Who knows, you just might discover that it is one of your favorite types of beer.