

## WIE TRINKT MAN BIER? / GERMAN BEER CUSTOMS

OVERWHELMED BY THE BEER MENU? HOW TO MAKE  
THE PERFECT BEER ORDER IN GERMAN*Pils/Pilsner/Pilsener*

Yes, those are basically three different ways of saying/spelling the same thing. And yes, they mean the same thing as the English word pilsner.

This type of beer is everywhere in Germany (and the world, for that matter). It's light amber in color and has a slight bitterness from its hops. If you've ever had a Budweiser you've had one, but please don't judge all pilsners by Bud. German pilsner is much more flavorful and less watery than that.

*Berliner Weiße* (literally, "Berlin white")

This light wheat beer is often served up in a short, wide glass in an unnatural shade of red or green. The color comes from the small shot of either *Himbeersirup* (raspberry syrup) or *Waldmeistersirup* (woodruff syrup) that typically comes with the drink.

In the European Union, the name "*Berliner Weiße*" is protected and the beer must be brewed in Berlin. However, *Berliner Weisse* (an alternate spelling easier on English keyboards) is starting to pop up in the U.S. and elsewhere.

This is the only beer variety on our list that's feminine (*die Berliner Weiße*), by the way. Everything else is neuter (*das Pils*, *das Hefeweizen*, etc.). Hopefully that's easy to remember!

*Schwarzbier* (black beer)

*Schwarzbier* is a dark lager that gets its color (and thus its name) from its high roasted malt content. This makes it similar to the dark stout that English speakers may be used to. It's not a top seller, but many bars will have at least have one variety available.

*Märzen* (March beer)

If you're thinking of Oktoberfest, you might be thinking of *Märzen* lager.

Its name comes from the fact that it was historically brewed in March (*März* in German) in accordance with a 1553 Bavarian law that banned the brewing of beer from April onwards. This beer stored well and could thus survive the brew-ban summer months from April to September. (You did know that Oktoberfest actually starts in September, right?)

*Hefeweizen* (literally, "yeast wheat")

*Hefeweizen* is a cloudy wheat beer that has been gaining in popularity worldwide thanks to the thousands of craft breweries entering the game across the globe. It typically has a higher alcohol content than *Berliner Weisse* and a richer color and flavor—no artificial syrups needed.

Hefeweizen is traditionally served in a curvy glass, not a bottle (and cans are just heresy).

*Kölsch*

*Kölsch* is another protected beer in the EU. It must come from the city of *Köln* (Cologne). That said, its imitators—sometimes irritatingly rendered "kolsch" without the umlaut, which is totally wrong—are starting to make inroads in the international craft beer scene.

This beer is very similar to pilsner, but often a little less bitter.