

## Brown Porter

August 29, 2008

Brown Porter is well described in the BJCP style guide so let's begin with that:

### 12A. Brown Porter

**Aroma:** Malt aroma with mild roastiness should be evident, and may have a chocolaty quality. May also show some non-roasted malt character in support (caramelly, grainy, bready, nutty, toffee-like and/or sweet). English hop aroma moderate to none. Fruity esters moderate to none. Diacetyl low to none.

**Appearance:** Light brown to dark brown in color, often with ruby highlights when held up to light. Good clarity, although may approach being opaque. Moderate off-white to light tan head with good to fair retention.

**Flavor:** Malt flavor includes a mild to moderate roastiness (frequently with a chocolate character) and often a significant caramel, nutty, and/or toffee character. May have other secondary flavors such as coffee, licorice, biscuits or toast in support. Should not have a significant black malt character (acid, burnt, or harsh roasted flavors), although small amounts may contribute a bitter chocolate complexity. English hop flavor moderate to none. Medium-low to medium hop bitterness will vary the balance from slightly malty to slightly bitter. Usually fairly well attenuated, although somewhat sweet versions exist. Diacetyl should be moderately low to none. Moderate to low fruity esters.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body. Moderately low to moderately high carbonation.

**Overall Impression:** A fairly substantial English dark ale with restrained roasty characteristics.

**Comments:** Differs from a robust porter in that it usually has softer, sweeter and more caramelly flavors, lower gravities, and usually less alcohol. More substance and roast than a brown ale. Higher in gravity than a dark mild. Some versions are fermented with lager yeast. Balance tends toward malt more than hops. Usually has an "English" character. Historical versions with Brettanomyces, sourness, or smokiness should be entered in the Specialty Beer category (23).

**History:** Originating in England, porter evolved from a blend of beers or gyles known as "Entire." A precursor to stout. Said to have been favored by porters and other physical laborers.

**Ingredients:** English ingredients are most common. May contain several malts, including chocolate and/or other dark roasted malts and caramel-type malts. Historical versions would use a significant amount of brown malt. Usually does not contain large amounts of black patent malt or roasted barley. English hops are most common, but are usually subdued. London or Dublin-type water (moderate carbonate hardness) is traditional. English or Irish ale yeast, or occasionally lager yeast, is used. May contain a moderate amount of adjuncts (sugars, maize, molasses, treacle, etc.).

<b>Vital Statistics:</b>	OG: 1.040 – 1.052
IBUs: 18 – 35	FG: 1.008 – 1.014
SRM: 20 – 30	ABV: 4 – 5.4%

**Commercial Examples:** Fuller's London Porter, Samuel Smith Taddy Porter, Burton Bridge Burton Porter, RCH Old Slug Porter, Nethergate Old Growler Porter, Hambleton Nightmare Porter, Harvey's Tom Paine Original Old Porter, Salopian Entire Butt English Porter, St. Peters Old-Style Porter, Shepherd Neame Original Porter, Flag Porter, Wasatch Polygamy Porter

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**Brown Porter According to the World of Jamil<sup>1</sup>**

Brown Porter is an English style of beer that's somewhere between Mild, Southern English Brown Ale and Robust Porter. Think of a triangle with Brown Porter in the middle of these three styles. Body, hops and roast all fall in the middle of the triangle. Sam Smith's Taddy Porter is the classic example of the style (and it's easily obtainable in the area).

The two critical ingredients in a Brown Porter are Brown Malt and Chocolate Malt. The brown malt is needed to hit the right flavor profile and you just can't get by without it. Chocolate malt is the second key ingredient and using the right amount of chocolate malt is paramount. It is the one item that has to be dialed up or down to get it just right. Too little chocolate and it's not roasty enough (and starts to look like the Southern English Brown) yet too much chocolate make it too roasty (and starts to look like a Robust Porter).

Jamil offers the following recipe which he claims to be similar to the class Sam Smith's Taddy Porter.

Jamil's Recipe

6 gallons; 27 IBU, 24 SRM, OG 1052, FG 1013  
Mash 152 until converted  
9.5# British Pale Malt (Marris Otter is nice) or 6.8# English Pale Ale Extract  
1# Brown Malt  
1# Crystal 40°L  
10oz Chocolate Malt, 350° L  
1.25 oz Fuggles 5% AA, 60 minutes  
0.5 oz Fuggles, 5% AA, 10 minutes  
Yeast: WLP013, Wyeast 1028, Danstar Nottingham  
Carbonate to 1.5 to 2 volumes

Brewing Notes:

- Water should be ok as is for 80% of the people; otherwise adjust if you have soft water.
- Chocolate malt is the key ingredient and the one item that has to be dialed up down to get it just right. 9 ounces may be ok but 8 ounces is definitely too low. 10 ounces may start out a little roastier than a Taddy Porter but it will age out in a couple months.
- The Lovibond rating on the chocolate malt can make a difference too.
- Must use English Ale yeast to give a little more attenuation with a drier finish (as opposed to sweet).
- For liquid yeast, use 2 packages or 1 package and 2 Liter starter or 1 package and 1 Liter starter with a stir plate.
- For dry yeast, use 2 packages.
- Serve a little warmer to bring out the yeast and malt character.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcribed from "The Jamil Show" Brown Porter episode which aired on October 22, 2007. You can listen to the entire podcast at <http://thebrewingnetwork.com/jamil.php>.

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### More on Brown Malt

Brown malt has a toasty, roasty, dry, biscuit flavor and a SRM in the 60-70 °L range. If you can't find brown you can easily make your own. Ray Daniels gives the following process in the article "BrewStyles: Historical Porter" (<http://www.allaboutbeer.com/homebrew/porter.html>).

*While brown and amber malts are difficult to find today, it is easy to make your own at home in the oven using a cookie sheet (covered with aluminum foil to ease clean up) and pale or 2-row malt.*

*Place the malt on the cookie sheet to a depth of about 1/2 inch. Place in the oven at 250 deg F for about 30 minutes to dry the malt. Next raise the temperature to 300 deg F for 30 minutes. At the end of this time, take several kernels of the roasted malt, break them open and compare the color of the starchy interior to that of some unroasted malt. By this time, it should be a cream or light buff color. This is the proper color for amber malt.*

*To produce brown malt, raise the heat again to 350 deg F and perform a similar color check every 10 - 15 minutes until the interior of the roasted malt takes on a tan color.*

### Brown Porter and Most Everyone Else

A quick Google search for "taddy porter clone recipe" returns 635 hits and googling "Brown Porter Recipe" gets even more. Sure most of them are junk but one of the most interesting things is there doesn't seem to be universal support for Jamil's use of brown malt. In the dozens of recipes I looked at I haven't found too many that call for it! I also looked at two of the more popular cloning sources: Clone Brews by Tess and Mark Szamatulski and Brew Your Own. Clone Brews has a Taddy Porter Clone recipe that is fairly similar to Jamil's except the specialty grains are replaced with 1# English Crystal, 3/4# Black Malt and 6 ounces chocolate malt and 2 ounces of black treacle is added to the boil. BYO also has a similar clone recipe without the brown malt (click <http://byo.com/recipe/971.html>).

Midwest Homebrewing has another clone listed which is fairly typical of the bulk of the internet recipes. You could probably figure out how to brew it if you wanted.

#### **Pam Smith's Taddy Porter w/ Munton's 6 gm dry yeast**

Pam Smith's Taddy Porter (Samuel Smith) The roasted grain flavor is followed by a hint of molasses and butterscotch. This black, full bodied porter is sold in England as a Strong Stout. It was originally named for train porters who were its servers and consumers. Our ingredients for this recipe include: 6 lbs. Light DME, 8 oz. Crystal 50-60°L, 8 oz. Black malt, 8 oz. Chocolate malt specialty grains, 2.5 oz. of hops, 2 oz. Molasses.

A few more Brown Porter examples can be found on the [Northern Brewer Homebrew Forum](#).

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**Where Does It End?**

So what does all this tell us? The style appears to be somewhat open to interpretation. This might be due to the distinction between brown and robust porter is somewhat hazy outside the BJCP. Much of the literature I found on the web or re-read from all the homebrew books I've accumulated over the years simply talks about "porter" without making a distinction between the two types. That made it a little harder to write about brown porter.

When it's time to brew a brown porter, my suggestion is to take one of these recipes as a starting point and do what you like with it while keeping the BJCP guide in mind. Myself I'll probably start with Jamil's recipe for no other reason than he his own show and he's won lots of awards.

Finally, if you're interested in a little history about porter, there is a nice short article by Ed Westemeier in [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#).

Enjoy!