

# How to Brew Good Beer Your First Time! Recipe: California Pale Ale

There are two ways to brew beer and this article is meant for beginner using Extracts and using pre-assembled Kits with all the ingredients and instructions ready to go with the kit. You can choose your own kit from whatever company you want, this is what we had at the time for this article.

From Extracts (less work, and less equipment), and from grain (more time, and more equipment and more knowledge and more money is needed initially at least). I explain how to brew from extracts. Extracts are all things (sugars) that were extracted from the barley grain (so this step is skipped by the brewer), and is a good starting point. You can brew fantastic beer here as well. Later once you get more advanced you can start to upgrade your equipment and knowledge and get more fine control and brew from grain.

Also all commercial breweries pretty much brew from grain (malted barley), because its makes more economical sense. Extracts costs more because the process of extracting and creating these products costs energy and money. There are things you can get away with when you brew from extracts, that you won't be able to get away when brewing from grain. But that's another article one day.

When I first started to brew, I used pretty much my wife's cooking things, I used a regular 3 gallon cooking pot to cook my wort in (un-fermented beer), but if you really want the beer to get better, you need to get the proper equipment. You can save money if you are handy with tools and know how to cut metal, weld and etc... if not, either you can learn or buy it from someone who does. People also convert Kegs into brew

pot/tuns as well, and you can buy those on craig\_list or ebay or your local brew store, etc...

**UPDATE:** since writing this article, I've upgrade my brew container (from wife's 3 gallon soup pot, to a 25 gallon more professional brew pot and it can be used as either a brew pot or tun, both)... if you don't know what a tun is, one day you'll learn when you start to brew from all grain, don't worry about this for now.

you can look in the photo-gallery to see the rest of the pictures:

[http://www.kodiaktechnical.com/gallery2/main.php?g2\\_itemId=5945](http://www.kodiaktechnical.com/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=5945)

The ingredients for: California Pale Ale were purchased from [the Brühaus](#) – look for them on ebay, a great company!!!

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The ingredient kit includes: ( read my instructions if you want it to come out good instead )

- 1- Munton's Hopped Light Malt Extract, 3.3lb
- 2- Munton's Light Dried Malt Extract, 1lb
- 1- Munton's Crushed Crystal Malt, .38lb
- 1- Hop Pellets, 1oz
- 1- Priming Sugar (Dextrose), 5oz
- 1- Fermentis Ale Yeast, 11.5g
- 1- Steeping Bag
- 55- Bottle Caps
- 1- Complete Instructions

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BEER can be broken down into 4 basic parts:

- 1) WATER
- 2) YEAST
- 3) MALT
- 4) HOPS

For a beginner (even me), "malt extracts" will form the basis of your brewing activity for a while. Malt extract is the sweet liquid (like honey) derived from the malt grain that has been processed into a concentrated syrup or into powder form.

This make the brewing process much easier and faster, you can be done within hours. Otherwise, using all-grain process, you will spend hours mashing. The malt extracts come in different types, from dark malt to light malt.

The brew of even the first beer will generate VERY GOOD BEER, better than what you will be able to buy in the store and much cheaper, so don't think that somehow you will be brewing something sub-standard.

Another thing to remember is that as you start to investigate into beer by looking into books, online forums, discussion boards, message boards, local brew store, you will notice the

availability of all kinds of fancy equipment to further expand on the home brewing process, keep one thing in mind. To make good beer, you don't really need any of that so don't stress about it, stick to the basics and get that down first. Once you made a good 5-10 batches, then investigating into further methods is of course smart and keeps you learning more.

Different BEER recipes will come with different combination of ingredients and different way to mix it when you boil it with water, but the basics are always:

**Malted barley (sugars) and Hops (used to add bitterness)** so you can balance out the sweetness.

I am thinking of writing an extensive investigative research report into Hops, but for now the [Wikipedia link is more than enough](#). This link is also filled with great information about [Hops all around](#).

Of course the other given ingredients are water and then you will need to ferment the brew with yeast when you finish the brew process, this is VERY IMPORTANT STEP!!! Don't mess up here...

Now, I have read several different long published books about the process of beer making and I noticed some inconsistencies with how they were written, no one seems to be doing anything the same way, but for a novice, if you follow the following instructions, you will get GREAT BEER!!!! But don't skip anything.

**Don't worry, be happy, let's start.**

All the ingredients for making the brew (you can get that at a local brew store or over the internet, ebay – where I actually got it from – a company called – the Brühhaus, check them out, they are great and they ship fast!!! – no I don't work for them ).

1. Glass Carboy [What is a [Carboy ?](#)] with the rubber

- stopper and CO2 lock
2. 3+ gallon stainless steel pot
  3. accurate thermometer
  4. long wooden spoon and a funnel
  5. **the brew ingredients** (whatever flavor you are making, this varies) – the stuff you put into the pot. Includes also yeast (a crucial ingredient and priming sugar – will explain later!)
  6. water gravity meter (this will determine how much alcohol will be in the final beer)
  7. a long flask so you can pour some beer into it and take the measurements with the gravity instrument
  8. a pouring/bottling bucket for after the fermentation is over
  9. containers to hold the beer (bottles take lots of time, go and buy 10 1/2 gallon growlers), don't bottle unless you are going to give the beer to friends and you don't expect the bottles back – PLEASE RECYCLE and think of the environment, there is only 1 Earth, not 2.

Alright then lets Brew... THIS IS A Brew FOR 5 GALLONS...

## STEP #1 – BOILING WORT

If you have bought a quality stainless steel pot, on the inside it will have marking, 4 quarts, 8 quarts (4 quarts = 1 gallon). Fill it to the 8 quarts water mark with water and BOIL it. The pot doesn't need to be stainless steel, thick aluminum pots are also a good alternative – so don't think that only stainless steel is the only way. I've upgraded to a bigger 25 gallon pot (so that I have upgrade capacity, I can still brew 5 gallon batches in this), and that one is made from thick aluminum and it works great!!! as well I also have a few stainless steel Kegs that been converted to pot/tuns.

Keep also in mind that, if you brew 2 gallon of wort, you will top of with 3 gallons of water inside the fermentor for 5 gallon total. The less you top-off with, the thicker the beer

will be, the more, the thinner the beer will be. And there are other things to learn about later.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aluminium> – to learn about what aluminum is. Keep in mind that when you get a new aluminum pot/kettle/tun, you have to season it, by boiling water, this will turn the inside of the wall almost black, that's how you know you did it correctly. The color might vary depending on the water quality of where you live (city pipes, well water, soft/hard water).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stainless\\_steel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stainless_steel) – to learn what stainless steel is

also, useful to know about the temperature of boiling water:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boiling\\_point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boiling_point)

## STEP #2

Once water is fully BOILING, turn heat off (if you have electric range, move it off of it), put the crushed grain into the Steeping Bag, tie the top of the steeping bag and put that into the water and let it seep like a tea bag for 30 minutes.

## STEP #3



Remove the steeping bag and discard it (if you have compost pile, dump it there). The Can of Light Malt Extract is like syrup, like hard honey, put that into a pot of hot water and let it sit there for 20 minutes prior to using it, so that it

all melts inside the can and is like a running syrup. Turn HEAT ON and bring the mixture back to a BOIL, once it is boiling, ADD the Light Malt Extract (open the can), while pouring it in, stir with the wooden spoon. Then add Dried Malt Extract (again stir with wooden spoon) wait for it all to dissolve and then last add the Hops and continue to stir.

Now watch out for FOAM, if you did everything right, the FOAMING should be minimal, just stir with the spoon, the foam should collapse on it's own soon and then go away, with only traces of foam visible. If the foam is a problem and it looks like it is about to come out of the pot, TURN OFF HEAT and wait for it to die down and put back on HEAT, REPEAT this step, until all the FOAM is gone.

Once all the FOAM is gone, then boil it for 30 minutes. TURN HEAT OFF after 30 minutes, and now let it sit there and go prepare your CARBOY. The CARBOY and anything that comes in contact with the beer, which at this point is called WORT needs to be super clean and fully 100% sanitized, get special chemicals for that at the brew store or online through the internet, you can also use a little bleach, but of course, rinse it out and make sure it is fully clean!!!

This includes the rubber stopper that the gas (CO2) lock – will explain below.

#### STEP #4



Pour 3 gallons of fresh water into the Carboy, then while

using a funnel, pour slowly the beer wort into the carboy and top it off with more clean water. **DO NOT POUR IT ALL THE WAY to the TOP**, because once the fermentation starts, about 1-2 days later, there will be some foaming and if you top it to the top of the Carboy, all that foam will come out and end up on the Floor. Great, now take the wort to it's final sitting destination. You should pick a dark place, one that is cool too!!! Ales like 65-75 temp ranges. Now WAIT until the temperature of your carboy drop below 90 F, I would wait until it is around 75-80 F – this will take 5-6 hours, so go take a hike. I usually start to brew around Noon, otherwise you have to wait until 10PM or 11PM to put in the yeast and if you like to go to sleep early, this might be a problem, lol.

#### STEP #5 – Starting the Fermentation Process

**Once the right** temps are achieved, pour out a little of the beer into a long flask and then use the water gravity meter to take a reading, write that down somewhere and don't really worry what that reading is at this point. After the beer is fermented, you will take another reading, do some math and then you'll know the alcohol level.



Get a piece of dry paper and make a funnel out of it, and then pour in all the YEAST into the carboy, let it fall where it falls and wait 10 minutes. Then with the long handle of the wooden spoon, give the top of the surface 2-3 pokes, **but DO NOT STIR it evenly**, bad idea.





Ok, at this point you are almost finished, with majority of all the hard work done (the yeast does all the hard work), insert the rubber stopper into the carboy and fill the water to the right level into the gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) lock and insert that into the rubber stopper. Now, leave it to ferment for about a week. At first nothing will happen, but the next day you might notice some foaming and a lot more activity, so that's a good sign!!!!

The yeast eats the sugars and it produces ALCOHOL and CO<sub>2</sub>. You want to keep the ALCOHOL in the carboy of course :- ) and let all the CO<sub>2</sub> gas out, while not letting anything into the carboy, that's what the gas lock is designed to do. You will notice that once this process starts to happen, the gas lock will move up and down, like a cylinder in a car engine, that's a good sign!!!

Now all you have to do is monitor that gas lock, there will be lots of activity in the first 1-3 days and then it will slowly die down. When the gas lock almost stop moving, your fermentation process is over. This is called SINGLE step fermentation.



## STEP #6 – A week later or so, look at the gas lock

Ok, now that the wort has actually become BEER, you are ready to start the bottling process!!! Unless you are going to be giving the beer away, don't waste your time collecting bottles, get 10 1/2 gallon growlers or some other bigger bottles with a top that don't use a cap and can be re-used over and over, just clean it, remember about our Mother Earth – the mother of all mothers.

Get a 5-6 gallon plastic bucket and siphon all the beer out of the carboy (using special gravity tubes, so that all the beer is sucked out and any material is left on the bottom of the carboy stays there!!!, there will always be stuff at the bottom left) and into the plastic bucket that has a spout installed (this all should come with your BEER kit!)...

Pour a little of the beer into the control flask and take another reading with the water gravity meter, read the instructions on how to use that, comes with the equipment, after you do the math, the final answer is your alcohol level.



Now go find your Priming Sugar packet, and mix that in a little bit of water and boil that away!!! and then once it boils, add that into the plastic bucket or whatever bucket you will be using. Mix that up and you are ready to pour.

The priming sugar will react with a little of yeast left in the beer mix, and that will carbonate your bottles!!!

Make sure that all the bottles are sanitized and clean too! and anything that comes in contact with the beer making process!!!

Pour away, cap it tight, put it away for 4 weeks ( I know the wait time sucks, but the beer needs to age properly ), nothing will stop you from drinking it sooner, I have tried it even after a week and it was good and even at this stage you can do a sample taste, there is no law against that!

That's it!!!!

FIN.