



YoBrew Magazine

Winter 2010

ISSUE No. 2

Price: FREE

Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of the YoBrew magazine. Pete and I have set to work to provide a wide and hopefully interesting range of articles for you. We cover Christmas recipes, brewing articles and provide a vision the future of kit brewing (Concept brewing). Pete and I provide two separate and independent views of "Best kits on the market". Outside of the normal home brew subject area we cover using good bacteria to ferment delicious probiotic yogurt at home. We hope you enjoy the magazine.

By Stefan Barnnard and Peter Laycock

Disclaimer

☺. All text in this magazine is purely our personal views and should not be taken as fact. No responsibility is assumed or implied for anything that happens as a result of reading these views.

Distribution: Please do distribute this PDF in its original un-modified form. Distribution must be FREE of Charge. The un-modified PDF can be placed on personal web sites and social network sites. Spread the word.

Free: This magazine is FREE and is not for sale. This magazine shall not be resold in any form and cannot be used for any commercial purpose unless specific written permission is provided by www.yobrew.co.uk

COPYRIGHT NOTICE ©
www.yobrew.co.uk 2010. All rights reserved.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and want to thank Pete for all his assistance in producing this magazine.

Pete contributes to www.yobrew.co.uk and has his own homebrew site www.petespintpot.co.uk



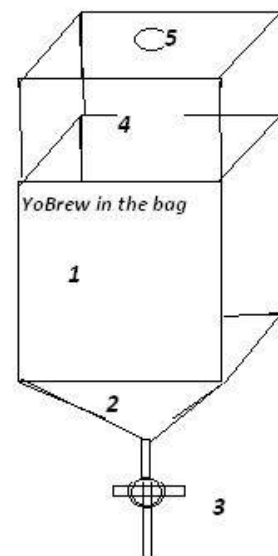
Concept brewing – Conical brew in the bag kits for wine and beer

By Stefan Barnnard

"brew in the bag" kits were quite popular, or so I am told, but I never see them about these days. I got to thinking this concept solves one of the common things that puts would be brewers off. Brew in the bag supplied means no fermentation bucket to buy and no bucket to sterilise and no sterilising chemical to buy. Another issue that puts novice brewers off is siphoning and racking the brew off the sediment. A conical fermenter solves this issue rather nicely by allowing the sediment to collect in a cone shaped funnel at the base of the fermenter. Then when you want to remove the sediment you just draw off from the tap at the bottom and stop once all the sediment is drawn off. Alas conical fermenters are prohibitively expensive. If the brew in the bag kit had a place to attach a Tube and a tap at the base then the conical brew in the bag concept could mean you also have the benefits of a conical fermenter as well. So no kit to sterilize due to the disposable bag and no siphoning as you draw from the base. First you draw off and discard the sediment then you draw off and bottle the clear brew. The photograph above right shows a brupack but in my concept I would expect to have a bag that is in a box like used for wine kits supplied today. The exception being that the concept has a conical base (Pop out) and has an expandable section to allow addition of extra water. Having the brew bag in a box or inexpensive cage means the brew bag can be made of thinner plastic and hence less expensive. After all it is disposable. To clarify I have drawn a sketch and numbered the key parts



- 1 The original box you get from the home brew shop. Contains all the ingredient except for yeast and may require extra water.
- 2 Pop out conical base
- 3 Tube and tap can be attached to the conical base of the brew in the bag
- 4 Expandable zone. The brew bag is sized to hold the final volume after adding extra water as per the brew instructions.
- 5 Screw top to allow access for adding the extra water, yeast, fermentation bubbler and other brewing gadgets.
- 6 Not displayed but may be needed. An in-expensive holder to give the expanded structure added strength.



This concept come out of the yobrew think barrel and is free for any one else to run with. As far as I know its not patented. If you do take this concept to product stage then please do let us know. We will give it a good mention on the site. A mention on YoBrew should help.

Best kits on the market

(Take 1)

By Stefan Barnard

In choosing the best kit on the market, I modestly suspect my view point is not that far removed from the average home brewer that likes home brewing as a great thing to do and can justify it on money savings and quality grounds. What I look for in a great beer or wine kit is very much the same as what I look for in the beer / wine shop. Somehow the packaging must pull me in and I need to be sold on that brand. Clearly the end product needs to deliver. When asked what I consider are the best kits they tend to be the more pricy ones like "House of Beverdale" or "Woodforde".

Actually when I think about it one of the kits in my own review that did not score full marks was Tom Caxton, yet I really got a kick out of brewing Tom Caxton with its hop enhancement system. I do not have to commit my self to 40 pints of the same beer. I can play around and produce a variety of beers from the one kit. I recall having a packet of hops stuff that could be added after fermentation and so I added different amounts to different bottles. I produced a range from very lightly hopped all the way to a bit silly in the hops scale. That gave me an interesting assortment to choose from. Guests were given the middle range and then offered a more or less hoppy version for the next bottle. Hops is just one of the dimensions in a balanced beer but it is pretty key. This kit gave me an easy way to experiment with just one dimension, hops and that was great and good fun.

To sum up, I can say the best kits on the market are Woodforde for sheer quality, House of Beverdale for their Barolo and top of the best list is Tom Caxton for making it fun and allowing me to easily produce 40 different beers with just one kit.

Best kits on the market

(Take 2)

By Peter Laycock

Kits are generally the easiest method of making beer & wines etc. "What best the best kits?" I hear you ask "I don't know!" I reply, "Some use in asking you!" is a valid response.

Kits are available in two types, those with no additional sugar required (expensive) & those needing additional sugar (relatively cheap). Paradoxically (?) the former kits are the easiest to make but the beginner probably wants a cheaper kit to start off with for obvious reasons.

Here is my personal list of recommendations but an omission isn't a dismissal (I have not tried all the kits!).

-

WINE

To me the most outstanding kits are made by *Beverdale*, of all the kits I have tried, they are consistently good. *California Connoisseurs* have a large range to choose from & are slightly cheaper but are not as good.

In the cheaper price range, *Solvino* & the *Brewmaker "Essential"* are both outstanding.

-

BEERS

Starting off with the expensive kits, *Brewferm* & *Woodforde's* come immediately to mind with *Milestone*, *Brewmaker (3Kg)* & *York Brewery* following close behind.

Mid-priced kits include *Brewmaker (1.8Kg)*, *Edme* & the *Munton's Connoisseurs* range.

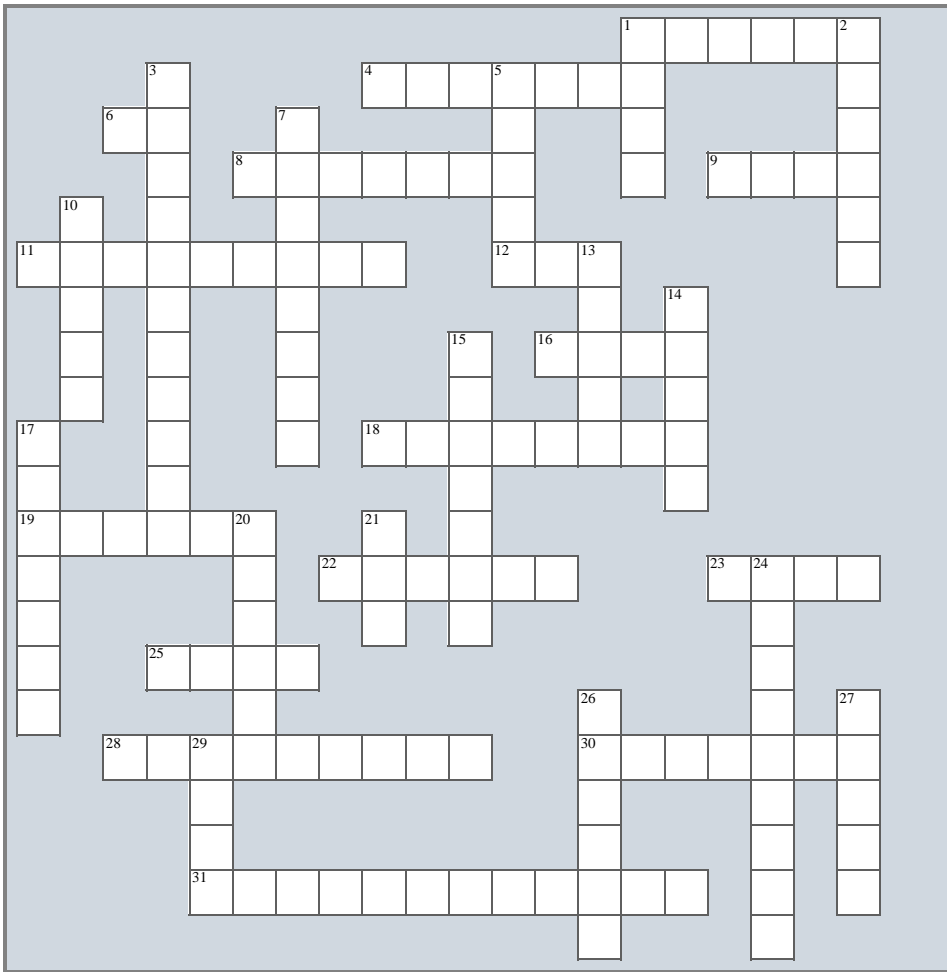
Geordie kits are very good value for money, "punching above their weight" in the budget beer department.

CIDER

I have not tried any of the kits available.

Please read the www.yobrew.co.uk/reviews.php page.

YoBrew's Christmas 2010 crossword



Across

1. Hot and spicy wine. (6)
4. A simple sugar. (7)
6. A measure of acidity. (2)
8. Drink beer out of. (7)
9. They make beer bitter. Even rabbit can do this. (4)
11. The French do not call it fizzy wine. (9)
12. Opposite of white. (3)
16. Used to be a bunch of grapes now its in a bottle. (4)
18. Pure Genius in this black stuff. (8)
19. Fortified Spanish wine. (6)
22. Bitter component of wine, especially red, found in grape skin and many other plant parts (astringent). (6)
23. Germinate grain then heat and you can extract this. (4)
25. A great place to visit and can be pulled out of a bottle. (4)
28. King of marketing US beer. (9)
30. Lighter than water but drinking it makes you fall down. (7)
31. Small brewery in the US. (12)

Down

1. Fermented honey (4)
2. Blue / Black plum like fruit found in my mum's garden. (6)
3. Measures heat. (11)
5. Apple brew. (5)
7. Drink too much and you can have one of these. (8)
10. Ingredient in Vodka. (5)
13. Never do this if you have been drinking. (5)
14. Eukaryotic micro-organisms used in home brew. (5)
15. Put the fizz in by adding a small amount of sugar. (7)
17. Key process in beer brewing. Mixing heated liquor in a tun. (7)
20. A really great home brew website. (6)
21. Wood that give wine character. (3)
24. If you drink too much too often you will become one of these. (9)
26. Ingredient in many great beers. (6)
27. Drink wine out of. (5)
29. Measure of Scottish whiskey. (4)

For the Dynamic Java Script crossword and or answers visit:-
<http://www.yobrew.co.uk/magazine.php>

Brewing additives

Like many people, if I see a product with loads of E numbers I get the impression it is bad. Many of the E numbers are naturally produced and are fine and healthy yet others are synthetic and some have been banned in food use. So it is hard and perhaps wrong to simply rule out all E numbers or just not be concerned at all about any E numbers. In commercial beers and wine it is rare to see any E number. I saw one (E220) on an inexpensive bottle of plonk and the E number just shows they have used sulphur dioxide SO₂ which is a practice that goes back centuries. I am just fine with that and in commercial wine I am spared from any other additives.



I think the general perception of home made wine is its going to be more organic and less synthetic. I took home a top of the range wine kit and inside was concentrated grape juice but they had not concentrated it too much as this can affect taste. I also had some sachets to add at different points in the brewing process. Bag 1 Yeast well that is good. Bag 2 Metabisulphite which I am fine with this as it is just a way to get some SO₂ into the finished brew and it imitates a process that has been used for centuries. Bag 3 Sorbate WOW surely not, this is a preservative and no commercial wine would ever have Sorbate. A cheaper kit I used had Barolo flavourings. I was quite shocked and there is no way they can pretend their brew is the same or even close to Barolo. It was my choice so I left out the sorbate and it's a risk that the brew may spoil but the top quality kit ended up just fine. I left out the Barolo flavourings from the other brew and that brew turned out to be a bland cheap and nasty wine.

Fortunately the beer brewing side seems far better. Preservative free and generally results in premium quality beer as good or better than shop bought. Perhaps wine making today has such very high standards that it is too much of a skill for the average home brewer. To aspire to brew a Barolo you need grapes of the right variety and of the right region juice extracted without being concentrated at all and it needs to be in a cellar for a few years. These demands are beyond most of us but I still manage to produce from kits, bottles that tastes very much like Barolo and I manage to avoid the additive that I do not agree with.

Home made yogurt

Delicious probiotic yogurt is made by fermenting milk using milk fermenting bacteria (good bacteria). I use a 1.2 Litre food Thermos to make yogurt. This method works well and is repeatable. I add 1 litre of milk at 44C and add the yogurt culture then screw the cap on and leave. The temperature inside the Thermos drops very gradually passing through 43C and to about 39C in around 7 hours which is the ideal temperature range for yogurt making. It takes about 7 hours to ferment,span> the longer you leave it the sharper / more tart it gets.

Method 1 and 2 are very similar but reading both will give you a more complete picture.

Method 1 - Straight EasiYo yogurt

- 1 packet of EasiYo (I use Greek style base & culture but there are loads of types to chose from)
- 1 Litre tap water
- 2-4 table spoons of sugar (I do not add this but it is what they suggest on the EasiYo packet)

Boil 1 Litre of water and pour into the 1.2 Litre Food Thermos. Allow the temperature to drop to 44C. (See below for ways to cool the milk) You do not have to pre-boil the water but pre-boiled water is recommended as it drives off chemical that yogurt making bacteria do not like and boiling kills most unwanted microbes such as bacteria.

Once the water temperature is down to 44C add the EasiYo and stir it in. Depending on taste, add 2-4 table spoons of sugar. Seal and give it a good shake. After shaking I release the cap a bit and then reseal.

Its done in about 7 hours. This method work in reverse to the EasiYo system. EasiYo use three types of yogurt making bacteria. bulgaricus, thermophilus and acidophilus and they have a special water baffle container that is designed to gradually raise the temperature. They claim that the continuous temperature change favors different bacteria at different points in the process and results in a more complex flavour. Using a Thermos does a similar thing but it starts at 44 and gradually goes down.

After 7 hours it should be done but knowing when it is done is a bit tricky. Industrial yogurt making will measure acidity and as soon as it reaches the right point they will cool the yogurt to 5C. I found that 7 hours fermentation is about right. Give it a bit more to be sure but you may make it a bit too sharp.

After 7 hours the yogurt should look creamy.

Very gently stir. (I do not stir if it looks right) If its not stirred it should be a bit like set yogurt. If its very gently stirred it should be like most natural yogurt. If its stirred more vigorously then it should be like drinking yogurt. If your yogurt has separated a bit into curds then you may need to stir it a bit more.

Pour into a container and place the container in the fridge. Delaying this may result in a more shartp / tart yogurt.



Method 2 - Supermarket milk yogurt

Starter culture (Either of the following)

- I use four table spoons of EasiYo Greek style base culture. This give me thier 3 yogurt making bacteria and it makes the milk a bit thicker.
- Two table spoons from your last home made yogurt (This is populat and I have tried it but I think it is more hygenic to use a specific starter culture)
- Two table spoons of shop bought live unflavoured natural yogurt.
- A measured quantity of freeze dried bacteria culture.

1 Litre of whole milk

(I use whole milk but most milk is supposed to be fine with the exception of UHT milk. UHT milk is heated to 135C and this breaks down the specific proteins that the yogurt bacteria need.)

Heat the milk until it starts to froths (about 85C) and pour the milk into the food Thermos. Seal and leave for 15 - 30 minutes.

Now you need to cool the milk to 44C. (See below for ways to cool the milk)

When the milk is at 44C add the starter culture and stir it in, seal and shake well. It is done in about 7 hours. After it is done very gently stir and pour into a container and transfer to the fridge. Delaying transfer to the fridge can make it too tart.

Ways to cool the milk

The milk is header to around 85C and placed into the food thermos with the lid sealed for 15 - 30 minutes this ensures that the milk and the thermos are free from unwanted bacteria. Ofter 15-30 minutes you need to cool the milk to 44C and you wnt to do this quite quickly but I am lothed to thae it of of the thermos as its all nice and bacteria free in there so I have devised 3 separate methods. Put here in order of discovery.

1. (35 hours) Keep the lid screwed on and every so often open and check the temperatur untill it is 44C. This takes ages about 35 hours. I think taking this long to cool causes the milk to separate slightly. The fatty part collect at the top and its more watery at the based. For yogurt making we want fully homoginised milk.
2. (10 Hours) Remove the Thermos lid and replace with a clean upside down side plate. This reduced the cooling time to about 10 hours.
3. (2 hours) See photo above right. I found a plastic bottle that once had cordial. It was just the right size such that if you turn it upside down and inserty it into the Thermos it goes in to its shouldders but then gets stuck and does go in fully. I cl;ean the bottle and fill it with cold water and screw its cap on. Then I turn the bottle upside doen and put it into the Thermos such that it toiuches the hot milk and it gets stick in the thermos neck and an fair amount of the bottle is above the thermos to help disapate the heat. The reduced cooling time of 2 Hours makes yogurt making much quicker.
4. Mini wort style cooler (Minutes) I have not tried this as its a bit over the top. Beer brewers cool thier hot wort with a simple water driven cooler. I was planning on making a mini version but I think it is a bit over the top.

What can go wrong

Not creamy enough - In my method 2 you can notice I add 4 table spoons of EasiYo to my warm milk this make the milk more concentrated and thus ends up more creamy. Some people add condensed milk or the use very creamy organic milk. This issue is more to do with natural yogurt but if you add jam it is less of a problem as the jam thickens it up.

Too sharp / tart - Firstly natural yogurt is a bit sharp and adding Jam makes to a bit more acceptable to most. As fermentation take place the acidity rises. The professional monitor acidity and its the acidity level that tells them when it is done. As soon as its at the right acidity level they quickly cool it to 5C. We on the other hand have to rely on temperature and timming.

Separation into curds - This is caused by lack of homoginisation. Homoginisation is a key step in industrial yogurt making but never in home yogurt making. To avoid separation do not over heat the milk. Keep the milk at 85C for 15-30 minutes and cool quickly stirring while cooling. In the earlier days I had a few that separated and managed to stir it back in. As I became more carful of the temperature I let the milk get to and improved the speed the mik cooled to 44C and reduced the fermentation time down this issue seemd to disapear. I used to ferment for about 24 hours and then it was very sharp and often separated. Now I only ferment for about 7 hours.

Microbe infection - I have never seen this but I makes sense that this can happen. Yogurt does not keep forever which makes the act of using some of the last batch as starter for the new batch a risky method. No industrial yogurt maker would do this. They always use a professionally incubated starter. However the re use of starter culture is common practice for home yogurt making so I guess it the risks are low.

Gas build up - Note in this article during fermentation I have the cap screwed on and this works well for me. When I first did it I was a bit concerned in case there was a pressure build up but that does not happen with this type of yogurt making. I guess if a yeast sneaked in it could create a pressure build up and could blow the top / container so you may want to play safe by allowing unexpected gas to escape.

Other issues - I plan to have a yogurt fermentation page on yobrew and on this page I would like a full list of things that go wrong so if you do make a duff batch, can you drop me an email such that I can investigate and add this to a problems and solutions section.

My email is on:- <http://www.yobrew.co.uk/about.php>

More on yogurt making:- <http://www.yobrew.co.uk/yogurt.php>

Improvements planned

Temperature

I plan to alter the start temperature and the fermentation time to see how it affects the end product. By changing the start temperature from say 44C to 43C, has an effect on the overall flavour. The great advantage of using the Thermos is being exact with temperatures. In my opinion and from what I read on the net the EasiYo system is vulnerable to temperature changes due to varying tap water temperatures. With the Thermos you start with an exact temperature and when fermenting the temperature change is very gradual therefore you are much more likely to be able to repeat the process. That means once you have found a combination that works well for you, you can reliably reproduce this.

Cultures

Different cultures produce different flavours. EasiYo use three of the main bacteria that are used in yogurt production. A lot of yogurts just use two strains of bacteria. If you have a natural yogurt you like then use it as a starter (2 table spoons per litre). For it to be effective it must be a live yogurt and should be unflavoured.

A final note on yogurt making

There are many factors in yogurt making so its good to record these and the final taste. Things to take notice of are

- Milk used
- Culture used
- Milk max temperature eg 85C for 30 minutes
- Time taken to cool the milk to 44C. (You also may want to note if you stir the milk much as stirring may keep it homogenised and avoid yogurt separating into curds)
- Milk temperature when the culture was added. (49C or above will kill the yogurt bacteria. 44C-38C is the ideal fermentation range. Below 38C may not be ideal but may be worth a try. Freezing the starter culture will kill the yogurt making bacteria unless its freeze dried.)
- Time it is allowed to ferment. The longer you leave it the more tart it can get. Professionals know exactly when it is right by the acidity level. I guess we can know by taste.
- Was the cap air tight or not. The bacteria work differently in the presence of air so either way may be better for you. I have only tried using a sealed Thermos.

I have made some great yogurts and eat them as is. Adding jam is a popular choice and makes it a bit thicker. Using the 1.2 Litre Thermos is now resulting in a repeatable and very nice yogurt. A smaller Thermos may lose heat to quickly and a larger one would make too much for my needs. I will continue to vary the above factors to zero in on the best combination. If you do like fruit flavoured yogurt over natural yogurt then add jam, that is what the professional do. Pete added a jam making tab to his free calculator. So if you want to make you own jam see. <http://www.yobrew.co.uk/calculators.php>

Nowt to do with brewing

Tasked with the job of taking my two daughters out all day and prepare a picnic style meal for their lunch I got out my 1.2 Litre food Thermos. In went 300ml of uncooked uncle ben's rice. Then in went 500ml of boiling water. Then in went just cooked and piping hot Swedish meat balls (they have no sauce). Screw down the cap and off we go. That was easy. Lunch time and the rice has expanded and is fully cooked. The meat balls sit nicely on top. Piping hot rice and meat balls all round. I should point out I preheat the thermos to ensure I am adding the items to an already hot thermos.

Before this success I had experimented with putting boiled rice straight into the pre-heated Thermos but the rice did not keep hot. The other thing to note is the rice is not evenly humid, at the top it is fluffy and dry-ish, the way I like it. In the middle it is fluffy but damper, just the way the youngest likes it. At the base it is wet-ish, the way the oldest daughter loves it.

Since the above two articles both mention my 1.2 Litre Thermos I should mention where I got it from. Well I studied a load of food flasks. Many were a lot more expensive but this one is just right for me. Keeps hot things hot for quite a while. Certainly as good or better than the others I studied. I shopped around on the net but was still undecided on what to get so I went to John Lewis who had an extensive range of flasks for me to see in the flesh. The 1.2 Thermos was just right and John Lewis were cheaper than any of the on-line sellers. Below is a link if you want to get it on-line from Amazon but I would recommend a visit to John Lewis, they may even be cheaper.

[Thermos originals Multi Purpose food and drink Stainless Steel Flask 1.2L](#)



CHRISTMAS BREWING

By Peter Laycock

Once again the dreaded "retail opportunity" called Christmas is looming upon us (to some it used to a religious festival but to me, Christmas never seems more than 6 months away & lasts 4 months). Unfortunately this gives us little time to sort out the Christmas booze, I am of course, speaking of home-brewed beers & wines etcetera.



The end of December can be a depressing time, so why not try some special brews? (As opposed to "**Special Brew**"! Ugh!). Towards this time of year, home brew shops sell dedicated Christmas beer kits, but no dedicated wine kits, the beer can be under-whelming but you cannot go far wrong with the Belgian style brews. Irish Stout is always welcome at this time of the year, I've tried several types, all were very good (better than the standard **Guinness** of course - given the chance to mature), but my personal favourite is the relatively cheap **Brewmaker Irish Velvet Dark Stout**.

If you brew a kit before November it could be ready, possibly by Christmas. But, however, stronger & more complex beers can take much longer to mature. I like to start my "Christmas Specials" well before June, which is when I started (2008) my "**Olde Wig Bender**". By Christmas it was superb. A year later it was even better, getting spicier as the beer level went down, a little sip took you on a "flavour journey" with a long mouth-puckering finish. Unfortunately I had none of this beer left for December 2010.

OLDE WIG BENDER

An XXXXXstmas ale. BUT NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS!

Munton's Spraymalt Light	2000g		Calc.
Crushed Crystal	190g	O.G. (Excluding primer)	1083 (1087 with primer)
Roast Barley	75g	F.G.	1014 (1013 with primer)
Sugar	400g	Alc. % (Including primer)	10
Priming sugar g/litre	6.3g (I used Demerara)	Initial volume litres	11
Fuggles (4.5% - H. Grown)	32g	Bitterness EBU	55
Goldings (5.3%)	13.5g	Colour EBC	100
Mixed spice (optional)	4 tsp	Suggested drinking temp. °C	10-13
(Schwartz used - Cinnamon, Coriander seed, Caraway, Nutmeg, Ginger & Cloves.)			
A good ale yeast			

I used the [YoBrew Beer & Wine Calculators](#) ("Extract Calc." Method "2"), in which the hops are boiled with just the crystal malt & roast barley. The malt extract & sugar are added directly to the fermenter, the hops etc. are sieved on to them. The boil is 30 mins for 4.5 litres of water & the mixed spice (if used) is added about 10-15 mins from the end of the boil.

WINE

As I mentioned previously, dedicated Christmas wine kits/wine recipes do not appear to exist. Well, I'm going to change that!

CHRISTMAS WINE

A simple wine but very pleasing, very fruity with a fairly high alcohol content. The fermentation may produce lots of argols & the maturation even more, but don't worry, it is the superfluous tartaric acid settling out. Best served WITHOUT FOOD as it only detracts from the wine.

Red grape juice (15.6g sugar/100ml)	3 litre	Calculations (4.85 litres original vol.):-	
Tin black cherries (pitted - 10.4g sugar/100g)	425g	O.G.	1094
Sugar	700g	F.G.	993
Pectic enzyme	1 tsp	Alc. %	13.7
Bentonite	1 tsp	Final acidity	0.68
Yeast nutrient	½ tsp	Tannin %	0.13
Wine yeast.			

Dissolve the sugar in about 470ml hot water, this makes about 875ml sugar solution. When cool, mix with 2 litres of grape juice in a demijohn. Add the enzyme, Bentonite & yeast nutrient. Make up to about 3 litres & add the yeast. When the gravity falls to between say 1010 & 1020 add the rest of the ingredients. Ferment to dryness.

After fining (if used)/racking, bulk mature for three months before bottling. The wine may be sweetened prior to serving & any sediment remaining in the bottom of the bottle may be utilized as a late addition to the next day's gravy.

PETE'S PINK GINGER WINE

This wine ideal for cold winter nights with a subtle spicy flavour but it needs at least 15 months to mature. Despite the name, my wine turned out to be a pale nectarine colour but "PETE'S PALE NECTARINE COLOURED GINGER WINE" just doesn't have that "ring" to it.

Apple juice (11g sugar/100ml)	2 litre	Calculations (4.7 litres original vol.):-	
Red grape juice (15.6g sugar/100ml)	1 litre	O.G.	1098
Root ginger	150g	F.G.	992 (1004 after sweetening)
Sugar	850g + 150g for sweetening	Alc. %	14.3
Cinnamon	1 tsp	Final acidity	0.59
Mixed spice (Schwartz used - Cinnamon, Coriander seed, Caraway, Nutmeg, Ginger & Cloves.)	1 tsp	Tannin %	0.04
Pectic enzyme			
Bentonite	1 tsp		
Yeast nutrient	1 tsp		
Wine yeast.	½ tsp		

MULLED WINE (GLÜHWEIN) & CIDERS



At Christmas time many people associate wines & ciders, perhaps some include beers, with mulls (personally I think the spoil a good

drink). These are available as commercial sachets, typically containing a blend of crushed spices including coriander seed, allspice, cloves & nutmeg.

Here are four simple recipes to make your own using a bottle (750ml) red wine: -

2 sticks cinnamon	100g Demerara sugar	85g Demerara sugar	2 cardamom pods
4 whole cloves	2 tsp ground cinnamon	1 tsp ground ginger	6 whole cloves
½ tsp grated nutmeg	1 tsp ground cloves	½ tsp ground nutmeg	6 allspice berries
Zest of 1 orange or lemon	1 tsp dried ground orange peel	1 cinnamon stick	6 whole black peppercorns
	1 tsp ground allspice		1 cinnamon stick plus 1 per glass for garnish (optional)
	½ tsp ground nutmeg		

With the exception of the wine, combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan. Heat, (stirring until any sugar dissolves) & then bring to a gentle boil. Turn the heat off for about 15 minutes so that the ingredients infuse into the liquid. Add the wine & turn on the heat, apply gently for a few minutes - DO NOT BOIL, otherwise the alcohol will evaporate. Sieve & serve hot in (pre-heated) wine glasses.

Other ingredients may include sliced apples/oranges, apple/orange juice, 150ml brandy, a star anise, a vanilla bean or ¼ of a teaspoon vanilla extract, 1-2 teaspoon of finely grated fresh root ginger, 1-2 Juniper berries, 1 (100mm or so) sprig of rosemary, a couple bay leaves etc.

One word of advice, watch those cloves, some people (like me) may find that their taste is over-powering. Oh, by the way, pick the worst wine you have, nobody will notice! (All right, if the wine has turned to vinegar someone might just notice! Just bung in a couple more cloves.)

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS



Normally on my Birthday & at Christmas I receive a dozen socks (6 pairs) which I'm very happy with. Sometimes I get a CD which never gets played or some expensive beer with a "humorous" name that is best poured down the toilet (cuts the middle man/woman out).

An ideal present to give any beer lover is the "**Great Beer Guide**" by the late lamented Michael Jackson (no, not the "gloved one"). It contains details of how to pour & review beers, with superb pictures of how different beers look & their ideal drinking temperatures. I borrowed the copy from our library so many times that my (occasionally) wonderful wife finally bought me a copy as a Christmas present. When I received mine it only cost a tenner but it has doubled in price since then! Published by Dorling Kindersley.

(You could always print this page & leave it lying around as a hint.)

Now, what I really could appreciate as a Christmas present is some hops, like East Kent Goldings (EKG) for instance, or may be some Saaz & possibly some dry or wet malt extract. I could spend a quiet few happy hours with my [YoBrew Beer Calculators](#), imagining how the different brews will taste. Alternately a cheap wine or beer kit would do (see the [YoBrew kit reviews](#)). Now they would make the perfect Christmas present (but don't forget the socks!).



AND FINALLY

Don't forget Kids; leave a mince pie & a nice little something for Santa to drink on Christmas Eve! (Use Dad's favourite tippie, he *shouldn't* mind.)

(We have no sponsors or advertisers but felt the back cover would look good with an advertisements style so we put this picture in.)

