

CALIFORNIA COMMON

HISTORY:

This style dates back to the mid 19th century California Gold Rush. Brewers who came west were accustomed to brewing lager style beers . The ice that was used for cooling fermentation and for aging these beers wasn't available in the warmer California climate so brewers adapted to different conditions by fermenting these lagers at the ambient temperatures. To cool the wort to fermentation temperatures brewers used flat shallow pans to allow more surface area and hence quicker cooling through convection. The climate in San Francisco and surrounding Bay areas was cool enough to get wort temperatures down to the lower end of ale fermentation temperatures (low 60's).

These beers were made using available ingredients of the time and were served after a short ageing period due to lack of refrigeration .

More in - depth historical information is available in Ray Daniels' book " Designing Great Beers " .

A NOTE ABOUT THIS STYLE

Today there are only a few beers of this style produced commercially. Anchor Steam Is the most widely known of these. In competitions judges compare entries to Steam but originally almost any style of lager would have been adapted to this brewing technique. We'll explore one type of recipe but really anything could be adapted to fermenting in this manner.

TECHNIQUE

GRIST

Pretty simple grain bill really....

American Pale Ale or Two-row malt 90%

Crystal Malt (10°, 20°, or 40° L) 10%

Many brewers add small amounts of character malts such as aromatic, Victory, Munich or pale chocolate which are all worth playing around with.

HOPS

Originally hops would have been a traditional American hop such as Cluster. Northern Brewer is the hop that Anchor Brewing uses and seems to be what judges expect.....

I'd recommend additions for boil (60 minutes), flavor(20-30 minutes) , aroma(1-2 minutes)

YEAST

This is one of the most important components of this beer style to achieve the right flavor and aroma profiles.

Recommended: White Labs WLP810 or Wyeast 2112 and make a 2L starter or pitch a couple of yeast packs/ vials and aerate well.

WATER

The water in the Bay Area is typically pretty low in mineral content and will work well with this beer style as-is. I would recommend filtering to remove chlorine/chloramine though.

MASH

pH of 5 -5.8

- A single step infusion mash at between 150° and 154° works well for this style though I prefer a step mash with rests at 117-120° ;145-149°; & 157-159°.
- Mash for 60-90 minutes

- Mash out and sparge at 168° for 45-60 minutes (don't collect sparge if gravity is below 1.010)

BOIL

A 60 minute boil is adequate though 90 minutes will help precipitate tannins and proteins better as well as providing more kettle caramelization .

FERMENTATION

A cool fermentation temp is typical for this style (60-62° F) to keep ester production minimal.

Cold conditioning or fining will assist in clarifying beer.

CARBONATION

Carbonate with corn sugar ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup per 5 gallons when bottling or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup in keg) or force carbonate to 2-2.5 volumes.

DRINK AND ENJOY !

FOR EXTRACT BREWERS

Check out recipe in “ Brewing Classic Styles” by Jamil Zainascheff & John Palmer and suggestions in Ray Daniels’ “Designing Great Beers”