



Official Newsletter of Forest City
Brewers
December Edition

Next Meeting will be held at **Prairie Street Brewing
Company**

Wednesday, January 7th, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Beer Trivia Question

George Washington was a known beer lover. In the New York Public Library you can find a recipe he hand wrote describing the process to make which beer?

HOW TO CONTACT FOREST CITY BREWERS

[Homepage: Forest City Brewers](#)

forestcitybrewers@gmail.com

[Facebook: Forest City Brewers](#)

Forest City Brewers

Welcome to the Forest City Brewers!!

**NOW TAKING 2026 MEMBERSHIP DUES!
\$35 – SINGLE // \$50-CO-HABITATION**

December Meeting Notes

President, Scott Walker, started off the meeting welcoming everyone. There were three new members introduced with one of them bringing a beer for the Open table. We Welcome all new members to the club!!!!

Next, we talked about the past / upcoming events for the Forest City Brewers. There are upcoming beer events such as Fondy Beer Fest (Fond Du Lac, WI) and FCB Winter/Holiday Party and Dinner.

Scott reminded all members that 2026 memberships can be renewed. Membership payments are accepted at the meeting or by visiting the FCB website. Scott explained the styles for the 2026 monthly competitions. See this newsletter and the website for the monthly categories. Styles were based on the 2021 BJCP guidelines and were chosen by the survey / member choices.

Treasurer, Jerry provided the FCB's current financial report and how our clubs monies were spent for 2025. The FCB account is staying in the black.

Brewer of the Year will be announced at the January meeting, hope to see you all there!!!



Monthly Style Table Competition

December Style Table – Brewer's Choice, Stout

1st Place

Lesley Davis – Irish Extra Sout

2nd Place

Ken Wallyn – Oatmeal Raisin Cookie Stout

3rd Place

Mike Sears – Oatmeal Stout

Honorable Mention

Scott Walker – Imperial Stout Lager

December Open Table

1st Place

Mark Davis – BBA Imperial Chocolate Stout

2nd Place

Jerry Machula – Winter Seasonal/Pumpkin Ale

3rd Place-Tie

Ryan Begmann – English Porter

Steve Cleland – Scottish Ale

Honorable Mention

Dave Benson – Helles Doppelbock

Current Point Standings

<https://forestcitybrewers.us/index.php/contest-points/>

*Please remember to preregister your beers for the Brewer of the Year contest by registering your beer thru the Forest City Brewers web page.

<https://forestcitybrewers.us/index.php/pre-register/>

Upcoming Competition Styles

January 2026: 33A – Wood Aged Beer

February 2026: Brown Ale - English & American

March 2026: Same Recipe - Wheat - All Grain & Extract Kit

April 2026: Fruited Sour

May 2026: Helles Bock

June 2026: Low to No ABV Beer (0%-2%)

July 2026: IPA - Any Style

UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING TASTERS' GUILD

December Tasters Guild will be at
The Music Box
December 11th, 2025 6 – 9 pm

There will be no Tasters Guild for January due to the Winter/ Holiday Party.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

Winter/Holiday Party

When: January 17th 3pm – 8p

Where: Shooters Tap room 4007 E State St,
Rockford, IL

As always, the club will be purchasing all the food for the main course, but members are encouraged (not required) to bring a side dish to pass. The main dish is still TBD, but we'll be ordering from the Shooter's kitchen.

Homebrew and commercial beer are welcomed and encouraged to bring to share. Shooters also has a full bar and extensive tap list as well. This is a paid members only event, plus 1 guest.



Fondy Brewfest 2026

When: February 7th, 2026 4 – 7:30 pm

Where: Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds-Expo Center
520 Fond du Lac Avenue
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

And, this year again, we've themed it... for 2026, in celebration of our country's 250th birthday, the theme is "Red White & Brews!" Expect to see folks sporting patriotic gear and an Uncle Sam or Betsy Ross in the crowd.

Brewers for this event will be provided \$50 to offset the hotel cost. The hotel in Fond du Lac of choice is Hotel Retlaw and in the past has provided a discount, just mention you are a brewer for Fondy Brew Fest.

[FONDY BREW FEST 2026](#)

TASTERS GUILD



November's Tasters guild was held at Pig Minds Brewing - 4080 Steele Dr, Machesney Park, IL, United States, Thanks to everyone that made this a great night to gather, consume fabulous concoctions, share some beers and share some great stories



This month's Tasters guild was held at The Music Box located at 218 E State St, Rockford, IL 61104 on Wednesday December 11th, 6 pm – 9pm. It was great to see everyone and check out a new place!!!

And the Answer Is...

Small beer, they traditionally have an alcohol percentage of 0.5% to 2.8%.

NEW FOREST CITY DISCOUNTS

We have a new **DISCOUNT** being offered by Welders Supply Company located 3485 Brick Dr, Rockford, IL 779-208-4055

Forest City Brewers is being offered the opportunity to participate in Co2 tank **exchanges**. If you need Co2 Monday-Friday 7:30 AM till 4:30 PM, please stop by and give them a try.

- 5lb and 20lb tanks always available
- 2.5lb and 10lb tanks, please call-in advance to verify availability
- Co2 tanks are exchange only
- Just mention you are a member of "Forest City Brewers"
- Cash On Delivery – Pay when you exchange / pick-up

[Welders Supply Rockford Map Location \(Link\)](#)

The Music Box

We have another **NEW FCB DISCOUNT** being provided to us by The Music Box located 218 E State St, Rockford, IL 61104. This great place has an intimate live music venue offering comfy vibes, original music and affordable craft cocktails & beers. Some music shows are free and others require a ticket. FCB members are being offered a 10% discount. They offer a Happy Hour on Tues, Thurs & Friday with \$4 off house pour mixers and \$2 off signature cocktails, wine and beer. Please stop by downtown Rockford and immerse yourself in a cozy ambiance and enjoy some craft beverages and an engaging musical experience.

Famous Dave's

We have a new FCB **DISCOUNT** being offered by Famous Dave's located 3303 N Perryville Rd, Rockford, IL 61114 815-636-0300. We are being offered \$5 off your meal. Please stop by with the family and enjoy some good food.

Club News

The "Barrel" Project has been concluded and we have (2) 53 gallon whiskey barrels available for free to any member(s) that would be interested in one.

- Man cave decor
- Bar decor
- Crafting supplies
- DIY projects

CLASSIFIEDS

Do You have something you would like to sell or give away? Please let us know so we can post it for you!!!



Dunkel



American



Doppelbock



Helles



Czech Dark



German Pils



Vienna



Festbier



Schwarzbier



Märzen



Czech Pale



Maibock

Lagers

Brewing Beer with Wheat: Wheat Beers Decoded

You've mastered the art of barley, but have you ever taken a walk on the wheat side? If not, let's delve into the fascinating world of wheat beers and uncover what makes them so refreshingly unique.

Wheat, the fun-loving cousin in the grain family, brings a whole new dynamic to the beer-making process. It's like inviting a jazz musician to a classical concert; the result is a symphony of flavors that's both familiar and excitingly different. The magic of wheat lies in its chemical composition. It's packed with proteins, more so than its straight-laced sibling, barley. These proteins are the secret agents behind the unique characteristics of wheat beers. They're responsible for that creamy, full-bodied texture that slides down your throat smoother than a Sinatra ballad. Not to mention, they contribute to the formation of that thick, long-lasting head that's a signature of wheat beers.

As for the flavors, wheat has a light, crisp taste that's as refreshing as a cool breeze on a hot day. This is largely due to its terpene profile. Terpenes, the aromatic compounds that give plants their unique scents and flavors, in wheat contribute subtle citrus and floral notes. This is why wheat beers and a slice of orange go together like peanut butter and jelly.

But what about the ABV and why is it lower in wheat beer? The answer lies in the sugar content. Barley is the sugar daddy of grains, with more enzymes to convert starches into fermentable sugars. Wheat, on the other hand, is more of a sugar momma, with fewer enzymes, resulting in less sugar and a lower ABV.

So, how do you use wheat in your brews? It's all about balance. Wheat can add complexity and depth to the flavor profile, but too much can make your beer heavier than a Black Sabbath riff. The best practice is to use wheat as a supplement to barley, not a replacement. Play around with different grain combinations until you find the perfect blend.

Just as wheat beers are distinct, there are hop varieties that pair especially well with wheat beers. Traditional German and Czech hops, like Hallertau and Saaz, are known for their mild bitterness and floral, spicy aromas. They complement the light, crisp flavors of wheat perfectly.

So now that we have clarified how and why wheat beers are distinct, let's get technical on the brewing process. There are some things to account for during the mash and sparge. When it comes to wheat beers, these steps do have their own unique quirks.

First, let's talk about mashing. Because wheat has a higher protein content than barley, it can make the mash thicker and more prone to a stuck sparge. It's like trying to wade through a swimming pool filled with oatmeal. To avoid this, you might want to consider a protein rest during the mash. This step, done at a lower temperature (around 122°F or 50°C), helps break down the proteins and makes the mash less viscous.

Now, onto sparging. Because of the aforementioned high protein content, wheat beers can benefit from a batch sparge rather than a continuous sparge. This method involves adding all your sparge water at once, giving it a good stir, and then draining it off. It's a bit like making a giant pot of tea. This can help prevent a stuck sparge and ensure you extract all the delicious sugars from your grains.

Temperature is always a key player in the brewing process, and wheat beers are no exception. Wheat beers are often fermented at slightly higher temperatures than their barley counterparts. This is because the yeast strains used in wheat beers (like the classic German Weizen yeast) tend to produce more of their signature fruity and spicy flavors when fermented at warmer temperatures (around 68-72°F or 20-22°C).

So, there you have it! A few tweaks to your mash, sparge, and fermentation temperatures can make all the difference when brewing a wheat beer. In the spirit of marrying art and science, don your lab coat, put on your French beret, roll up your sleeves, and get brewing!