AUSTRALIAN HOME BREWING · SINCE 1968

Welcome to home brewing

Congratulations, you're a brewer now.

You've just joined a hobby that's been filling Aussie fridges for generations. In a few weeks you'll be opening a beer you made yourself, and handing one to a mate who won't believe it until you tell them. This guide takes you from the box to your first pour. Read it once before brew day, then keep it handy.

Three things that make great beer

1. **Use good quality ingredients**
   Real malt, fresh hops and the right yeast. Your beer can only be as good as what goes into it.

2. **The yeast makes the beer**
   Yeast shapes the style, the flavour and how your beer turns out. Use the yeast your recipe calls for.

3. **Keep fermentation in range**
   Never let your brew go above the recommended temperature for your yeast. For most ales that's 18 to 22°C.

Get those right and you'll brew clean, crisp, delicious beer you'll be proud of.

Watch the whole brew day, start to finish

Scan with your phone camera, or visit australianhomebrewing.com.au/pages/how-to-brew-your-first-batch

BEFORE YOU START

Get to know your gear

Depending on which kit you chose, your box includes:

- Fermenter, lid, airlock, tap, thermometer
- Capper and crown seals
- No-rinse sanitiser
- Your recipe kit and its recipe card
- Bottling valve
- Carbonation drops
- Hydrometer and test flask (some kits)

Pick your brew spot

Any room works, from a laundry to a spare room or cupboard, as long as it isn't exposed to heat or big swings in temperature. Keep it out of direct sun. If your spot runs cold in winter, a heater pad keeps things steady.

How much beer?

A 30L fermenter brews about 21 litres: around 55 or more 330mL stubbies, or 28 x 750mL longnecks. The Small Batch kit brews about 12 litres: around 30 or more 330mL stubbies, or 16 x 750mL longnecks.

Sanitising matters

Anything that touches your beer gets a sanitise first. Your gear is new, so on your first brew day a quick sanitise is all it needs: mix the no-rinse sanitiser as the label says, coat every surface, drain. No rinsing needed.

Tip for next time: clean your fermenter and gear as soon as you've finished bottling, with a brewing cleaner like Brewclean and a soft cloth (not a scourer). Then it's ready to go, and your next brew day starts with a light sanitise.

BREW DAY

Brew day in four steps

1. **Sanitise**
   Fermenter, lid, airlock, tap and spoon: everything that touches the beer.
2. **Make your wort**
   Follow the recipe card that came with your recipe kit. Every recipe is a little different, and some include a short boil on the stove, so go by the card.
3. **Top up and check the temperature**
   Top up with cold water to 21 litres (12 litres for the Small Batch kit) and stir well. Check the stick-on thermometer: as long as it reads 25°C or below, you're good to add the yeast. If you have a hydrometer, take your first reading now and write it down.
4. **Add the yeast**
   Sprinkle the yeast on top. Fit the lid, half fill the airlock with water and pop it in. Move the fermenter to your brew spot and keep it in the fermentation range for the yeast in your recipe: 18 to 22°C for most ales.

That's brew day done.

WEEK 1 TO 2

While it ferments

Within a day or two the airlock starts bubbling. That's the yeast converting the sugars from the malt into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Leave the lid on and allow fermentation to continue.

Watch for heat. Keep your brew inside the range for your yeast: 18 to 22°C for most ales. If it gets warmer than that, the yeast starts making flavours you don't want, and your beer won't be as good as it could be. **Cold is nothing to worry about.** It won't harm the taste: fermentation just slows down, and picks up again once the brew warms back into range. **Fermenting usually takes 1 to 2 weeks.**

YOUR HYDROMETER

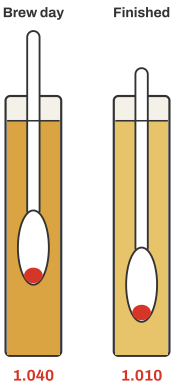
How you know it's finished

What is gravity? Gravity is how dense your beer is compared with water. Water reads 1.000. Sugar makes the wort denser, so on brew day your hydrometer floats higher and reads something like 1.040. As the yeast converts the sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide, the gravity drops.

Why it matters. Gravity tells you when fermentation has finished. Bottle too early and there's still sugar left to ferment, so it keeps fermenting in the bottle and builds up too much pressure: over-fizzy beer that gushes when you open it.

How to take a reading

1. Run a sample from the tap into the test flask until it's about three-quarters full.
2. Drop the hydrometer in and give it a gentle spin to knock off any bubbles.
3. Read the number at eye level, where the surface of the beer meets the scale.
4. Tip the sample out. Don't pour it back into the fermenter.



It's finished when you get the same reading twice, 24 to 48 hours apart.

A steady reading means the sugar levels are stable and no more fermentation is taking place. Every beer finishes a little differently, but expect a final gravity between 1.008 and 1.014 for most beers. Your recipe card gives the target for your beer.

Bonus: how strong is it? Take your final reading from your brew day reading and multiply by 131. **1.044 – 1.010 = 0.034 x 131 = about 4.5% ABV.**

Don't trust the airlock

It can go quiet before the beer is finished, especially in cooler weather. The hydrometer is the only way to know for sure.

No hydrometer?

Leave your brew for about 14 days. By then it's most likely finished and ready to bottle. A hydrometer takes the guesswork out, and it's worth adding for your next batch.

BOTTLING DAY

Fill, cap, stand them up

1. **Sanitise your bottles and caps**
   Glass crown-seal bottles only: screw-top bottles won't hold a cap.

2. **Add carbonation drops**
   One drop in each 330mL or 375mL stubby, two in each 750mL longneck. This is what gives your beer its fizz.

3. **Fill**
   Insert the bottling valve into the tap and push each bottle up onto it. Fill to the very top, then take the bottle off the valve: that leaves just the right space, about 3cm, at the top.

4. **Cap and stand them upright**
   Seal each bottle with a crown seal using your capper.

THE WAIT

It's worth it

WEEK 1

Room temperature. The yeast converts the sugar in the carbonation drops into carbon dioxide: secondary fermentation, right there in the bottle. That's your fizz.

AT LEAST 3 WEEKS

In the bottle in total. Store them somewhere cool and dark. The longer you leave them, the better the beer gets.

FRIDGE

Only chill what you'll drink. Beer doesn't age or improve in the fridge, so let the rest keep maturing.

Your first pour

Chill it, then pour gently into a clean glass in one smooth go. Leave the last centimetre in the bottle: that's yeast, and it's meant to be there. Then take a sip. You made that. Stash a few away each batch to taste how much better they get.

Don't panic if...

The airlock isn't bubbling.
The lid might not be sealed tight. Check with your hydrometer.

It tastes a bit young at three weeks.
Give it another week or two. It keeps getting better.

There's sediment in the bottles.
That's yeast, and it's normal. Pour gently and leave it behind.

Your brew spot gets cold.
Fermentation just slows down. It picks up again as it warms up; a heater pad helps.

Stuck on anything? Ask us. We've been helping Aussies brew since 1968, and there's no such thing as a silly question. Get in touch through our website, or come and see us in store. Ready for batch two? Your gear lasts for years: just add a new recipe kit.

Australian Home Brewing · 24 Eskay Rd, Oakleigh South VIC 3167

australianhomebrewing.com.au