

Yeast Options for Craft Brewing

Dried Yeast

The range and types of dried yeast strains available in small packs have certainly increased during the past few years and cover many of the popular styles that we brew. For example we now have strains suitable for Wheat Beers, Saisons, Lagers and American styles as well of course our usual English beers.

Sources of Dried Yeast:

Currently there are three manufacturers of dried brewing yeasts, these are Fermentis, (*Safale / Safbrew*) Lallemand (*Danstar*) and Mauri. (*Mauribrew*) If you purchase dried brewing yeast with labels showing other than the above they are likely to have been repackaged from bulk packs and may even be a blend of different strains.

Storage and using Dried Yeast:

Yeast sachets should ideally be stored in the fridge where the deterioration rate (*death of cells*) can be kept to below 5% a year. This contrasts with storing sachets at room temperature where losses can be as high as 25% for the same period.

Sachets should ideally be re-hydrated according the instructions on the sachet or website of the makers. Re-hydrated yeast according to the makers has a higher viability rate than if pitched directly into wort, however many craft brewers have had excellent results by just adding the sachet directly to the cooled wort.

Some Advantages of using Dried Yeast:

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| Cost | * Cheaper than liquid yeasts when used on a “once off” basis. |
| Convenience | * No advance preparation needed |
| Consistency | * Repeatable results easy to achieve |

Disadvantages

- Lower gravity English style beers may taste slightly bland and lack complexity of flavour when compared with a suitable liquid strain.

Liquid Yeast

Sources of Liquid Yeast

Cultures suitable for most styles of beer are available from the following manufacturers.

Wyeast: These are available via several dealers here and come in a foil “smack-pack” which needs to be activated before use according to the instructions.

White Labs: These are supplied in heavy duty plastic vials.

Brewlabs: Supplied on agar slants which require propagation using aseptic techniques.

Bottle conditioned beer: This technique also requires aseptic techniques with a two stage propagation.

Using Liquid Yeast

If you're planning to use Wyeast or White Labs products it is strongly recommended that you prepare a 1 – 2 Litre starter a day or two in advance of your brewing session. Some brewers pitch these direct however I view this as risky, a starter prepared in advance is a far better option.

Some advantages of Liquid yeast.

- A far wider range is available
- Strains can be chosen with specific character in mind (such as fruity esters or neutral) and with varying fermentation performance such as suitability for top-cropping.

Some disadvantages of Liquid yeast

- More expensive if not re-used or propagated
- Time and expense in preparing a starter
- Consistency not always easy to achieve if yeast is re-used and propagated further

Detailed information relating to the propagation and care of yeast can be found on the MCB website under Brewing Topics / Leicester Yeast Day Notes FAQ.

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