

# THE HOW-TO OF HOME BREW

If you've always wanted to try your hand at making beer but weren't sure how to do it, you won't need to knock down a wall for a separate brewery.

Beginning brewers can start with a brewing kit. Kits are available in Lincoln at Kirk's Brew and Gifts, at 1150 Cornhusker Highway, and in Omaha at Fermenter's Supply, 8410 K Plaza. The equipment kits run about \$46. Ingredient kits run from \$11 to \$24. The kits are about as big as a five-gallon bucket -- which is how much beer the kits can make.

Equipment kits at Kirk's also come with a brewmaster's bible: "The Joy of Homebrew", by Charlie Papazian, president of the Homebrewer's Association. Kirk's sells about 200 kits a year.

Kirk Weidner, owner of Kirk's Brew and Gifts, said that after buying the pre packet kit of equipment, you'll need

the key ingredients of malt, hops, yeast and primary sugar. He said brewers can add other ingredients -- such as toasted barley, fruit, spices and different types of yeast.

"Sky's the limit as far as how you influence the taste of a beer," he said.

Before making the beer, Weidner advised to make sure to sanitize everything -- especially the siphon hose and bottle caps -- because contamination can ruin a batch of beer "pretty quickly."

"The best comparison of home-made beer taste is to the beer made at Crane River's brewpub, which is not filtered," Weidner said. "Obviously, it's nothing like Anheuser-Busch would make," he said. Though you won't be ready to rival Anheuser-Busch or Coors, you will have a small, private stock of brew to call your own."

## WHAT YOU NEED

### Brewkettle

A pot that holds at least 3 gallons. It's used for boiling your wort.



### Long-Handled Spoon

Used for stirring.



### Bottles

You will need about 50, 12 oz. bottles or enough bottles, in any other size, to fill the same volume. Brown or green glass bottles are necessary.

### Unscented Household Bleach

Diluted bleach is used to sterilize all beer making equipment. Clean equipment is very important.

### Primary Fermenter

The primary fermenter is used to hold the wort as it ferments. [A plastic bucket with a lid or a large glass bottle, it must be able to hold at least 6 gallons.]



### Bottling Bucket

Often a plastic bucket with a lid, it must be able to hold at least 5 gallons.

### Fermentation Lock

Also called an airlock it keeps air out of the primary fermenter while letting carbon dioxide escape.

### Siphon Hose

Plastic tubing of about 6 feet. It is used for transferring the beer.

### Bottle Capper & Caps

There are many types of bottle cappers that will work, the only difference is the price, and ease of use. As for bottle caps, they must be new, you'll need about 50.



### Malt Extract Syrup

Malt extract syrup is made from barley and has a lot of natural sugar in it. Brewing yeast eats the sugar, and produces alcohol and carbon dioxide.

### Water

A clear liquid that can be attained from your kitchen sink.

### Hops

Hops are flowers with a bitter flavor. These can be purchased in a pellet form of which you will need 1 ounce.

### Alc Yeast

Dehydrated yeast sold in packets. You'll need about two packets.

### Corn Sugar

You need only 3/4 cup, or 4 ounces.

## 1.

### Boiling

- Soak the two cans of malt extract syrup in hot water for at least 20 minutes, and bring 1 1/2 gallons of water to a boil in your brewkettle.
- Remove the kettle from heat, add the malt extract to the water. Stir until it's all dissolved.
- Boil the mixture, called wort, for at least 30 minutes. Five or 10 minutes before you are finished boiling, add the hop pellets.



## What You Do

## 2.

### Sanitizing

- While you are boiling, sanitize your primary fermenter using a solution of 1 oz. of bleach to 1 gallon of water. Clean all surfaces thoroughly with solution and rinse. From this point on, everything that comes in contact with the beer must be sanitized. This is very important because contamination can cause a bad taste in your beer.
- Fill your fermenter with 3 gallons of water, and cover with a clean lid.



## 3.

### Cooling and Pitching

- When you are finished boiling, carefully pour all the wort into your water-filled fermenter. Put lid on tightly.
- When the wort has cooled to near room temperature, follow the instructions on the yeast packet for rehydrating the yeast, open the lid and pour the yeast into the wort. (This is called pitching your yeast.) Cover again and attach your fermentation lock. Add water to fill the airlock halfway.



## 4.

### Fermenting

- Fermenting should start within 24 hours, but it could take longer. A sign of fermentation is the bubbling of carbon dioxide through the fermentation lock. The bubbling should be rapid and vigorous for a couple of days and then gradually slow down. Keep the beer at room temperature, protected from light. Fourteen days after fermentation has begun, you're ready to bottle.



## 5.

### Bottling

- Dissolve 3/4 cup of corn sugar in a cup of water. Boil for 10 minutes.
- Put your fermenter of beer on the counter and your bottling bucket on the floor. Pour the sugar solution into the bottling bucket, and then siphon the beer from the fermenter leaving the sediment behind. Do this carefully so not to splash.
- Put the bottling bucket on the counter and siphon the beer into each bottle.



## 6.

### Capping and Tasting

- Make sure that the bottles are sanitized by soaking them in a solution of 1 or 2 ounces of bleach to 1 gallon of water. After the bottles are filled, use your capper to apply the caps.
- Store your bottles in a cool, dark place. Wait at least two weeks before drinking. Finally, you're done! It's time to sit back with some friends and crack open a few home-brews. Hopefully, you like your beer.



DN GRAPHIC BY AARON STECKELBERG

SOURCE: AMERICAN HOMEBREWERS ASSOCIATION

GRAPHIC INTENDED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY