

# A hefeweizen before noon may help with digestion

By Eric Asimov, New York Times

In the heat of a waning summer, when half the world seems to have taken off on vacation, a late-morning glass of wheat beer can be another sort of pleasurable departure. In Bavaria, home of the hefeweizen style of wheat beer, such refreshment is an essential component of the *brotzeit*, or second breakfast.

The *brotzeit* may consist of a little cheese and bread, or even better, a fresh pretzel; perhaps veal sausage; some long white radishes; and a hefeweizen.

In German, hefeweizen means yeast wheat, so called because the beer is traditionally unfiltered, leaving particles of yeast sediment to turn the golden beer cloudy and turbid. It may be this suggestion of solidity that leads Germans to occasionally refer to hefeweizen as bottled bread.

Americans might look askance at a pre-noon glass of beer, but hefeweizen is light, crisp, fairly low in alcohol, undeniably refreshing and, the Germans believe, good for digestion.

No matter what time of day, however, the hefeweizen style has become popular with American consumers, whose own contribution to the tradition has been to serve the beer with a wedge of lemon on the rim of the glass, dipping into what ought to be a foamy, crenelated head.

American brewers, too, are drawn to hefeweizen, which is but one distinctive style among many German wheat beers. Kristalweizen is similar to hefeweizen, except it has been filtered, so it is crystal clear. Berliner weisse is pleasingly tart and sour; dunkelweizen is a darker version of hefeweizen; weizenbock is darker and more powerful.

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