

Suggested Topics for Homebrew Con 2021

The suggestions below have been outlined by the Seminar Subcommittee for Homebrew Con 2021. The topics suggested are not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a guide to potential speakers to some of the top priority topics that the committee would like to see presented on at this year's event. Hopeful speakers are welcome to submit proposals beyond the scope of these suggestions but are encouraged to keep them in mind when planning their proposal content.

Beer Styles

The BJCP recognizes over 130 distinct beer styles in its beer guidelines, along with countless others not in the guidelines. Each style has a unique history and characteristics and is brewed using specific brewing processes and techniques. The seminars in this track will highlight individual beer styles and the techniques used to brew them (and why).

- How styles emerge (Ex: Kolsch/Alt, Regional International Ales [Argentina, Italian, New Zealand, Brazilian, etc.])
- Compare and contrast of similar styles
- Differentiating general history from beer history
- Emerging styles (Ex: pastry stouts/ fruit "slushies", Winter Warmers, etc.)
- How to decide where your beer goes in a competition
- Saison
- Bocks (history, sub-styles, brewing requirements, etc.)
- How taxes, water chemistry, wars, technology and/or climate defined beer styles
- Extinct (or nearly extinct) Styles
- Historic beers (Ex: Stein Bier, Fraoch, Herbal, Wiccan ales, Egyptian ales)
- Lager fundamentals
- Best ways to educate yourself about a style -
- Beer Vocabulary and what it all means ASBC (anyone?)
- Belgian Styles (in general) – challenge to brew, make it taste like it's from Belgium
- How to brew authentic English Pub Ale
- Fresh Hop Beers
- Mead styles (Ex: Polish, historical meads, other)
- How to achieve the style you are looking for (Expectations of what you want vs. what the style calls for)
- How new innovations in ingredients are changing beer styles

Beyond Beer

Fermentation can go beyond just beer and plays an impactful role in a variety of foods and beverages outside of beer. These seminars will focus on any non-beer fermentation product including mead, cider, sake, perry, cheese, bread, kombucha, kimchi, etc.

- Regional mead/cider panel discussing differences
- Uses of yeast for mead
- Spent grain for baking
- Yeast varieties for baking
- Pickles and pickled items (onions, garlic, peppers, etc.)
- Home fermentation possibilities (cheese, sauerkraut, kombucha, etc.)
- How to handle cider/mead/wine after fermentation
- How to organize a panel for tannins/acids and make adjustments post-fermentation
- Strange fermentations (Gatorade, m&ms, Cheetos, churros, etc.)
- Braggot
- Hard Seltzer
- Lower alcohol meads/Hydromels

Brewing Process

The brewing process track covers all the processes included in crafting homebrew – from Brew in a Bag, decoction mashing, barrel aging, fermentation, and filtration, to cellaring, packaging, cleaning and sanitation.

- Best ways to control your fermentation with Kviek
- Temperature control for lagers and ales
- Review of different types of brewing systems (extract, Brew in a Bag, multi-vessel, automation)
 - Discuss pros and cons of cost, efficiency, batch size, etc.
- Low Oxygen Brewing pros and cons
- Overrated vs. underrated issues in homebrewing (e.g. water, low oxygen brewing, removing chlorophenols, yeast health, oxidation, etc.).
- Fermentation Under Pressure (methods, equipment, ingredients, etc.)
- Sparge methods in relation to styles and brew systems – balancing efficiency and stuck mash
- Mastering the Mash and a look at the different variables (grain crush, time, temperature, water to grain ratio, system, pH, lautering method/time, etc.). Doug Brown + Jocelyn
- Pros/cons of different hop additions (First wort, cold dry hopping, bittering, flavor, aroma, during fermentation, dry hopping, randaizing, etc.)
- Hop Creep
- Basics of the brewing process.
- How to kettle sour beer
- Common off-flavors, and how to identify and prevent them during the brewing process
- Basic and Low Cost Brewing Set-up
- Balancing CO2 and Draught Lines.
- How to brew multiple styles from the same wort/brew day

Clubs, Community, Competitions

Running a club or competitions is about more than just holding a meeting or setting a date. Things like finance, planning, logistics, human resources, training, and management are all just as important to keep your club or competition healthy. Stay on top of the latest trends and learn best practices for clubs and competitions.

Pandemic Specific

- How to continue BJCP training/exams during a pandemic.
- Alternative club meeting delivery formats

Community Specific:

- Celebrating and encouraging diversity in the club community
- How to do outreach and recruit members from BIPOC communities
- Top 10 ways to have a highly functional club
- Top 10 ways to create inclusion and diversity
- Why clubs should build relationships with local breweries, distributors, and beer-selling establishments.
- Using social media to keep current and prospective members informed and engaged
- Social Brewing – introducing others to the hobby

Competition Specific:

- Competition Software Demos
- Running a competition best practice (possible roundtable/panel)

Clubs Specific:

- How to add money to the club bank account
- How to deal with conflict or lack of engagement in a club
- How to provide options for club members at all levels (education, participation, feedback)
- Best practices on how to run a homebrew club (panel of different sized and aged clubs)
 - Effective leadership; using social media to engage with members; running club events; etc.
- How to start a homebrew club
- How to build a strong inter-club community and engage in multi-club activities

Do It Yourself

So much of the spirit of homebrewing is doing things yourself. Are you building a tiered brewing system, a kegerator, a full basement bar, or a cool gadget to bring up your brewing efficiency? This track serves the DIY homebrewer looking to get into the nitty-gritty of their brewing gear and serving equipment.

- Building a Keezer/Jockey Box (size, taps, finishings, tools, skillsets, materials, etc., cost)
- How to repurpose homebrew equipment (and vice versa)
- Homebrew Hacks (smart electric plugs, smart speakers, automation, etc.)

- Basic brewing setups on the cheap
- Acquiring and building a homebrewing toolbox (portable to-go tool box too)
- Rapid fire tip session (30 min, 30 tips)
- Brewing with disabilities – ways to make it more accessible.
- Building a glycol system.
- Building a lager box/fermentation chamber

Going Pro

Looking to take your homebrew professional? These presentations will focus on what it takes to go from brewing on your homebrew set up to successfully opening up a brewery.

- Packaging for small breweries
- Getting your foot in the door (tips for resume writing and interviewing, resources/opportunities for education, review of different roles in a brewery)
- Economy of Scale in Beer Production for New Pro Brewers
- Going pro roundtable (Feature a Q&A, share tips, and stories)

Ingredients & Supplies

We all know the basic ingredients in brewing beer: barley, hops, water, yeast. While those are the building blocks of great beer, other ingredients such as spices, vegetables, adjuncts, and other additives continue to expand creative homebrewing. Attend these seminars to learn all things ingredients.

- Ingredient sensory (needs to be applicable to virtual experience if needed)
- Ways to capture and sustain yeast
- Brewing with other grains like rice, sorghum, etc.
- Gluten-free brewing
- Impact of hop terroir
- Analysis of different craft malts
- Brewing with herbs and other foraged ingredients
- Understanding hop creep
- Brewing with fresh hops
- Different hopping methods
- How to not be overwhelmed with all the choices of brewing ingredients
- Practical guide to yeast management
- How to not make Water chemistry overwhelming
- Hazy yeast strains (types, pitch rates, aeration, alcohol tolerance, flocculation, strains differ based on malt/hop bills)
- Brewing with lager yeast
- Use of extracts, flavorings, and real ingredients to achieve desired flavors in adjunct beers
- Barley and malt research: breeding, contribution to beer flavor, agronomics, etc.

Other/Misc.

Any seminar that does not fit into one of the other categories may be submitted here. This is an expansive category that may encompass a wide range of topics and discussions.

- How to responsibly drink beer and stay healthy
- Historic brewing
- How to determine ABV/Carbs/Calories in homebrew
- Going Green – methods/equipment to help reduce power/water/time requirements during brew day
- Low-alcoholic beer

Recipe Formulation & Quality

Quality management for homebrewers is important for making great beer. The seminars in this track will cover recipe formulation, maintaining quality in all aspects of brewing, best practices for serving, and any other pertinent seminar topic that falls within this category.

- Ways to carbonate beyond using a CO2 canister
- Best ways to tweak a recipe
- How to write your own recipe (extract and all-grain)
- How to wood/barrel aged with a non-wood/barrel aged recipe?
- Homebrew barrel use vs. commercial barrel use.
- How to predict what different strains will do within a recipe.
- Constraints of fermentation
- Batch splitting with different yeast strains
- Yeast Blending
- Strategies and techniques for brewing high ABV beers (and maintain quality)
- How to choose the right specialty grain
- Pushing style boundaries for recipe design
- Scaling hops, spices, and herbs post-fermentation
- Flavor and aroma profiles of new hop varieties
- General Homebrew Quality Control techniques (ex: cell counts, forced fermentation samples, wort stability, microbe testing, etc.)
- Brewing with Reverse Osmosis
- Deoxygenating water
- Quality control when brewing with lager yeast (pitching rate, fermentation, yeast strains, diacetyl)
- Post fermentation additions: best use and practices for aseptic fruit purees