



United States Association of Cider Makers: Cider Style Guide





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V 1.1 October 2017

Standard Styles

Modern Ciders are made primarily from culinary/table apples. Compared to other Standard styles, these ciders are generally lower in tannins and higher in acidity.

Aroma/Flavor- Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have an apple aroma and flavor. Dry ciders will be more wine-like with some esters. Sugar and acidity will typically combine to give a refreshing character. Acidity is medium to high—refreshing, but must not be harsh or biting.

Appearance- Typically pale to yellow in color. Ranges from brilliant to hazy, depending on the cider maker's intention.

Varieties- Commonly grown varieties such as McIntosh, Golden Delicious, Jonagold, Granny Smith, Gala and Fuji are often found in Modern Ciders.

Heritage Ciders are made primarily from multi-use or cider-specific bittersweet/bittersharp apples, heirloom varieties; wild or crab apples are sometimes used for acidity/tannin balance. These ciders will generally be higher in tannins than Modern Ciders. This style encompasses those produced in the West Country of England (notably Somerset and Herefordshire), Northern France (notably Normandy and Brittany), Northern Spain (notably Basque and Asturias regions), as well as New World ciders and others in which cider-specific apple varieties and production techniques are used.

Aroma/Flavor- Increased complexity derived from the cider maker's selection of apples and production techniques. Common attributes include increased astringency, bitterness and complex aromatics.

Appearance- Typically yellow to amber in color. Ranges from brilliant to hazy, depending on the cider maker's intention.

Varieties- Commonly used varieties include Dabinett (bittersweet), Kingston Black (bittersharp), Roxbury Russet (American heirloom) and Wickson (crab).

Modern Perries (*singular, perry*) are made from culinary/table pears. Compared to Heritage Perry, Modern Perry is generally lower in tannins.

Aroma/Flavor- There is a pear character, but not obviously fruity. No bitterness. Ranges from dry to sweet.

Appearance- Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally pale in color.

Varieties- Common varieties include Bartlett, Comice, Bosc and Anjou.

Heritage Perries are made from pear varieties grown specifically for perry production. Compared to Modern Perry, Heritage Perry is generally more complex and higher in tannins.

Aroma/Flavor- There is a pear character, but not obviously fruity. May have slight bitterness. Ranges from dry to sweet depending on varieties used.

Appearance- Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally pale in color.

Varieties- Gin, Brandy, Barland, Blakeney Red, Thorn, and Moorcroft, etc.



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Fruit Ciders are ciders with non-pome fruits or fruits/fruit juices added either before or after fermentation.

Aroma/Flavor- The added fruit will be prevalent in the overall flavor and aroma.

Appearance- The added fruit will typically influence color and clarity.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified, typically dessert/culinary varieties are used. Examples of fruit additions include cherry, cranberry, blueberry, and peach.

Hopped Ciders are simply ciders with added hops.

Aroma/Flavor- The intensity of hop aroma, flavor and bitterness will be determined by hop variety and production process used.

Appearance- Ranges from brilliant to hazy, depending on the cider maker's intention.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified; typically dessert/culinary varieties are used. Examples of commonly used hops include Citra, Cascade, Galaxy, and Mosaic.

Spiced Ciders are ciders made with any combination of spices, herbs and/or botanicals added either before or after fermentation.

Aroma/Flavor- The added ingredient(s) will be prevalent in the overall flavor and aroma.

Appearance- The added spice may influence color and clarity.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified, typically dessert/culinary varieties used. Examples of additions include ginger, cinnamon, habanero, elderflower, and mint.

Wood-Aged Ciders are ciders in which the wood and/or barrel character is a notable part of the overall flavor profile.

Aroma/Flavor- There is a wide continuum of intensity of flavor based on the wood to cider ratio used and the previous use of the wood.

Appearance- Color may be influenced by the wood/barrel character and time in contact with the wood.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified.

Sour Ciders are made intentionally sour using non-standard yeasts and bacterial fermentation.

Aroma/Flavor- A sour cider will typically have relatively high levels of a variety of acids not normally present in apples. Predominant among them are acetic and lactic acids.

Appearance- A sour cider is an usually unfiltered cider that is naturally conditioned, so ranges from clear to cloudy in appearance.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified; botanicals and other fruit are commonly added.



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Ice Ciders are made by concentrating the juice before fermentation, either by freezing the fruit before pressing it, or by freezing the juice and then drawing off the concentrate as it thaws. It can be made using artificial refrigeration, although only those ciders made by natural freezing outdoors may be labelled 'Ice Cider' per the TTB (it is the only TTB-regulated cider style name). Typically, the fermentation is stopped or is arrested before the cider reaches dryness to retain high residual sugar.

Aroma / Flavor- Intensely flavored, with pome fruit and tropical fruit flavors and aromas prevalent. Acidity must be enough to prevent it from being cloying. Mouthfeel is smooth and full bodied. May be very slightly tannic (astringent and/or bitter).

Appearance- Brilliant. Color is deeper than a Standard cider, from gold to dark amber. High viscosity.

Varieties- Apple varieties not specified.

Addendum

These cider style guidelines were designed to build a foundation for the lexicon we use to discuss cider. We hope they will be helpful for journalists, consumers, retailers, servers, cider makers and more. This is a living, growing document. Cider is a diverse, complex beverage, and additional definitions will be added with time to reflect this. For now, with the consumer in mind, we release these guidelines to begin unifying the language we use to converse about cider.

This guide builds on the pioneering work of GLINTCAP and BJCP to define cider styles. We recognize and appreciate their efforts.

Adopted by the USACM Board of Directors in September 2017.
Please email info@ciderassociation.org with your questions.