

The American Craft Beer Cookbook: 150 Recipes from Your Favorite Brewpubs and Breweries

John Holl

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This judicious cookbook artfully describes the best recipes from American brewpubs with savory details.

John Holl's *The American Craft Beer Cookbook: 150 Recipes from Your Favorite Brewpubs and Breweries* is an information-packed tour of successful brewpubs and artisan breweries throughout the United States. The cookbook, however, should come with a caveat attached: Warning: Frequent use of the recipes in this book may contribute to weight gain.

The book is artfully illustrated with an abundance of color photos of food and breweries. Holl uses boxes of detailed information to bring readers' attention to the brewery highlighted for each recipe. A definitive list of the chefs and artisan breweries (arranged by state) featured is included in the book's back matter.

Holl is currently the host of The Beer Briefing, a show on iHeart Radio, and has written two other books and numerous articles on beer.

At its heart, *The American Craft Beer Cookbook* is just that: a cookbook. The recipes included are complete, the directions clearly delineated, and the ingredients readily available. The range of food is limited to what is offered in brewpubs, and that is, primarily, meat. There is a sandwich with pulled pork and sausage, a smoked bologna mousse with chips made from chicken skins, scotch eggs wrapped in sausage and seasoned flour and deep fried in oil, and hanger steak with a Gorgonzola cream sauce.

But, there is more in this cookbook than burgers and sausage. Holl offers brunch fare that includes sweet potato pancakes and an interesting root vegetable hash. And, the salad section is filled with tasty and nutritious preparations of greens. The Northern Michigan salad with fruit beer vinaigrette is inviting, and the wheat berry salad is uniquely adventuresome.

The author doesn't ignore vegetables, but they are given short shrift. The vegetable section of the cookbook reads as if it might have been an afterthought. There is a wonderful recipe for Szechuan green beans, which is described as a fun and spicy way to "dress up the humble green bean." Spinach gets a similar treatment, presented as "Particularly great with summer dishes, this dish cooks up quickly and elevates the otherwise humble leafy green." Holl includes a recipe for Truffled Potatoes that sounds delicious, mostly because the potatoes are combined with two cups of heavy cream and two tablespoons of butter.

With many Americans already obese and suffering from diabetes and heart disease at alarming rates, one is hesitant to encourage the type of eating promoted by *The American Craft Beer Cookbook*. But, if used selectively, the food and drink offered in this artfully designed cookbook would broaden the taste experience of many foodies.

JOHN SENGER (Fall 2013)

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