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Ginger Beer Taste-off



Dark Chocolate Mousse



Mile High Popovers



Olive Oil Gelato

Recipe & Drink Index

Archives

Phoo-d



Mascarpone Cheesecake

Ginger Beer Taste-off

Monday December 27th, 2010 in **Wine & Spirits**



Not only have I been exploring the world of [sparkling non-alcoholic beverages](#), but I have also undertaken a quest to taste my way through every ginger beer I can get my hands on. When craft brewing exploded onto the beverage scene it also opened the door for a wide variety of non-alcoholic ginger beers. Originally ginger beer was indeed alcoholic, the product of fermenting ginger, sugar, and water with a yeast known as “ginger beer plant”. In the 20th century this process changed as ginger beer moved from a true beer into the soft drink category. A few producers of modern ginger beer still use a brewing process to achieve complex levels of flavor but stop short of producing an alcoholic beverage. For a pregnant lady this creates the perfect balance of a beverage with interesting beer-like complexity without the negative effects of alcohol. So in the name of science, pregnancy, and for all those out there who are searching for something exciting to drink when alcohol is off limits, here are the results of my ginger beer taste-off:

Following the photo from left to right-

Fentimans: This ginger beer starts with a dark candied-ginger aroma. A mild cola-like flavor with medium body is the first impression but then a long burning ginger finish kicks in at the end. Botanical notes of juniper and other herbs are floral and dark at the same time. This is a complex and enjoyable ginger beer and was our clear



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favorite.

Maine Root: On the nose, this ginger beer has a bright lemony ginger aroma. A very hot peppery ginger flavor characterizes the drink. While not overly sweet, the ginger beer is somewhat one-dimensional. It would be good mixed into a hard lemonade, but I can't say I would purchase it again to drink alone.

Ginger People: This ginger beer begins with a light sweet ginger aroma. It has a syrupy, flat flavor that is juice-like and very sweet. The finish is short with only a mild ginger flavor. Basically, this tastes like a mild ginger soda pop- cloying, and not very good.

Reeds Jamaican Style: A subtle lemony ginger aroma starts off the experience. The beer has a pleasant citrusy ginger flavor that is not spicy or peppery. It avoids excess sweetness, balancing out the light body with just enough ginger. This is an easy drinker, widely available, and good place to start for those new to ginger beer.

Bundaberg: Interestingly enough, this ginger beer from Australia really doesn't have an aroma. Easy to drink, it presents a mild ginger flavor wrapped in a dark cola-like body. Naturally brewed, it contains a milky sediment and bits of ginger at the bottom of the bottle. Balanced sweetness and a smooth finish would make this another good choice for those just starting out with ginger beers.

Sourcing Note: I was able to buy all of the above ginger beers at [Cost Plus World Market](#). [Whole Foods](#) also carries a good selection of ginger beer, and usually you can find [Reed's Ginger Beer](#) at local supermarkets.

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bryan said..

Thanks, I was just looking at ginger beer while shopping yesterday! Though I am one to indulge in spirits I understand that medical professionals agree that sometimes there should be other beverages included in my diet. Thanks for the reviews I guess I am off to Whole Foods with the kiddos tomorrow.
December 27, 2010 @ 10:55 pm

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Carolyn Jung said..

If you ever get a chance, try this one:

<http://www.sodapopstop.com/products/detail.cfm?link=116>

The Blenheim Hot Hot Ginger Ale is really something else. It is SPICY, but in a good way if you love ginger like I do. I had a chance to buy some one time when I was down in Los Angeles. Definitely worth seeking out to try at least once.

December 28, 2010 @ 7:37 pm

admin said..

Bryan- Have fun finding some ginger beer to try! If you are feeling like ignoring medical professionals, they also make a fantastic Dark & Stormy. =)

Carolyn- Wow, that is an interesting ginger ale! I will keep an eye out for that one to try.

December 29, 2010 @ 7:25 am

bryan said..

I hadn't heard of that drink until now, but it sounds great! Thanks

December 29, 2010 @ 10:25 am

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