

Can beer have a place in your weight-loss plan? Here are some tips to have the best of both worlds

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Love beer and also hoping to accomplish some weight loss? Read this post to learn more about calories in beer and how it can impact your weight-loss plan.



Can beer and weight loss go together?

We have a lot of options for beer these days, especially with all the craft microbrews. There are endless beer varieties with unique tastes, bodies, and colors. It is great for beer lovers, but it is important to know that beer can be a huge calorie sink for those striving to manage their weight. Unfortunately, it is difficult to know which beer is high or low in calories since regulators do not require calories to appear on beer, wine, or liquor containers. Some brewers voluntarily provide this information on their website, especially if they are marketing a lower calorie or carb content, but many do not. In addition, calorie trackers often include big-name commercial beers instead of microbrews. Read on to see how MyNetDiary and some extra nutrition knowledge make it possible for you to enjoy beer and still make strides toward weight loss.

Making sense of carbs and alcohol

Although beer-making starts with carbs (e.g., cereal grains, most commonly barley), much of the carb content converts to alcohol when fermented with yeast. By weight and volume, beer is primarily water. Although most of the calories come from alcohol, unfermented carbs and a small amount of protein also contribute to the total calories. The alcohol content is typically expressed as a percentage of alcohol by volume (% ABV). *All else being equal, the higher the ABV, the higher the calories.* But ultimately, the brewing of beer and the resulting ABV and carb content will all determine caloric content.

Calorie tracking - log the right beer

When logging a brand-name beer with MyNetDiary, be especially careful to pick the correct food item for calorie-content accuracy. There might be multiple versions for the same brand. For example, the brand "Budweiser" or "Bud" comes in regular and light versions. If you drink regular Bud, then log "[Budweiser regular beer 5% ABV](#)." If you drink Bud Light, then log "[Budweiser Light beer](#)." The difference in calories is pretty significant. Regular contains about 50% more calories than the light version.

In the case of microbrews, you might not find your favorite beer in any food database. This is more common when a brewery does not voluntarily post nutrition information on its website. Since regulations do not require alcohol containers to indicate any calorie or nutrition data, it can be tricky to find this information. If you want to enter a custom food item for a particular type of beer, contact the brewing company to request its carb and calorie information. If that information is not available to you, you could enter the staple food item "[Beer regular 5% ABV](#)".

Tip: If you want to track alcohol grams, then upgrade to [Premium membership](#).

Can you drink beer and still lose weight?

Yes, but it is harder to create a caloric deficit if you drink every day. If you are trying to lose weight, here are ways to reduce calories and still enjoy a cold one from time to time:

- Drink light or low % ABV beer.

- Reduce your portion size. Use a smaller glass or choose a 12-ounce can instead of a 16-ounce bottle.
- Drink less frequently. Perhaps only imbibe on weekends.
- If cutting carbs, choose lower-carb beers, like Michelob Ultra.

Does beer give you a big belly?

In the past, experts held firm that the excess calorie intake from beer combined with genetics caused midsection weight gain, a.k.a. the beer belly. Now, studies challenging this thought explore how heavy alcohol intake may profoundly influence metabolism to result in increased waist size and central body fat, and elevated blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. In addition, other studies show that heavy alcohol intake can increase fat storage. Not sure how beer might be impacting your waistline? You could take a beer-free holiday and see if your waist size shrinks.

Moderate drinking is defined as 1-2 drinks per day for men and up to one drink for women. One drink of beer is 12 fluid ounces of 5% ABV beer.

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This blog was reviewed and updated by [Brenda Braslow, MS, RDN, LDN, CDCES](#) on October 12, 2021.

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