

Going Out Guide

Cheap cans of beer, ranked

By Ryan Ermey January 8 at 3:30 PM

You've just paid \$10 for a snifter of a rich and complex craft beer. But you're not a rich and complex person. You're a person who had a terrible week at work, and you want a little more bang for your bar tab than that eisbock is giving you.

For the same price, you could have had three cans of ice cold utility lager. But which one? The list below ranks 10 cheap beers sold at D.C.

bars for \$4 or less. (We've excluded Bud, Miller and Coors from our list because, come on, you don't need us to tell you how those taste.)

Each beer was given a score based on three equally weighted factors:

ABV: You should get as much return on your investment as possible.

Can design: Sacrificing quality doesn't mean you have to sacrifice style.

Taste: If you insist.



(Photo by Camille Powell Kilgore/The Washington Post)

10. Natural Light



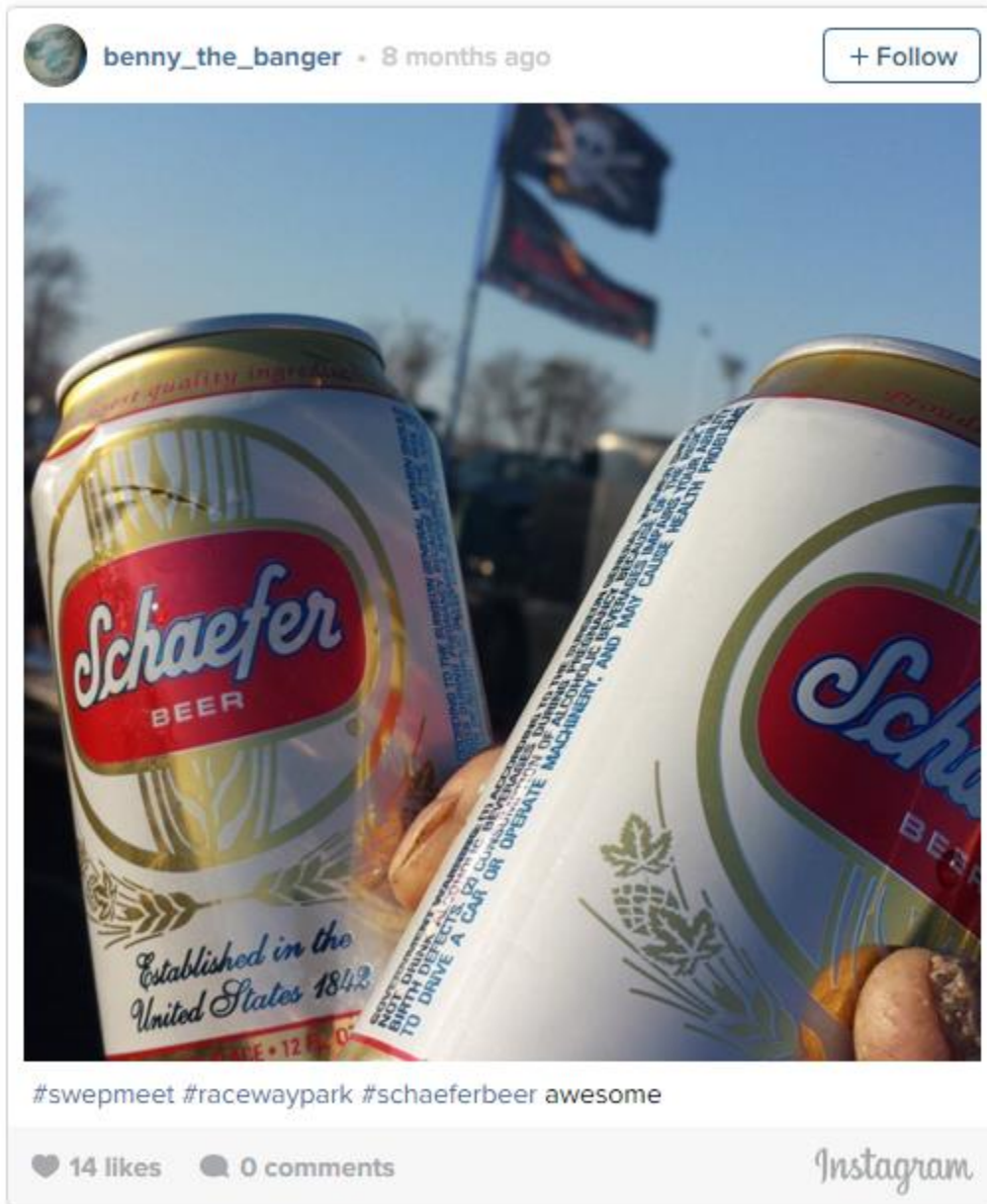
Available at: [The Pug](#), 1234 H St. NE.

Can: It's never a good sign when the can is designed to make a beer look cold. But that's what Natty's silver and blue motif is here for: to trick you into thinking you're enjoying a frosty brew even though you just pulled the can out from under your buddy's couch.

Taste: If you drank this in college you know exactly how cold this beer needs to be at all tolerable. Even on the verge of freezing, it still tastes like carbonated sewer water.

Total: 4.2 (ABV) + 1 (can) + 1 (taste) = **6.2**

9. Schaefer



Available at: [The Handsome Cock](#), 1334 U St. NW.

Can: It looks like a can that belongs in a koozie.

Taste: There's a hint of sweetness. A suggestion of bitterness. A clean aftertaste. The overall effect is like drinking the ghost of a beer that died in 1958 and has been haunting your can ever since.

Total: 4.6 (ABV) + 2 (can) + 2 (taste) = **8.2**

8. Yuengling



Available at: [Red Derby](#), 3718 14th St. NW.

Can: In keeping with its status as the nation's oldest brewery, Yuengling designed its label to look like parchment, which, against its green bottles, looks quite handsome. But when applied across the whole can, the color gives the effect of a white can that has been sitting on the ground in a high school baseball dugout.

Taste: This Pennsylvania favorite is a solid, eminently drinkable domestic lager. Its pleasant caramel sweetness is a lovely departure from the corn-syrupy quality found in most budget brews.

Total: 4.4 (ABV) + 2 (can) + 4 (taste) = **10.4**

7. Tecate



juancolin · 2 weeks ago

+ Follow



Si va a se en lata, que sea #tecate

7 likes 2 comments

Instagram

Available at: [Showtime Lounge](#), 113 Rhode Island Ave. NW.

Can: This one just falls short of being really good. The bright red of the can yields too much space to a pale gold sash. And while Tecate's eagle logo is cool, the "3D" iteration, with the right wing bigger than the left, is a strange choice. Is the eagle supposed to be leaning toward us? Why? It just ends up looking like the artist made a mistake.

Taste: Does your Tecate taste good? That depends. Was your bartender kind enough to give you a lime? If yes, squeeze that bad boy directly into the can, and you have a beer that's actually as crisp and refreshing as all of these beers purport to be. If not, you're in for a rather unpleasant and very fizzy beer.

Total: 4.5 (ABV) + 3 (can) + 3 (taste) = **10.5**

6. Pabst Blue Ribbon



Available at: [Comet Ping Pong](#), 5037 Connecticut Ave. NW.

Can: You don't become a hipster staple with a poor can design. The red, white and blue can is clean and all-American. It even has a nice little paragraph at the bottom in case you get bored of hearing about your friend's nonprofit work and instead want to remind yourself that you're drinking America's best tasting beer of 1893.

Taste: It's what we imagine Duff probably tastes like. Or whatever Norm drank on "Cheers."

Total: 4.74 (ABV) + 3 (can) + 3 (taste) = **10.74**

5. National Bohemian



Available at: [Boundary Road](#), 414 H St. NE.

Can: Mr. Boh is everything you want in a beer mascot: iconic, weird, beautifully designed and totally unique.

Taste: Natty Boh is what the cool kids drink in this town. It's available at just about every dive bar, but it's also on the menu at mixologist Derek Brown's Eat the Rich and noted cheap beer enthusiast David Chang's Momofuku. But despite D.C.'s fascination with the beer, there seems to be a huge variance in its quality -- some cans taste fine while others taste like everyone at the brewery was drunk during the beer's production.

Total: 4.52 (ABV) + 4 (can) + 3 (taste) = **11.52**

Tie-3. Stroh's



Available at: [Ivy and Coney](#), 1537 Seventh St. NW.

Can: Now we're talking. The can is a lovely shade of royal blue. The beer's name is given boldly and legibly above a red and gold heraldic lion. A beer fit for a king.

Taste: Well, it looks like it, anyway. Because once His Royal Highness takes a sip, he'll realize that this beer tastes like the result of pouring Miller High Life through your rain gutters. It's Miller Low Life.

Total: 4.6 (ABV) + 5 (can) + 2 (taste) = **11.6**

Tie-3. Schlitz



Available at: [The Codmother](#), 1334 U St. NW.

Can: Schlitz's can features attractive script, and a reminder across the top that this is the "Classic 60's Formula" parent company Pabst says it was able to recreate in 2008. This way you can enjoy Schlitz the way your father did -- by drinking several of them before drag racing through the abandoned quarry, or whatever other nonsense that generation was allowed to do and still go to college.

Taste: Then again, maybe your dad and Pabst knew what they were doing. This stuff is good. It doesn't have that corn syrupy taste found in many other so-called adjunct lagers. And in its place? Yes, Virginia. There are hops.

Total: 4.6 (ABV) + 3 (can) + 4 (taste) = **11.6**

2. Narragansett



Available at: [Bar Charley](#), 1825 18th St. NW.

Can: Narragansett has a white can with a red logo, and its green trim gives it a sort of Christmas-y vibe. Accompanying the logo are the words "Made on Honor, Sold on Merit," which is a little stern compared to Schlitz's "The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous" and Natty Boh's "Oh Boy, What a Beer!" Have a little fun, fellas!

Taste: Narragansett is quite simply the best tasting beer on our list. A lovely balance of hops and malt. A nice bit of carbonation with a clean, refreshing finish. This is a real, live beer. In fact, when your bartender asks if you'd like it in a glass you might even consider it.

Total: 5.0 (ABV) + 3 (can) + 5 (taste) = **13.0**

1. Genesee Cream Ale



Summer's last stand. We won't go down without a bite! And a few Cream Ales.

248 likes 8 comments

Instagram

Available at: [The Wonderland Ballroom](#), 1101 Kenyon St. NW.

Can: Genny's can is green and shiny and just about perfect. A single white stripe contains the name of the brewer. Under it, the name of the beer in white letters. A white barley stem perches above to indicate that this is indeed beer.

Taste: Genesee would have you believe they've achieved some sort of beer alchemy by combining a lager and an ale. They haven't. But they do make a pretty agreeable beer. It's creamy, but doesn't leave a filmy aftertaste. It's a little fruity, but not overly sweet. Packing the biggest ABV punch on our list, it's a model of the form: cheap, tasty beer that makes you look good when you drink it. Cheers to that.

Total: 5.1 (ABV) + 5 (can) + 4 (taste) = **14.1**