



BEER

The Summer Shandy: 5 Perfect Hot Weather Thirst-Quenchers

BY JON KATZ Jul 17, 2014 2:00 PM

Sip on the juiciest beer cocktails of all time



It's been a rainy, humid summer so far on the East Coast, so I'm wishing for several weeks of the 90-degree weather which causes me to crave one drink in particular: the shandy. It's a beer cocktail made by mixing lemonade or soda with beer. Hear me out.

Even with so many great summer styles — [session IPAs](#), sour ales and fruit beers — the shandy sticks out as the king of hot weather refreshment because of its low alcohol content, huge fruit juice punch and the fact that it does not taste like fruit punch. Although shandies are just catching on in the U.S. now, they've been popular in Europe for over a century. The traditional English version mixes ale with ginger beer, ginger ale or lemonade. The latter has become the most popular variation in the U.S.

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Another popular take on the style is the German and Austrian radler, which mixes lemonade or grapefruit juice with local ale and is traditionally lighter and hoppier than the English versions. If you're thinking about being adventurous and making your own, which you totally should, I'd advise using either kolsch or pilsner as the base beer. Light, crisp styles like these are perfect for cocktails because they mix well while still retaining plenty of beer flavor.

If you're feeling inclined to go to the store instead of concocting it yourself, you're in luck. There's never been a better time or selection than right now. While many traditional German and English brands export their own, there are plenty of great American craft examples to explore. Here are five of the most refreshing shandies out there for when that summer heatwave finally hits.

1. **Harpoon Brewery: UFO Big Squeeze Shandy**

This new shandy from Boston-based Harpoon uses grapefruit to awesomely refreshing effect. It really does look like beer mixed with grapefruit juice and delivers massive grapefruit flavor. You can taste everything from the bitter pith to the sweet, juicy fruit, along with the refreshing wheat malts of the base beer.

2. **Sixpoint Brewery: RAD**

I have to admit that I didn't see this coming from Brooklyn's Sixpoint, as many of their newer releases have been huge IPAs and stouts. RAD is *much* tamer at a scant 3.2% and, as you can see from the photo above, basically pours out like juice. RAD has huge notes of tropical fruit juice and is nicely carbonated with a refreshingly tart kick. By the way, Heather Reynolds, a brewer from Sixpoint, replied to my photo on Instagram that it works great as a mixer for cocktails too.

3. **Boston Beer Company: Samuel Adams Porch Rocker**

This Sam Adams option is a beer-lover's shandy, as it retains plenty of crisp German-style lager flavor. Porch Rocker is a lemonade version of the shandy style and, as expected, it's big on refreshing lemon/lime citrus flavors. If you're not completely sold on a full-on fruit juice/beer cocktail, this one holds its own as beer alone, and is a great companion for the dog days to come.

4. **Narragansett Brewing Company: Del's Shandy**

The Rhode Island-based brewers of renowned Narragansett Lager have delivered some excellent seasonal offerings. Del's is a more traditional shandy of Narragansett Lager mixed with pleasantly tart lemonade. You won't pick up on the 5%, but definitely note that at a few points higher than other shandies, this one can sneak up on ya, especially in its convenient, 16-ounce can form.

5. **Stieglbrauerei zu Salzburg: Stiegl Grapefruit Radler**

This was the first radler (of many) I had on my trip to Berlin. It's actually Austrian but also extremely popular in Deutschland and beyond. All sentiments aside, it's also probably the best. This one wins the summer beer cocktail award for authenticity and at a ridiculously low 2.5%, Stiegl radler still has loads of real grapefruit flavor while still tasting like a great German beer full of bready malt.