

The Isthmus

Beer Here: Booyah from Milwaukee Brewing



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It's the opening of baseball season, and what better way to mark the return of the Milwaukee Brewers than with a crisp, bubbly, and spicy Saison? That's the French word for season, and Wisconsinites with Flemish-Belgian heritage will recognize "booyah," the term for a soup served at a community party -- much like the atmosphere at Miller Park. Booyah is, appropriately, the name of a beer made by [Milwaukee Brewing](#), and it's the beer equivalent of a home run!

What is it? [Booyah](#) from Milwaukee Brewing Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Style: The Saison is a farmhouse ale, brewed in the French-speaking region of southern Belgium. It's traditionally a low-alcohol, light-bodied, pale-colored beer that was made to refresh farmworkers working under the hot sun. Historically, saisons were known not so much as a style but as a light, crisp and refreshing ale made in summer.

Today, saisons are associated with low to medium malt aroma and a hoppy bitterness that is assertive but not overwhelming. They can have a spicy and fruity character, with a balanced amount of sour or acidic flavors. You might even detect some earthy, cellar-like aromas. Saisons range from 4.5% to 8.5% ABV.

Background: The beer gets its name from "[booyah](#)" -- a stew that takes several days to make, often in 55-gallon kettles, for serving at large community events. Milwaukee Brewing co-owner Jim Hughes, who grew up in De Pere, has fond memories of enjoying booyah at the Brown and Kewaunee county fairs; he says that the stew's complexity of ingredients and flavor, combined with its Wisconsin heritage, made for a great beer name.

Booyah, the beer, is made with barley and wheat for added body, while a touch of malted rye and oats gives it light earthy tones. Czech Saaz and Columbus hops combine for a citrus type of bitterness. The Saison yeast gives it a sweet tangerine fruitiness with a spicy tone of pepper.

Booyah was originally a seasonal beer for Milwaukee Brewing, but it has recently been added to the brewery's year-round list of brews. It can be a little tough to find in Madison stores, but if you're planning a trip to watch the Brewers, you might allow for a stop at the Milwaukee Ale House (affiliated with Milwaukee Brewing), where it's commonly on tap. Booyah finishes at 6.5% ABV and sells for around \$9/six-pack.

Milwaukee Brewing has updated its packaging and beer names to call attention to Milwaukee's and Wisconsin's heritage. The brewery has also recently expanded production, and this past month started distribution in Chicago.

Tasting notes:

- *Aroma:* A spicy-yeasty floral aroma.
- *Appearance:* Clear apricot-golden color with a soft tan marbled head.
- *Texture:* Medium bodied and bubbly.
- *Taste:* The yeasty, earthy sweetness dominates.
- *Finish/Aftertaste:* Sweet, spicy ending, with some alcoholic warmth.

Glassware: The tulip glass will highlight the beer's color, and its flared lip will support the soft head.

Pairs well with: The sweet spicy tones of Booyah are great with stews and barbecue. Keep it handy as the grilling season heats up.

Rating: Four Bottle Openers (out of four).

The Consensus: Booyah has not received enough ratings to be evaluated at [BeerAdvocate](#), and 60/23 (overall/style) at [RateBeer](#).

The Verdict: Booyah is a wonderful sipping beer, with complex flavors that range from fruity sweetness to dryness, with a touch of pepper in the finish. The yeasty and sweet spicy tones are inviting and relaxing. There's just enough alcoholic warmth to accent that sweetness. At 6.5% ABV, it'll take the chill off an outdoor springtime lunch or barbecue, but it's also a great picnic beer throughout the summer into fall. It will age well over a few months if you keep it in the back of the refrigerator, where it's consistently cool and out of the light.