

# KITCHEN DAILY

## BREWMASTER JARED ROUBEN TALKS CULINARY-INSPIRED BEER

KITCHEN DAILY | 12/19/13

Jared Rouben has earned a following over the years for changing the brew game with his flavorful beers that incorporate unusual fruits, herbs and spices sourced from his local farmer's market. With his new brewery [Moody Tongue Brewing Company](#) opening its doors this winter, we chat with the chef-turned-brewmaster to get the scoop behind "culinary beers," the chef's unusual brewing techniques and his favorite beer and food pairings for the holidays.

[Check out the slideshow above](#) to discover the buzz behind "culinary beers" and what's so special about Jared's food-centric brews.



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Have you heard the buzz about "culinary beer"? We chat with Jared Rouben, brewmaster of Chicago's [Moody Tongue Brewing Company](#) opening this winter, to discover what's so special about his food-centric beers,

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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### WHAT IS A "CULINARY BEER"?

"Culinary brewing" is the process by which traditional and innovative cooking methods are used to incorporate ingredients into beer to enhance flavor profiles and aromatics. This utilizes an approach similar to that from a chef's mindset, including an understanding of how to best source ingredients (e.g., from farmers' markets) as well as how to integrate those ingredients in a fashion which best highlights their tastes, flavors and aromatics. As a chef strives to achieve in any dish, my goal through culinary brewing is to create flavorful and aromatic beers with balance.

*Image Credit: Facebook*



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### YOU ARE A FORMER COOK. HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN BREWING?

While I've always loved food, I began to see a lot of similarities between the processes of cooking and brewing after I started the Brew Club while at the Culinary Institute of America. The flavors and aromatics in the beers I loved reminded me of ingredients we would use when cooking. This connection helped me begin to think about beer recipes as cooking recipes, and I continued to see the overlap the

more I explored.

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For example, it's easy to think of your malted grain as bread (e.g., like a biscuit) or your hops as a fruit (e.g., like a grapefruit). I would speak in traditional beer language but think more like a cook. Later, my exploration into a career in brewing really just became an extension of my culinary background. I view Moody Tongue's beer as "food" and the brewery as our "kitchen".

*Image Credit: Facebook*



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WHAT UNIQUE FLAVORS AND INGREDIENTS DO YOU INCORPORATE INTO YOUR BEER?

It's not that we are just showcasing "unique" flavors or ingredients – what's unique about our beer is the processes we use to incorporate our ingredients. By understanding each ingredient, we can understand how to treat and incorporate it into a balanced beer. I tend to focus on familiar, seasonal flavors – using ingredients like fruits and teas in the spring and summer or chocolates and coffees in the fall and winter -- but that doesn't mean we won't think outside of the box every now and then.

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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Just as with a dish in a kitchen, the quality of a beer is only as good as the quality of its ingredients. I personally source all of our ingredients and emphasize understanding the right way to "cook" each ingredient into a beer. At the end of the day, it's the final product – that is, the overall beer with its flavors and aromatics – that stands out as a very unique beer.

*Image Credit: Facebook*



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WHAT DO YOU THINK THE BEVERAGE TRENDS WILL BE IN 2014?

I think you are seeing an increased popularity in a new area of beverages which are high quality and delicious while remaining approachable and affordable. You may begin

seeing more wines on tap as well as growth in the popularity of ciders and culinary beers. Beverage menus are continuing to grow and develop as the scene changes, and in turn I believe you will see more learning and back-and-forth between people like sommeliers and cicerones. I think this is a very exciting time in the beverage community.

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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WHAT OTHER BREWERIES DO YOU ADMIRE?

There are a lot of fantastic breweries out there which understand how to build a great beer. Off hand, I admire breweries like Three Floyds, Goose Island, Piece, Wiseacre, Breakside, Oakshire and Firestone Walker. These are all breweries which I have liked to use in the past for beer and food pairings.

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO MERGE THE WORLDS OF BEER AND FOOD?

I think it's important to provide your guests with the most memorable culinary experience and, while this always begins with service, I believe it is heavily influenced by how beverages and foods are used in concert with one another to ultimately excite guests' senses. Chefs, servers, cicerones and sommeliers all have the ability to influence special moments in peoples' lives when they walk around their establishments. As a team, we must all focus on a "culinary trinity" – service, beverages and food – to create something memorable.

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY TO MAKING A GOOD BEER?

Great beers come from great ingredients and choosing and understanding how to use those ingredients requires a level of thought which really separates better beers out there.

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#### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREW YOUR BEER?

While there is no fixed rule, Moody Tongue will use about two weeks to create its culinary beers (similar to most other ales right now). That said, we will be using culinary techniques to prepare some of our ingredients before actually starting the brewing process (e.g., think of brandying blackberries for up to three weeks before creating the beer in which they are used) or we may let certain beers sit in our tanks a bit longer after fermentation (e.g., think of infusing watermelons into a beer during the few days following fermentation). And, as a chef would do in a kitchen, we continually taste our ingredients and beer throughout the process to ensure we are doing our best to create a delicious, balanced beer.

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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#### WHAT BEER AND FOOD PAIRING DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR THE WINTER AND/OR FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

Now that the weather is turning much colder, I would definitely recommend relaxing by a warm fire with either a bourbon barrel aged beer or, really, any beer with chocolate; and, I would also recommend thinking about pairing those beers with desserts. I believe that pairing beer and dessert is one of the most underrated pairings and, perhaps, my favorite. Just think of pairing a chocolate dessert with a framboise, chocolate stout or a bourbon barrel aged porter right now!

*Image Credit: Getty Images*



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#### WHAT'S NEXT FOR MOODY TONGUE?

I am very excited to see where Moody Tongue grows over time. While we want to start by focusing on our home market right here in Chicago, we are certainly interested in sending our beers across the country. I think there are certain cities which are more open to beer and the idea of mixing the worlds of beer and food -- and that's where you will find us grow first.

*Image Credit: [Facebook](#)*