



Drinks Ireland
Cider

What is cider?

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Cider is a low-alcohol drink produced by the fermentation of apple juice. As apple juice typically contains less natural sugar than wine, the final alcohol level will normally be about 5.5% - 7.5% which is about half that of wine.

Different varieties of apples are used to produce cider; eating apples, cooking apples and cider apples. It is down to the skill of the cider maker as to how the blend of different varieties of apples produce each specific cider.



Cider is structured and balanced around three main components:

1. Acidity

How refreshing you find the cider. How much, and for how long, do your cheeks run after swallowing? Tilt your head downwards, are your cheeks still running? Acidity in cider is great to match with foods such as Asian curries or fish dishes.

2. Tannin

Like the grip from black tea. Do your front teeth slightly grip your gums or does the front of your mouth start drying? Similar to tannin in red-wine such as Chianti or even Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon.

3. Sweetness

How sweet the cider tastes to you. Often noticed at the tip of your tongue.



What is the history of cider in Ireland?

Cider has a long history in Ireland. During the eighteenth century, Irish cider was highly regarded for both its quality and economic importance. In 1737, quality Irish cider was being described as the equivalent to quality wine. By 2019, cider was the third most popular alcoholic beverage in Ireland.



Environmental benefits

The production of apples makes a significant contribution towards reducing Ireland's national greenhouse gas emissions, almost on a par with forestry on a per hectare basis and it also supports the birds, the bees and wildlife in our orchards. You can enjoy a glass of cider knowing that it is the most environmentally friendly long drink.

What flavours are in cider?

A vast array of flavours can be tasted in cider depending on the apple varieties used and cider-making techniques. Common flavours include:

You may also encounter flavours of yeast, fresh bread, biscuits, wood, whiskey, wine, sherry and beer amongst others, depending on the cider-making techniques used. Ageing can also provide sweet, nutty and chocolate flavours. There are depths and complexities to the flavours of cider.

Fruity flavours

Citrus fruits like lemon and lime, stone fruit like peaches and apricots, red fruit like strawberries and cranberries, even tropical and black fruits flavours. Different varieties of eating apples.

Refreshing acidic flavours
Green apples like Granny Smiths, citrus fruits like lemon and lime.

Earthy flavours
Savoury, black tea, smoky and spicy flavours.

Fragrant flavours
Various flowers and herbs.

Cider styles in Ireland

The structure and flavours of cider available in Ireland, depend on the general style you choose. Some ciders are a mix of these general styles.

- **Acid-driven ciders**

Refreshing and vibrant. Balance of high acidity, low tannin with a range of sweetness. Flavours include Granny Smith apples, gooseberries, lemons, limes and grapefruits. Great to match with foods such as Asian curries or fish dishes. Similar to wines like Chablis, dry Rieslings and Sauvignon Blanc.

- **Tannic ciders**

A grippy and bigger taste. Flavours can include mix of black tea, orange, mandarin, peat, smoky bacon, peat and as well as stone fruit. The grippiness is similar to wines like red Chianti and light Malbecs and Cabernet Sauvignon and matches with similar foods.

- **Sweeter ciders**

We all love sweetness. The balance in these ciders focuses on sweetness, but they can include a range of acidity and tannin. Versatile ciders with light sweetness like Red and Golden Delicious apples which are similar to Pinot Grigio and Gewurtztraminer wines and sweeter ciders similar to sweeter wines.

- **Single Variety ciders**

Instead of a blend of apple varieties, these ciders focus on one variety, such as Sweet Katy or Elstar. The balance of these ciders depend on both the variety but also the year. These are similar to single grape varieties of wines and vintages.

- **Keeved ciders**

Made using an ancient method, these lightly sparkling ciders are complexly flavoured. Balanced around pronounced flavours, refreshing acidity, gentle tannins and sweetness. Flavours can include stone fruit, tropical fruit, floral flavours, fresh bread, vanilla and caramel.

- **Fruit/Floral ciders**

These ciders are balanced around their flavour and acidity with some sweetness. Either with or without the addition of fruits and flowers, the flavours in these ciders can include elderflowers, rhubarb, raspberries, cranberries.

- **Barrel-aged ciders**

These ciders have been aged in barrels and include flavours from those barrels such as whiskey, brandy, wine, sherry and even beer. Additional layers of flavours.



Some cider have similarities to various beer styles. Hopped ciders have an additional layer of flavour from the adding of hops, similar to Indian Pale Ales and American Pale Ales. Other cider styles available in Ireland include pommeau (similar to an aperitif or liqueur), ice cider (similar to ice wine) and apple brandy (distilled and aged apple spirit).