

USED WHISKY BARREL PREPARATION

PREPARATION FOR USE

Once you receive your barrels, it is important that steps are taken to properly rehydrate the barrels so that they will not leak once filled.

REHYDRATING A BARREL

1. Fill barrel completely with clean water and plug with silicone bung.
2. Rehydrate by allowing the barrel to rest filled with water for 24 to 48 hours.
3. During this time, periodically spray down the outside of the barrels to promote swelling of the staves.
4. After this time, top barrels up with more clean water.
5. Examine each barrel for leaks. If leakage occurs, repeat steps 1-3.
6. Drain barrel and allow it to dry thoroughly. This usually takes 1-2 hours.

SANITIZING A BARREL

If desired, barrels may be sanitized in a variety of ways. Common methods include: filling with a solution of peracetic acid, filling and soaking with $>180^{\circ}\text{f}$ water, or filling with ozonated water.

FILLING WITH FINISHED BEER

1. Drain barrel of sanitizer.
2. Purge barrel with CO₂.
3. Fill barrel with finished beer from the racking arm of the fermenter.
NOTE: A good rule of thumb is to only fill barrels with beer once it has five million yeast cells per milliliter or less of yeast still in suspension. This can be measured with a hemocytometer and microscope.
4. Barrels should be filled all the way to the top to prevent oxidation. Make sure the bung is put onto beer and not just beer foam. Some spillage will inevitably occur.
5. Top barrels with silicone bung.
6. Inspect barrel for leaks.
NOTE: At this point, leaks should be small if any. A paraffin wax based product such as "barrel butter" may be rubbed onto leaks in the staves/head to seal minor leaks.
7. Allow beer to mature in barrels until desired flavor is reached. Typically, 2-6 months.

SAMPLING BARRELS

As your beer matures, you will want to taste it periodically to monitor flavor development. Avoid removing the bung and using a thief to sample as this will promote oxidation. Instead, pre-drill a hole in the head of the barrel using a 7/64" drill bit and electric drill. Using a hammer, drive a sanitized stainless-steel nail into the hole to stop the leak. This nail can be removed & replaced to obtain tasting samples throughout conditioning of the beer.