

Summary

Beer is the world's most widely consumed alcoholic beverage, and the third-most popular drink overall, after water and tea. It is thought by some to be the oldest fermented beverage. Beer is sold in bottles and cans and in pubs and bars is available on draught. The strength of beer may be measured by the percentage by volume of ethyl alcohol. Strong beers are in excess of 4 percent, the so-called barley wines 8 to 10 percent. Diet beers or light beers are fully fermented, low-carbohydrate beers in which enzymes are used to convert normally unfermentable (and high-calorie) carbohydrates to fermentable form. In low-alcohol beers (0.5 to 2.0 percent alcohol) and “alcohol-free” beers (less than 0.1 percent alcohol), alcohol is removed after fermentation by low-temperature vacuum evaporation or by membrane filtration. Other low-alcohol products may be produced from worts of low fermentability, using yeasts that cannot ferment maltose, or by mixing yeast separated from a normal fermentation with weak wort at a low temperature for a short time.