

Podcast 69 – Australian Beer

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia,
with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 69 – Australian Beer

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Hi,

Australians love their beer. In 2014, Australians drank around 1,747 million litres of beer. That's around 92 litres of beer for every person aged 15 years or older, per year. That's a lot of beer. When compared to the rest of the world, the statistics in 2011 showed that Australians ranked 11th in the world in terms of the number of litres per head. Number 1 was the Czech Republic, where they drank around 148 litres per head. Austria was second with around 108 litres per person and Germany was third with around 106 litres per person.

Given that there are many people who drink very little or no beer at all, including in Australia, there must be many people who drink a large amount of beer per year. I'm not a beer drinker, but I know that any podcast about Australia must, at some point, talk about Australian beers. We make our own and we like to drink lots of it. This podcast will give you a brief summary.



In Australia, we make and drink mostly lager beers, although there are some other types of beers made and consumed here too. Australian beers can be categorized into 3 groups based on the amount of alcohol they contain. First is low strength, which has around 2.5% alcohol. Second is mid strength, which has around 3.5% alcohol. Third is full strength beer, which has typically around 4.6% alcohol.

Full strength beer is by far the most popular beer in Australia, being around 83% of all beer consumed. Mid strength is around 12% of the total and low strength only around 5%. As you can see, not many Australians are interested in low or mid strength beer. As an example, once a few years ago I bought two dozen stubbies of low strength beer, thinking that my two adult sons would like to have a beer occasionally. I soon found that they were not in the slightest bit interested in drinking my 'free' beer because it wasn't full strength. After about 18 months, I gave the beer away to some tradesmen who had come to do some work on our

house. They couldn't resist the offer of free beer, even if it was low strength and a little old.

Beer has been made in Australia since the early days of European settlement. The first brewery was started in 1804 in Sydney. Many more followed. As European settlement gained pace, the various colonies around Australia were established, later to become the states of Australia. By the 1860s, there were breweries operating in Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. In those days, it was not easy or quick to travel between these different cities, as sailing ships were slow compared to today's airplanes, trucks and trains. This meant that the local beers were generally the only beers available and they became firm favourites of the local people. Remarkably, this loyalty has continued into the present, with each state capital city still having their own beers, to which local people remain largely loyal.

In Melbourne, the local popular brands are Carlton Draught, Victoria Bitter, Crown Lager and Pure Blond. Victoria Bitter seems to be very popular at any celebration I attend. Pure Blond is a fairly new beer that is low in carbohydrate for those who want to watch their weight. These beers are brewed in Melbourne but the brewer, Carlton and United Breweries, is now owned by a British company.



In Brisbane, the local XXXX Gold is very popular. XXXX is not exactly a creative name. But I guess XXXX is as good a name as any for a beer. XXXX Gold is brewed by the Castlemaine Perkins brewery, which is now owned by a Japanese company.

In Adelaide, the local popular beer is Cooper's Pale Ale. The local Cooper's Brewery is the largest Australian owned brewery.

In Sydney, one of the local popular beers is Toohey's Extra Dry. This beer is brewed by Tooheys which also makes Tooheys Old, a dark ale beer which is also popular.

In Perth, the two top beers are Swan and Emu. I can remember seeing the Swan Brewery on the banks of the Swan River when I lived in Perth in my younger days. The black swan is the bird emblem for Western Australia, so you can see it made a lot of sense to call the local beer Swan. Needless to say, Swan beer

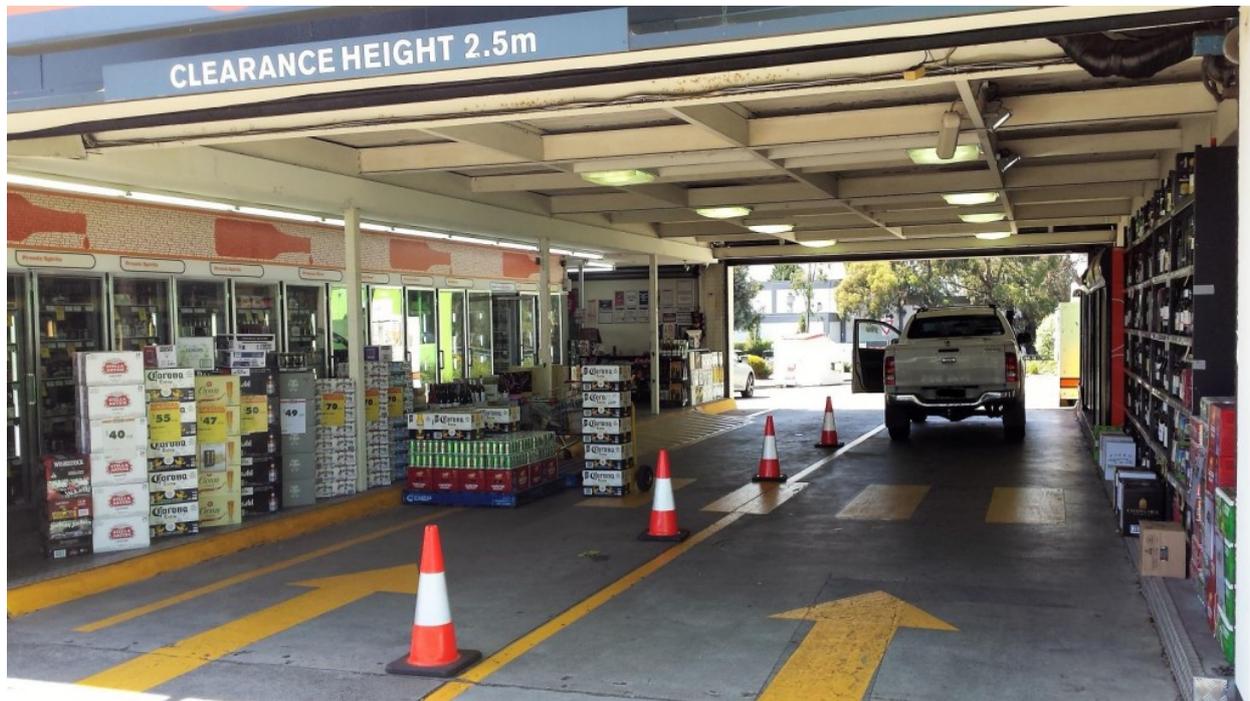
is still very popular in Perth and throughout Western Australia.

Finally, in Tasmania we have the Cascade Brewery, based in Hobart, which makes the popular Cascade Premium Beer. The Boag's Brewery is based in Launceston in the north of Tasmania. It makes the popular James Boag Premium Beer.

Although local beers remain the most popular beer in each capital city, Victoria Bitter has been advertised widely across Australia and is well known in many cities, along with XXXX Gold and Carlton Draught. Interestingly, Foster's Lager is well known internationally as an Australian beer, yet is not very popular in Australia.

Of course, there are dozens of other beers made in Australia, along with an ever increasing number of boutique beers made by specialist breweries. Beer is becoming like wine, with many different brands and styles to choose from. Many smaller regional towns now have their own breweries and their beers are also worth trying when travelling.

One of the most interesting things about beer in Australia is the way you can buy it. We have what is called the 'drive through' attached to many hotels and bottle shops. You don't even need to get out of your car to buy your beer. These bottle shops have a special drive way through their store so you can actually drive your car into the bottle shop and an attendant will ask you what you want.



They hand it to you through your window, you pay and then you drive out the other side. Of course, if you want to take a closer look at what is available, you park your car and come into the bottle shop to select and buy your beer. Most Australian beer drinkers know exactly what beer they want, usually bought in a 'slab', which is a carton of 24 cans or small bottles called stubbies. Buying a slab at a drive through is something typically Australian. Enjoy your next Australian beer.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 69 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

advertised = when you tell people that a product is good and they should buy it

alcohol = the part of the beer which makes you drunk

ale = a type of beer which is brewed a certain way

amount = how much of something

attached = when one thing is connected to another

attend = to go to an event

attendant = the person who helps you in a shop or store

banks = the edges of a river

boutique = special, usually bought by only a few people

brands = the different names of products

brewed = how beer is made

brewery = a place where beer is made

brief summary = to tell you the main points about something

carbohydrate = part of the food we eat

categorized = put into groups

celebration = when people have a party

colonies = areas that are controlled by a foreign country

compared = when you decide if something is worse or better than something else

consumed = eaten or drank

contain = include

creative = when you think of new things that are different

dozen = 12

emblem = something that makes you think of something else

established = created, started

European settlement = when people from Europe first came to live in Australia

firm favourites = the things people like best

gained pace = increase in speed

including = when something is part of something else

internationally = in many different countries of the world

lager = a type of beer which is brewed a certain way

loyalty = when people like something and they keep on liking it

needless to say = you don't need to say it

occasionally = sometimes

operating = in business, when something is working correctly

per head = one for every person

per person = one for every person

premium = high quality

present = today

ranked = when you put things in order. For example, from lowest to highest.

regional = areas away from the capital cities

remarkably = something that is a little unusual

sailing ships = ships that use the wind

select = to chose

slightest = a very small amount

specialist = when you are very good at one thing

statistics = detailed numbers about something. For example, how many, how big, etc

strength = how strong something is

stubbies = small bottle holding 375ml

styles = types

throughout = in all parts

tradesmen = someone who works with his hands to make things. For example, a brick layer

typically = when something is seen many times, normal, average

weight = how heavy you are