Extract Brewing Instructions

Caution

These instructions work with ALL the extract beer making recipes on this site. That said, I can't verify if any other recipes have taken into account the following. I would suggest either asking, if possible, or running the recipe through a beer recipe program with the amount of water you will boil with.

How to Get the Proper Hop Bitterness

In order to get all the hop bitterness you expect from your beer you need to make adjustments for the amount of water you boil your wort in. Follow these instructions to get the correct amount of hop bittering and steeping water for your grains.

1. Sanitize all equipment that will come into contact with your beer (funnel, strainer, bucket, carboy hoses etc). Keep a spray bottle of sanitizer on hand for later use.
2. If your kit does not include steeping grains, go to step 5, otherwise add the steeping grains to the "sock" and calculate the optimal amount of water to steep your grains with. The formula is: 2 quarts of water per pound of grain. For example if you have 1.25 lbs of grain multiply 1.25 x 2. You will use 2.5 quarts of water.
3. Bring the water from step 2 to 160° F, this will bring the water to about 150-154° F after you put in the grain, turn off the heat and place your grain bag into the water.
4. Steep for 30 minutes and let the bag drain over your "tea". Don't squeeze the steeping sock or you will extract tannins and other harsh compounds from the husks.
5. Bring 2-3 Gallons of water to a boil, this depends on the size of your brew pot, but more is better, just be careful of boiling over.
6. After your water has come to a boil, turn off the burner (this will keep the malt extract from scorching when it drops to the bottom) and add 1 cup of liquid malt extract or 1 lb of dry malt extract and any other additives (i.e. water treatment salts) that the recipe calls for. You can use a spatula or spoon with a little of the hot water (be careful), to help get the liquid malt off the sides of the can. Stir it up until the extract is dissolved completely.
7. Turn on the burner again, and once the mixture starts to boil start the timer. Most beers have a hop addition at 60 minutes and boil for 60 minutes also. So check your recipe and see what you need to add and at what time. Add the remaining malt extract and boil for the last 10 minutes. Usually Irish moss or Whirlfloc is also added with 10 minutes to go.
8. When your time is up add any final aroma hops if applicable and get ready to cool your wort. You can stick your pot into an ice bath in the sink or if you have an immersion chiller use that. Cool to 90° F, and add to your fermenter. ***If using a glass carboy, don't add hot wort and cold water, it might break and that is not fun***.
9. Top up to 5 gallons and use a hydrometer to take a reading, this is easy to do. Just float your sanitized hydrometer in your bucket and note the reading.

10. Now you can “pitch” your yeast. If you are using dry yeast just throw it on top. You don’t need to stir up anything; it will dissolve on its own. If you are using liquid yeast, follow the instructions on the yeast and by all means open it slowly as it will contain pressure and you don’t want it to blow out all over you instead of your beer!
11. Attach your lid and airlock (adding water or vodka to the line).
12. Store the fermenter where the temperature stays constant and between 65° - 75° F. Your recipe will give you the optimum temperature for your particular yeast. Cooler is generally better. If you have problems with temperatures, ask someone for some techniques to raise or lower your temperature.
13. You should see signs of fermentation in 12 - 24 hours. This will be noticed as the airlock bubbles. Don’t be surprised if it doesn’t though because some buckets don’t seal airtight and you may not build up enough pressure to push your airlock. Also, some yeast have very mild fermentations.
14. Usually in 4-7 days, the airlock will be slowed down and once you are at about one bubble every 1½ minutes you are ready to bottle. You can be sure by taking another hydrometer reading with your sanitized (remember that spray bottle) hydrometer. The recipe should tell you the expected final gravity (usually 1.008 - 1.014).
15. Congratulations, you are ready to bottle, see Bottling Your Homebrew to learn how to do this.

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