

# [Eight Methods for Spicing Up Your Pumpkin Beer](#)

It's here: The pumpkinocalypse.

Every year at about this time the Basic in all of us rears its ugly head. Fall inevitably ushers in the advent of sharp flavors and pumpkin spiced this and that. Samuel Adams has traded in their lemon-hinted Summer Ale for the fuller bodied Oktoberfest and a multitude of pumpkin ales and other beers hit the shelves.

Everybody has their favorite pumpkin beer (with many of us probably having the same favorite), and while most are content to buy in bulk and savor it all season, it's so easy to forget the value in using beer as a mixer or at the very least, sprucing things up a bit. Layer some pumpkin beer with other beers or spirits, or anything else you might think of. A pinch of this, a dash of that. As long as you're within the wide range of fall flavors, it's hard to mess this one up.

Here are some ideas you can test out:

## **The Spicy Pumpkin**

- 1 pumpkin ale
- sugar & spices for rim

More commonly referred to as ... cinnamon-sugar on the rim!

This one probably comes as no surprise. Many restaurants that offer pumpkin beers will garnish it with a cinnamon-sugar rim (or perhaps even a cinnamon and brown sugar rim). It complements the flavors wonderfully, adding a nice touch of sweetness to the fall spices in the brew. It's easy enough to do; the process is identical to salting the rim for a margarita. Wet the rim of the glass with warm water, apple juice or some meat from an orange (the best option). If you're feeling REALLY dangerous, track down some pumpkin butter (yum...) to moisten the rim. Heck, vanilla vodka might even be great.

Whatever you choose, pour out your spices in a small plate or bowl and just dab your glass in it, rolling it around to ensure a nice coat.

To really spice things up? Mix up the spice ingredients. You'll definitely want to use some kind of sugar in there, be it brown or granulated. Cinnamon is the standard go-to, but pumpkin pie spice, which includes cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and allspice, also suits it quite well.

## **Pumpkin Cider**

- 1 part pumpkin beer
- 1 part cider

Simple and obvious! Mix together some lighter cider with pumpkin beer for a light, fruity and sweet addition to the pumpkin spices. A pear cider will offer a milder flavor as well, letting the pumpkin dominate the flavor profile. Best shared, unless you feel like drinking two net beers all by yourself.

## **The Vanilla Pumpkin**

- 1 pumpkin beer
- 1 shot of vanilla vodka

This one's really self-explanatory: Toss some vanilla vodka in your pumpkin beer. Feel free to combine with the rimmer previously mentioned. Amounts can vary: one shot, two shots, a big ole pour? It's up to you. Any brand of vodka or pumpkin ale will do! You could feasibly do this carbomb style if you're feeling wild.

*Similar (and much improved) variations substitute whipped cream vodka.*

## **The Pumpkin Captain**

- 1 pumpkin beer
- 1 shot of spiced rum

It's no mystery that the dark, mysterious flavors of spiced rums complement a pumpkin beer really well. Much like with the vanilla vodka, the portions are completely up to you. This one is perhaps the best simple cocktail mixer of the bunch.

One of my favorite fall beverages is spiced rum in some cold, non-alcoholic apple cider. Do that with some pumpkin beer, and you've basically got that amazing Pumpkin Juice everybody's always raving about at Hogwarts.

## **The Creamy Gourd (Bomb!?)**

- 1 pumpkin beer
- 1 shot of irish cream OR ½ Irish cream, ½ spiced rum

This one's a bit tricky, because the Irish cream will most likely curdle if mixed too harshly (think Irish Car Bomb curdle). In fact, this one is best consumed almost identically to an Irish Car Bomb, but instead of a shot including Jameson and Bailey's, you do just irish cream, or maybe maintain the half-and-half with spiced rum.

If you're going to mix them straight up, you'll want the Irish cream to be just a light drizzle on top of the pumpkin beer. The smooth, creamy beige will really richen up the flavor for this special treat, but again, curds will curdle your stomach into knots, so proceed at your own risk.

## **The Headless Horseman**

- 1 part pumpkin beer
- 1 part full-bodied stout

In this autumnal variation of the infamous Black and Tan, the simple switch is to sub out the Bass Ale for pumpkin beer, but keep the Guinness or other stout on top. Some places, like Providence's Snookers, have been known to call this the "Headless Horseman" which is odd, considering you wind up getting a lot of head and the pumpkin is on the bottom instead of the top ... but anyway.

You can vary the proportions depending on your preference, but you always want to fill 1/2 to 2/3 of the

glass with pumpkin ale and then slow drizzle the stout floater so it stays on top and doesn't mix right away. The professionals will pour it onto a spoon and let it drip down, but it can be done without.

Rest assured: This one tastes AMAZING and stands as perhaps my favorite variation on pumpkin beer. This is also a great one to have when out, because a lot of restaurants this fall with have both Guinness and a pumpkin beer on draft.

### **The Lambp Shade**

- 1 part pumpkin beer
- 1 part creamy stout
- Drizzle of abricotier lambic

One of my favorite drinks in the world is a signature drink at the Duck & Bunny in PVD: The Lava Lambp. They drizzle Guinness over a bed of Magner's Hard Cider and top it all off with a Framboise Lambic floater. The raspberry of the Framboise trickles through the beverage, slowly dissolving and mixing to give it a look that is distinctly Lava Lamp-like.

For a comparable pumpkin variation, switch in pumpkin ale for the Magner's and choose a different flavor of Lambic. The apricot perhaps works best, but there are a variety of flavors that you can dabble in when it comes to the rich, syrupy brew.

### **The Great Pumpkin**

- Pumpkin beer
- Rye whiskey
- Apple brandy
- Maple syrup
- Garnish with nutmeg

I've seen variations of this one that include a whole egg that really enriches the overall boldness of this complicated cocktail. If you're of the faint of stomach, feel free to skip that step, or even substitute it for a touch of cream or milk (or pumpkin egg nog!).