

Edinburgh craft brewer uses faba beans for new 'green' beer



Faba beans have now been chosen by a Scottish brewer to make a beer that's kinder to the environment. Named Tundra, the India Pale Ale brewed by Edinburgh-based Barney's Beer used 40% whole faba beans and 60% malted barley. The brew also boasts environmentally friendly credentials because it is made from legumes, which need no nitrogen-based fertilisers.

Aficionados have described it as “light amber in colour with assertive bitterness and a distinctive hoppy character”. It was born out of a project seeking novel uses for faba beans that would increase their market potential and reduce wastage. Andrew Barnett, of Barney's Beer, said: “We decided to go with an IPA, adding some depth to the flavour with Belgian malt and spicing things up with US hops. It's cool to be involved in a project at such an early stage that has potential to revolutionise beer-making.”

The use of pulses in brewing is not as “out there” as it sounds, since enterprising individuals in days of yore would have fermented boozy drinks from whatever they could lay their hands on. Barnett added: “It's not unusual for unconventional ingredients to be used to make beer. The pint we know today has evolved over years, and all sorts of fermentable sugar sources have been used in the past. I understand peas and beans are common ingredients in beer in Japan.”

Pulses such as faba beans are high in starch as well as protein, essential minerals like iron, zinc and magnesium, and are gluten-free. Their consumption helps promote low glycemic index, offsetting diabetes, and can safeguard good cardiovascular function. They also foster sustainable food production, as they require no nitrogen-based fertiliser. Faba bean crop has a massive potential in Scotland. The idea, if you can imagine the by-product going into producing quality meat and fish, is to marry legume-supported crop systems with two of Scotland's biggest industries – aquaculture and beer and spirit production.



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