



Cleaning Glassware

by Ray Daniels, Cicerone Certification Program



This post can also be found on the [Cicerone Certification Program Blog](#).

Excerpted from [The Cicerone® Certifications Program's Introduction to Beer eBook](#)

Nothing betrays a dirty glass faster than beer. Any dirt, dried beer, sanitizer, or oil remaining in a glass will alter the appearance of the beer poured into it. Thus, beer glasses must not only be “clean,” but “beer clean.” The ability to consistently create and fill beer-clean glasses is a hallmark of great beer service. Properly cleaned glasses enable properly poured beer, and the combination leads to a visually appealing presentation of beer. When the beer looks good, the beer drinker finds that they like it before they ever take their first sip.

Achieving beer clean glassware requires that you have the right materials and follow the right process. Legal requirements and cleaning methods vary by country, but beer-clean glassware can be attained either by handwashing or through the use of a dedicated glasswashing machine.

Under no circumstances should beer glasses be washed with regular dishes or with glasses which have been used for milk- or cream-containing drinks. Regardless of the detergent used, the fats and oils from foods and dairy products will linger on beer glassware, destroying head formation and ruining the ability to achieve an attractive pour. Beer glasses must be washed in a separate, independent cleaning system dedicated to bar glassware and using inorganic cleaners suited to the purpose. Various systems may be used to sanitize public glassware and

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the acceptable options are usually dictated by local health regulations. Sanitizer compounds are used in some markets, while sanitizing with hot water is employed in other cases. Both can effectively sanitize glassware, although when chemical sanitizers are used, a quick rinse of the glass with clean, cool water immediately before filling helps remove residual sanitizer and improve the appearance of the beer.

Common signs of dirty glassware include bubbles adhering to the inside of a glass (in the liquid portion of the beer), poor foam formation or head retention, and a lack of lacing on the inside of the glass as the beer is consumed. Finally, a simple water rinse can reveal the sheeting of water on the inside, indicating a beer-clean glass. You can also conduct a salt test to give a clearer indication of whether your glass-cleaning regimen is working correctly.

To see the key signs of a beer-clean glass, check out our [Beer Clean Glassware poster](#).



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Ray Daniels is founder and director emeritus of the Cicerone Certification Program. He is a veteran beer writer and educator who has traveled the world promoting quality beer service. (And he managed to sample a few along the way!)