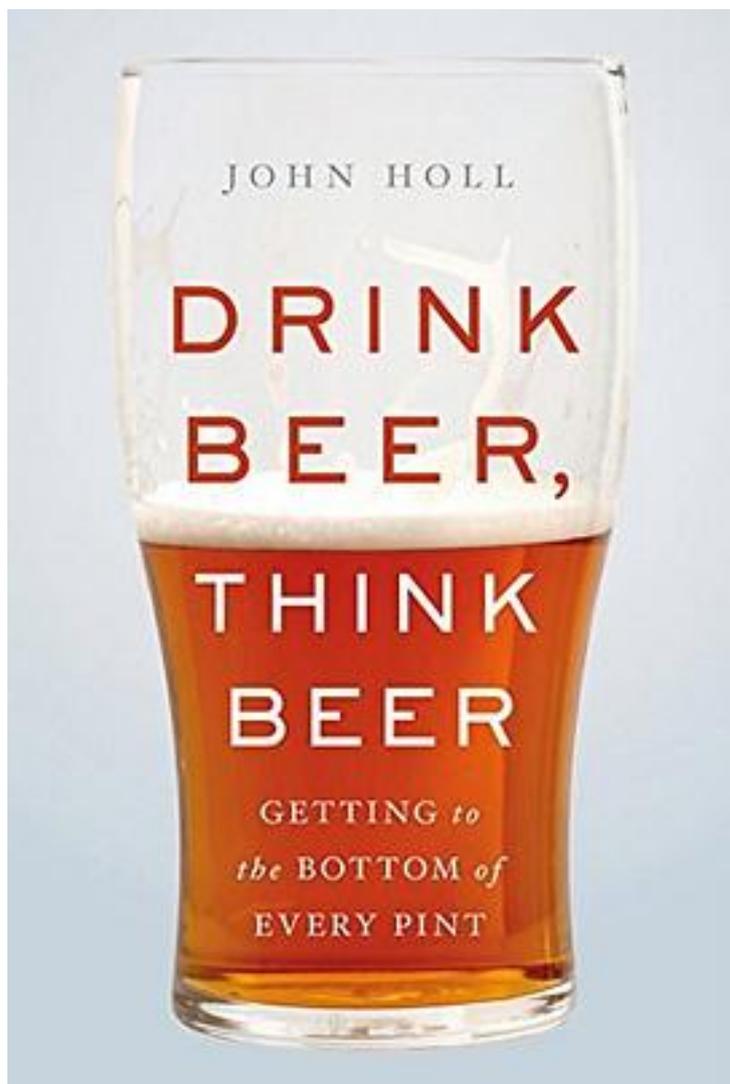


Drink Beer, Think Beer: Getting to the Bottom of Every Pint



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Just about anyone with a modest amount of beer knowledge will tell you that right here, right now is the best time in the history of mankind to be a beer drinker. With the most breweries in the United States since Prohibition and a global culture that is thriving and innovating, there are choices on tap like never before, using ingredients that a generation ago would have been considered taboo by beer makers. And looking around at any one of the 4,800 breweries currently operating in the U.S. will reveal a clientele as diverse as the nation itself. The truth, however, is that while it is a great time to be a beer drinker, it's also a confusing time. Poor quality, misinformation about flavors, and, perhaps, too much choice. Moreover, for every good news story about diversity of taste and positive economic impact, there's a dark side: Unfair business practices like large breweries paying for a tap instead of earning it by popular demand, small brewers denied access to ingredients by larger brewers monopolizing them, unsafe working conditions, and an undercurrent of sexism among brewers that still favors white males above all others. Quality often suffers as breweries try to grow too quickly and "craft" beers promote bitter, strong flavors at the expense of the more subtle brews. To drink beer is easy. Pour, put to lips, and swallow. To think critically about beer is much harder. Appreciating and conscientiously participating in beer culture today is about more than downing pints and understanding flavors. It requires an understanding of everything it took to get that beer into your glass, looking and tasting the way it does, priced the way it is, and sold at that particular venue. Drawing on history, economics, and countless interviews with industry insiders, expert John Holl here provides a complete guide to beer today, exploring how beer and breweries are building communities, changing tastes, and shaping lives.

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