



# African Beer Cup 2026 Competition Rules

## Participants

- Any commercial brewery which produces beer in Africa may enter the African Beer Cup, regardless of brewery size or ownership. Beers produced in Africa under licence or under contract for a worldwide brand may participate as long as the beer entered was brewed in Africa.
- Non-commercial beers - such as home-brewed beers - or beers not produced in Africa are not eligible.
- Special edition or seasonal brews are eligible to enter provided they have been commercially available prior to the competition.

## Payments for beer entries

- Payments must be made directly to the African Beer Cup, either via credit card or EFT.
- Bank fees for international bank transfers and cash deposits must be carried by the entrant.
- Entry costs vary depending on the number of beers entered:

1 – 2 beers: ZAR 1050 per beer

3 – 9 beers: ZAR 975 per beer

10 or more beers: ZAR 925 per beer

## Refunds

- Breweries that have paid for their entries may request a refund and withdraw their African Beer Cup entry prior to 17 April 2026. There will be no refunds or credit notes allowed after 17 April. Refunds may be subject to administrative charges if paid via credit card.
- Should a brewery enter a beer and later find that the beer will not be ready in time for the competition, a substitute beer can be entered in its place at no additional cost, provided that the substitution takes place on or before 23 April 2026. No substitutions or category changes can be implemented after 23 April.
- Breweries that do not pay the entry fees by 11 May 2026 are not eligible to have their beers judged. Delivered beers will be forfeited and will not be returned unless the entrant wishes to arrange a courier to collect.

## Shipping

- All beers must reach our depot at BevPlus in Cape Town by the deadline of 30 April 2026 at 16:30.
- In order to establish equal conditions for all participants, the African Beer Cup will not accept any beer deliveries after the deadline, with the following exception of beers from breweries outside of South Africa:
  - a. For international breweries: entries which were delayed at ports will be accepted after the final deadline as long as all correct shipping procedures were followed and the beers were at a South African port prior to the final deadline date **and** reach the African Beer Cup HQ prior to judging dates
- International and domestic shipping costs are borne by the brewer.



- Breweries entering from outside of South Africa must ensure they fulfil all South African Revenue Service (SARS) customs procedures, and that all duties and taxes are paid by the shipping brewery (Delivery Duties Paid).
- The African Beer Cup will not be held liable for beers delayed at ports due to shipping errors. (Please see our detailed guidelines on shipping beers from outside South Africa).
- The African Beer Cup will not be liable for any unpaid duties or taxes and beers will not be collected if all SARS customs procedures were not followed resulting in extra fees.
- Breweries will not be eligible for refunds if their beers are delayed/stuck at ports due to shipping errors.
- Once beers arrive at our premises, all entries are kept refrigerated at all times.

## Judging

- Every beer will be judged blind. All beers are judged twice by different panels of experienced judges, beer industry experts and brewers.
- Judges that work for a brewery that has entered the competition will not be eligible to judge in any of the categories in which they have entered.
- The judging will be run in accordance with Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) rules and judged out of a total score of 50 points.
- Judges will use the [African Beer Cup Guidelines](#).
- As long as judged beer reaches the threshold to qualify for a particular medal, there will be one gold, one silver, and one bronze medal per each of the 41 categories (not including sub-categories), except for the following:
  - a. Category 18 – Pale American Ale. There will be two sets of medals: Blonde Ale and American Pale Ale.
  - b. Category 21 – IPA. There will be four sets of medals: American IPA, Speciality IPA, Hazy IPA and Session IPA.
- Medal thresholds:
  - a. Gold: 40 points and above
  - b. Silver: 35 points to 39 points
  - c. Bronze: 30 points to 34 points
- In cases where there is a difference in score greater than seven (7) points, the beer will be blind judged again by a third panel and an aggregate score will be given based off the three scores.
- In cases where two or more beers in the same category have the same score and are in medal contention, the beers will be blind judged by a panel to determine which beer is the better example of the style.
- **Mead**

Mead will be added to the African Beer Cup for the first time in 2025. Mead will be judged by a specially selected panel, according to the 2015 Mead Guidelines. There will be one gold medal, one silver medal and one bronze medal across all mead categories, provided that the meads reach the score thresholds listed above. All other rules remain the same for mead and beer.
- **African Celebration Award**

Beers entered in category A1: African Grains Beer, A2: Speciality African Beer and A3: South African Hop Beer will eligible for the African Celebration Award. The highest scoring beer in these categories will be awarded the African Celebration Award. In the event that two or more beers have the same score, judges will assess these beers in a blind judging panel and choose the overall winner of the African Celebration Award.
- **Best Beer in Africa Award**
  - a. All gold medal winners will be eligible to win the Best Beer in Africa award.



- b. The Best Beer in Africa judging will involve a minimum of three (3) judges per flight to judge a maximum of twelve (12) beers per flight. Every gold medal winning beer will go through to a best of show round to determine the Best Beer in Africa. Beers from different categories will compete against each other. Judges will determine which beer is the best representation of its style.

**ENDS**