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A preliminary study investigating consumer preference for cheese and beer pairings

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Highlights

- The hedonic response to cheese and beer pairs was evaluated by eighty consumers.
- Cheese and beer pair preference was driven more by beer liking, then by cheese liking, cheese type, and beer type.
- Cheese and beer pair liking was significantly higher if the cheese flavour largely dominated the beer flavour.
- Parmigiano cheese consumption had a significant effect on the perception of beer flavour.

â€¢ A precise selection of the cheese and the beer is required for a given cheese and beer pair to be liked.

Abstract

The current study was designed to explore the hedonic response of consumers to cheese and beer pairings by actual tasting in a natural environment of consumption. Eighty regular beer and cheese consumers hedonically rated sixteen pairs among four different styles of beer (Standard Lager, Hefeweizen, Amber Bock, Vienna Lager) and four cheeses (Parmigiano-Reggiano, Gorgonzola, Mozzarella, Smoked Provola). The consumers were asked to indicate whether the cheese or the beer flavour dominated each pairing. The hedonic response varied significantly ($p < 0.001$) across combinations of cheese and beer pairs: Parmigiano cheese and Standard Lager were significantly preferred over other cheeses and beers, respectively. The hedonic liking of beer and cheese pairs was affected, in order of effect size, by beer liking, cheese type, flavour dominance, beer type, and beer type—cheese type interaction. Because the pairing was largely affected by beer preference, expert panellists were asked to explore the sensory properties of the beer with and without prior cheese consumption, using Parmigiano-Reggiano as a case study. Prior Parmigiano consumption showed a positive effect on beer liking, by modulating the perceived intensities of acidity, fruitiness, phenolic flavour, level of alcohol and carbonation, and sweetness. These outcomes are useful for engineering the most enjoyable pairing and to avoid intolerable mismatches, thus offering restaurateurs basic rules for aligning particular cheeses and beers in the marketplace.



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Keywords

Beer; Cheese and beer pairing; Consumer liking; Flavour dominance

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