



Essential Guide to Bulk Priming

This page provides the essential information needed to carry out bulk-priming. Technical details have deliberately been kept to a minimum. This guide also serves as an introduction to the more technical discussion.

The following procedure assumes we are working with a beer fermented at around 20°C.

A difference of plus or minus a few degrees won't matter much, but more than around 5°C certainly will.

Procedure

- Measure the required quantity of priming sugar as determined from the table below (we assume here that you are using dextrose).
- Add to saucepan with only enough water to dissolve it (say, 200 ml).
- Bring to boil for a minute or two.
- Add to beer a few minutes prior to bottling and gently stir to distribute evenly. If using a bottling bucket, add the priming sugar as or just before you commence racking – the swirling wort will mix the sugar.

You can add it directly to the primary fermenter, but then you also risk stirring up the yeast cake.

- Don't forget to sanitise the bottling bucket and any equipment that contacts the beer. Take care not to splash the beer when racking as this will cause oxidation.

How much dextrose to add (grams).

The most important column is the 'Rate of dextrose to add'; – multiply this by your volume of fermented beer (in litres) to obtain the total quantity of dextrose to add.

The total amounts for 19L, 23L and 40L are provided, as they are common brew lengths.

Guide to Dextrose Addition for Bulk Priming

Carbonation Level	Rate of dextrose to add (g/L)	Total amount of dextrose to add (grams)*		
		19 L	23 L	40 L
High	7-10	135-190	160-230	280-400
Medium	4-6	75-115	90-140	160-240
Low	0-3	0-55	0-70	0-120

*Note: numbers are rounded to nearest 5 g.

Use 'Medium' to replace standard priming practices (approximately equal to the standard 1 teaspoon/750ml bottle instructions that we all started our brewing with).

Good for most lagers, regular ales, stouts and so on. Use 'High' for Weizens and some Belgian styles. Use 'Low' for English style ales. Or use whatever you like to suit your taste: it's your beer!

For sugars other than dextrose:

The most predictable priming results are obtained from simple fully fermentable sugars such as dextrose or sucrose, but for if you like to experiment here is a guide for adjusting the quantity of priming sugar depending on the type you use.

Start with the numbers in the table above then adjust as follows:

- Table sugar (sucrose) – decrease numbers by 10%
- Dry malt extract – increase by 20-25% (this depends on the brand and may take a little trial and error)
- Liquid malt extract – increase by 40% (this depends on the brand and may take a little trial and error)
- Honey – increase by 50%

Warning: It is very important that the beer has completely finished fermenting and there are no residual fermentable sugars left. Bottling too early, typically results in excessive carbonation, gushers, or even bottle bombs.

You should also be aware that some beers, like stout or other full-bodied beers, may contain some long-chain sugars that will ferment very slowly, leading to a gradual increase in carbonation over a period of months.