



## LET THE *BATTLE COMMENCE*

**CANS ARE GOOD FOR THE BREWER, GOOD FOR THE BEER-DRINKING TRAVELER, AND GOOD FOR THE BEER. BUT IS IT GOOD FOR THE EARTH?**

More and more craft breweries are adding cans to their lineups because they're cheap, they travel well, and they keep damaging light from hitting the beer inside.

Canning craft beer is a trend that began in the US back in 2002, when Colorado-based brewery, Oskar Blues, decided to say goodbye to bottles. The brewery's success in the wake of the release proved that not only were cans a viable option for delivering contemporary craft beer to the masses, but an exciting alternative for those who longed for something new when it came to transporting and consuming their brews. Now, back on home soil, Tottenham-based brewery, Beavertown, led the way when it came to introducing top-quality canned beer to the UK market – altering perceptions about what sits inside shiny metal shells. Now, more and more of the UK and Europe's most beloved breweries are following in the footsteps of Beavertown and their American cousins, embracing the many benefits of canned beer and ensuring beer lovers have the best drinking experience possible

When it comes down to it, the most environmentally friendly way to drink a beer is to ride your bike to the nearest brewery

and drink straight from the tap. That's not always possible, and with so many beer options out there, no one should be limited to just one local brewery. So environment-loving people are stuck between two options: cans or bottles.

Putting taste and style aside, here are the environmental pros and cons for bottles and cans.

### THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST BOTTLES

Glass bottles are recyclable, and the typical bottle is made with between 20 and 30 percent recycled material. They also are made with silica. Silica is industrial sand and gravel with a high silicon dioxide content. According to the United States Geological Survey, silica is abundant and its mining "usually has a limited environmental impact."

That side of bottled beer sounds great, but there's one major problem: Glass is heavy. Glass bottles have a larger carbon footprint when it comes to transportation. They also take a large amount of thick cardboard packaging to make sure the fragile glass bottles don't break. According to Slate, transporting a bottle emits 20 percent more greenhouse gases than a can.

### THE CASE FOR AND AGAINST CANS

You probably know this already, but cans are a lot lighter than bottles. That means they have a smaller carbon footprint than glass (as noted above), but also that they take less cardboard to hold and transport. Furthermore, cans are made with much more recycled content than glass bottles. According to The Aluminum Association, cans are typically made with 70 percent recycled content, and people recycle their cans 20 percent more often than they recycle glass.

The major downside to cans comes from making new aluminum. Aluminum producers need to mine bauxite, which is a clay mineral made up of aluminum hydroxide, iron, titanium, sulphur, and chromium. Bauxite mining is a scorched-earth operation in which massive equipment tramples local terrain and breaks into the Earth while spewing dust into the atmosphere. No matter how good recycling gets, new aluminum will always be a part of the equation.

Neither option sounds appealing to you? Maybe it's best to just stick to the local taps, then. That is the purest way to try good beer