

Fancy a pint?

Callum: Hello and I'm Callum Robertson, and this is London Life. They are something of a British institution, they have their own specialised vocabulary and there are over 6000 of them in London alone.

What am I talking about? Well it's the good old pub, of course. Going to the pub is something that is quintessentially British, it's something that is part of our heritage our culture and it's an experience which isn't really the same anywhere else in the world.

So first, what do we mean by a pub. The word pub is short for public house, a public house. A public house is a place where alcoholic drinks are sold for people to consume on the premises. What makes a pub a pub and not simply a bar is that pubs usually have some kind of homely atmosphere. There might be lots of wood in the décor, carpets on the floor and if you're lucky an open fire where you can sit with your drink and keep warm on a cold winter's night.

Pubs are usually identified by a sign hanging outside. These signs were originally compulsory following a 14th Century law which said that whoever was making beer to be sold had to hang out a sign.

These days most pubs are still marked by a sign hanging outside and the names of pubs are also very traditional, like The King's Head, The Rose and Crown and the Carpenter's Arms.

There is a lot a specific vocabulary associated with pubs and pub is not the only word they are known by. Booze is a slang word for alcohol and so the boozier is another name for a pub.

A pub that you go to regularly you call your local, and in your local you are known as a regular.

So what is it about the pub experience that makes it so special? Dean Fetzer runs a website which provides a guide to and reviews of thousands of London pubs told us why.

Dean Fetzer

Well, it's about the whole package, it's about the environment, the atmosphere, the people who work in the pub, the people who visit the pub and the beer is important but it's not the ultimate part of the experience, it's about how you find the pub.

Callum: So according to Dean it's not the beer that's most important about going to the pub, it is important but it's not the ultimate part of the experience. That is the overall atmosphere and environment, the people who are there are the people who work there. It makes it all a very social and enjoyable experience. Listen again.

Dean Fetzer

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Callum: In most pubs you can buy a wide range of alcohol and soft drinks, wines and spirits but because most pubs have a connection with breweries, companies that brew or produce beer, this is the main product sold. There are many different

beers and lagers. In Britain if you order a beer what you get what is called, bitter, a dark beer which is not very gassy. Lager is the golden drink with more gas that is more common in many other countries. So if this is what you want and you're in an English pub be sure to ask for lager. And although you can buy beer and lager in a bottle it's more usual for it to be served by a pump which brings up the drink from barrels in the cellar of the pub.

In Britain beer and lager from the pump is sold in measures of a pint or half a pint. Just those two. A pint is about half a litre. The word 'pint' is very useful to remember. With British people you can use it when arranging a drink and buying a drink. For example a very common phrase to use is this one:

Fancy a pint, fancy a pint

It means, "Would you like to come to the pub with me and have a drink" Quite a long sentence there – so it's useful to remember the short version:

Fancy a pint?

And of course the word 'pint' is used when ordering your drinks in the pub.

A pint of bitter please

I'll have a pint of lager please

And if you don't want a pint, but a half pint, then we just use the word 'half'

Half a bitter please

Half a lager please

Finally if you're going to an English pub there's another thing to remember.
Here's Dean Fetzer again.

Dean Fetzer

Don't expect a waiter to come to your table and take an order 'cos it doesn't happen in a lot of them, some are doing it now, but it's quite a new thing.

Callum: That's right, when ordering your drink in a pub you go to the bar and speak directly to the person working behind the bar, there are no waiters coming to tables to take orders!

Well that's all from this edition of London Life. I have to admit that I'm quite thirsty now, anyone fancy a pint?