Ask the expert - is the UK the only place where beer is drunk full of live cultures?

09/06/2024 by Tim Webb

Campaign



No.   Bottle-conditioned beers are commonplace around the world and in some countries, most prominently Belgium, but also the Netherlands, France and various parts of Scandinavia, they are highly prized. Cask-conditioned ales are also emerging in North America, where at least two annual festivals feature 200 plus cask ales, and appear occasionally in some Latin American countries, notably Brazil.   Is our beer probiotic and more nutritious? It is probably correct to say live beers are likely to be more nutritious in some ways, though others would argue that continuing the removal of sugars from a beer and converting these into alcohol makes them less nutritious. It depends on how nutrition is viewed.   To be pedantic, the suggestion that other types of beer have been “treated” is slightly misleading as this usually infers the addition of modifying chemicals. The treatment process for beer is usually microfiltration, or in some cases pasteurisation.   Also, while the observation that such beers can be seen as probiotic is correct, once a live beer has been properly conditioned in its container, it will in practice contain very little residual live yeast. The purpose of the yeast is to aid further conditioning of the beer in its container, bringing about more flavour development rather than yeast procreation.   Tim Webb (pictured) is a member of CAMRA’s Technical Advisory Group and is the author of CAMRA’s Beer Breaks, plus co-author, with Stephen Beaumont, of The World Atlas of Beer  Have you a question for our experts? Send it to wb.editor@camra.org.uk