

# Beer Bus Adventures: Brew Tours Available in Many U.S. C



Larz Watts of Brewhop in San Diego.

BY MIRELLA AMATO

In Europe, where there is a rich beer history, many cities offer at least one regular tour that includes brewery visits. These tours are a convenient way to discover a city's brewing history and sample an array of beers without having to worry about transportation or maps. Beer bus tours are also an environmentally friendly option and circumvent the whole "drink or drive" dilemma.

Travelers in the U.S. will be happy to learn that a number of passionate and entrepreneurial individuals have decided to offer beer bus tours in their hometowns. The past three years have seen the birth of at least six beer bus tour companies throughout the U.S. There are now a number of cities where visitors can sign up for public or private pre-arranged brewery tours, and get an insider's look at the local beer scene.

## Portland The Portland Brew Bus

[www.brewbus.com](http://www.brewbus.com)

The Portland Brew Bus has been running for 13 years, but founder and tour operator Jim Long has noticed an increased interest in the tours lately. He offers public bus tours year-round and can also accommodate groups for private tours. During these tours, Long will sometimes run The College of Brew Knowledge, providing diplomas for participants. According to Long, the Portland tour is about more than just beer, it is a celebration of the city. Long has been getting requests from other locations, and is contemplating also offering tours in Philadelphia, Washington and New York City.

## Kansas City KC Hometown Beer Bus Tours

[www.beerjockey.blogspot.com](http://www.beerjockey.blogspot.com)

Jim Quinn, a.k.a. The Beer Jockey, has been working in the beer industry for years. When he moved

to Kansas City, he was surprised to find out about the city's rich beer history. He discovered a number of old brewery buildings, as well as depots that were formally used as bottling and distribution centers for larger breweries. The KC Hometown Beer Bus Tour, which has been running since 2006, highlights this local history, as well as providing insight into the current local brewing scene. For the time being, the tours are only available for private groups of 15 or more.

## San Diego Brewery Tours of San Diego

[www.brewerytoursandsanidiego.com](http://www.brewerytoursandsanidiego.com)

San Diego is home to not one, but two beer tour companies! Brewery Tours of San Diego (BTSD) was started by Jon McDermott and his partner Mindy in August 2007. Public tours are available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Each day features three different breweries, in order to give customers a choice of destinations, or the opportunity to see a wide variety of local breweries in one weekend. Although the focus of the BTSD really is the San Diego Brewing Scene, McDermott does point out some sites along the way. BTSD also offer private tours for groups of six to eight people.

## Brew Hop

[www.brewhop.com](http://www.brewhop.com)

Brew Hop, on the other hand, only offers private brewery tours, for groups of two to 30 people. Customers planning a visit to San Diego can call in advance to schedule a tour and either request specific breweries, or ask Summer and partner Larz Watts to recommend an itinerary. The Brew Hop team will provide an overview of the local beer scene along the way, mentioning other significant breweries in the area. Brew Hop has been

running since April of last year, and is hoping to offer its services in Seattle by the end of the year, and later to expand into San Francisco and Portland.

## Asheville Brews Cruise

[www.brewscruise.com](http://www.brewscruise.com)

Mark and Trish Lyons' mission with Brews Cruise is to enhance beer knowledge for everyone who participates, providing a 'beer 101' for complete novices, and making sure to "break out something exclusive" for the seasoned beer fans. The tour, which runs year-round usually from Wednesday to Saturday, focuses on beer and the Asheville beer culture. Although Brews Cruise has only been running two years, it is already in expansion. Brews Cruise Nashville is well on its way (see below) and Brews Cruise Denver will be coming soon.

## Nashville Brews Cruise

[www.brewscruise.com/nashville](http://www.brewscruise.com/nashville)

The first official Nashville Brews Cruise ran on June 29 of this year. Public tours now run Tuesday through Saturday year-round. Nashville Brews Cruise founder, John Cummins, was inspired to start the tour after attending the Asheville Brews Cruise. He is very happy to spread the word about his local beer scene. Nashville is currently home to one micro-brewery and three brewpubs, and rumor has it there will be more of them opening soon.

## San Francisco Muir Woods and Brewery Tour

[www.incadventures.com](http://www.incadventures.com)

The Muir Woods and Brewery tour is a unique beer bus tour experience run by a large eco-friendly tour company: Incredible Adventures (IA). The tour includes a stop at the Golden Gate Bridge and a visit to Muir Woods, as well as to three local breweries. The tour was introduced to the IA portfolio at the request of the San Francisco Brewing Guild, who felt that their



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