

MEAD MAKERS

PRESENTED BY

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A collage of mead-making ingredients and tools. In the foreground, a glass of red mead and a glass of yellow mead are visible. A wooden honey dipper and a wooden spoon are also present, set against a background of honey and a wooden bowl.

Intro to Mead Making

Brew your first gallon of mead

What is Mead?

Mead is a wine made from honey.

- Honey provides the main sugar source that yeast consume and convert to alcohol and CO₂.

There are different varieties of mead just as there are different varieties of other alcoholic beverages

- Metheglins, Melomels, Cyser, Braggots...
- Traditional Mead: Honey, Water and yeast.



Your One Gallon Batch: Ingredients

Water

- NO
 - Distilled Water
 - Heavily Chlorinated Water
 - Reverse Osmosis
- YES
 - Tap Water
 - Spring Water



Your One Gallon Batch: Ingredients

Honey

- Use whatever you have!
- Different types of honey will provide different flavors
- I recommend starting with 3 to 5lbs per gallon of mead
 - You can go lower or higher, it will effect alcohol content, flavor and mouthfeel

Yeast

- Use a brewers yeast
 - Dry champagne, sweet wine, ale

Intro to Mead Making

This is meant to be a gateway to a new hobby and your first batch of homemade mead

- I will be guiding you through the process of making mead with minimal investment and equipment to see if it's something you enjoy at all as a hobby
- This is how I started and everything is safe, accessible and should result in a satisfactory mead
- If you end up liking this process you will want to start adopting new practices down the line and most likely investing more into your equipment.
- I have provided lists of equipment as handouts.

Your One Gallon Batch: What You Will Need on Brew Day

- One gallon jug. AKA Fermentation Vessel
 - Old wine jug, brew kit you've never used, jug of spring water...
- Air Lock
 - Air-lock, balloon
- Sanitizer
 - unscented regular old house bleach
- Cleaner
 - Dish soap
- Yeast Nutrient
 - raisins
- Honey
- Yeast
- Water



Brew Day: Making the Must

Sanitize Everything.

- Cleaning and Sanitization are the unsung heroes of a good brew
 - Everything that will be used must be cleaned and then sanitized. If in doubt. Sanitize it again. Especially if it is something that will come into contact with the Must.
 - Cleaning
 - hit everything with warm Water and dish soap. Make sure there are no solids on anything especially in your fermentation vessel.
 - Sanitize
 - Fill your sink with a couple gallons of water. Unsure of how many gallons it holds? Use your empty fermenter to measure. Get about 2 gallons in there and then fill the bottle cap from the bleach container with bleach and dump it into the water. That is now your sanitizing solution. It should not smell strongly of bleach. If it does dilute it down with more water. This solution is well within sanitizing guidelines, which are 1 tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water.
 - Soak everything in there for a couple of minutes. Time is your friend because that dilution is very mild.

Brew Day: Making the Must

- Add your water to your fermentation vessel
 - Depending on what you use for your FV will depend on how much water you add or take out.
 - Fill halfway to start
- Add your honey into the water
 - Measure your honey out and add it to your water. Measure by weight.
- Fill your fermenter with water until you hit the desired volume for your container
 - You need to leave some “head space”. If you fill it too much it will overflow and make a mess while fermenting.
- Shake or Stir your mixture until it is well blended
 - If you stir, make sure your stirrer is sanitized. If you cap and shake, make sure the cap is sanitized.

Brew Day: Final Steps from Must to Mead

- Add your yeast nutrient
 - For this brew we are using a 1oz box of raisins added in as our yeast nutrient
- Add your yeast
 - Open your packet and pour directly into your must through the mouth of your fermenter.
- Now add your air lock
 - If you have an airlock make sure its filled with water/sanitizer so nothing can get into your fermenter.
 - If you are using a balloon, sanitize it and put it over the mouth of your fermenter and then use a sanitized needle to puncture a hole in it. The hole does not have to be visible as long as you know the needle went through the side of the balloon.
- Now Take your Fermenter and place it in a cool dark spot
 - Not too cool. Whatever yeast you chose will have an ideal temperature threshold
 - Not too warm. Yeast will begin to multiply and much like a crowded room the must will warm up as the yeast become more active

Now, you wait.

After 24 hours you should see signs of fermentation

- If you used an air lock, you should see the cap releasing air
- If you used the balloon method. The balloon should be partially inflated
- You may see bubbles forming at the top or running up the sides of your fermenter
- You may see a foam floating on top
- Fermentation Takes time
 - Check on it all you want, but try not to agitate
 - It will be vigorous early
 - Fades over time
 - I would plan to let it ferment for 2 to 3 whole weeks
 - When fermentation is done it will begin to clear



Bottling Your Mead

What You Will Need

- Bottles
- Bottle caps or corks
- Bottle capper/corker
- Funnel or Auto-siphon
- Cleaner
- Sanitizer
- Your fermented mead



Bottling Your Mead

Different types of bottles

- Beer Bottles
 - 12 or 22oz bottles
 - Requires bottle cap and capper
- Wine Bottles
 - 750mL bottles
 - Require corks and corker
- Swing Top Bottles
 - Varying sizes
 - No additional equipment
 - Purportedly don't keep as long but I've never had issues



Bottling Your Mead

Cleaning and Sanitization

- Once again this is crucial to the success of your mead. If done right your bottled mead can sit for years or even indefinitely without contamination issues.
- Clean and sanitize everything that your mead will contact, funnel, siphon, caps, bottles, etc
- You may want to place some old towels down in your fill area to make clean up easier/avoid getting mead on everything
- Clean towel for bottles to rest and dry on while they wait to be filled

Bottling Your Mead

Transferring your finished mead from the fermenter to the bottle

- If you chose to purchase an auto-siphon, place it in the mead without touching the pile of sediment at the bottom of your fermenter and pump.
 - Gravity will do the rest. Just move the hose from bottle to bottle as they fill.
- If you choose to use a kitchen funnel you will want to pour as gently as possible to try and avoid stirring up that sediment at the bottom of the fermenter.
 - This inevitably will transfer more sediment into your bottles than the siphon method. It is unavoidable with this method.
- Cap as soon as possible.
 - You want to keep air/oxygen out of your finished mead as much as you can.



Finishing Up

- Make sure you clean all your equipment to make sure your next brew day goes as easily as possible
- Feel free to drink whatever mead didn't make it into a bottle. Use your judgement though. If it looks like all that remain is that cloudy sediment maybe hold off.
- Age your mead. Not necessary but they taste better with age
 - Flavors and heat from alcohol will mellow
 - Crack a bottle every 3 months or so and see where they taste best to you!