

Traditional Mead

Mead is known from many sources of ancient history throughout Europe, Africa and Asia, and can be regarded as the ancestor of all fermented drinks. The defining characteristic of mead is that the majority of the beverage's fermentable sugar is derived from honey. It may be still, carbonated or naturally sparkling, and it may be dry, semi-sweet or sweet.

Ingredients (For a 5 gallon batch)

1 Gallon of your favorite honey
1 Packet of Lalvin wine yeast of your choosing
3 tsp Yeast Nutrient*
2 tsp Fermax Nutrient*
3 tsp Acid Blend*
1/2 tsp Irish Moss *

Statistics

Original Gravity 1.062
Final Gravity 1.016
Alcohol Cont 6.0%

When it comes to honey selection, Clover and Orange Blossom honey are great choices. Typically the darker the honey, the more intense the flavor of the finished mead.

***These ingredients are mixed together in a small vial.**

Procedure

A few hours before you begin to brew: If you are using liquid yeast, prepare it according to the package instructions. If using dry yeast, simply remove from the fridge and allow to come to room temperature.

1. In a pot combine honey and 1½ gallons of water.
2. Slowly increase heat until the honey dissolves, then raise the temperature of the mixture to 170F. Steep at this temperature for 20 minutes to pasteurize the honey (without boiling, which would drive off delicate aromatics).
3. (Optional) If you want to add fruit to your mead: crushed, chopped or pureed fruit may be added to the honey/water mixture during the steeping process. Take care not to allow the fruit to boil.
4. Put a lid on the pot and move the pot into an icewater bath in order to chill rapidly. (A sink full of cold water will work adequately if the water is changed two or three times as it heats up.) Once you can comfortably touch the sides of the pot, pour the honey and water mixture into cold water in your fermenter and top off to 5 gallons.
5. When the temperature is below 80F add the yeast. If using dry yeast, sprinkle it evenly across the surface.
6. Allow to ferment at room temperature until completion. The final gravity should be around 0.990-0.994. If fermentation stops before the mead reaches its final gravity, the fermentation may be "stuck." If you find that you have a "stuck" fermentation, there are a few things you can try. You can add Yeast Energizer, or another pack of yeast. You can also try to rouse the yeast by shaking or stirring it up.
7. Once you have confirmed fermentation has completed, transfer into a clean and sanitized 5 gallon carboy. While this is called a "secondary fermentation", there should be no actual fermentation occurring. Likewise, make sure the carboy is filled within 1-2 inches of the bottom of the stopper. You do not want any headspace at this stage. If you do not have enough mead to fill the carboy up to that level, you may add water or (preferred) store bought mead.
8. Most mead makers will agree that a full year of aging is preferred before proceeding to bottling. However, let your own tastebuds be your guide. As the mead clears, you will occasionally need to rack (transfer) off the sediment at the bottom of the carboy. This will provide you a chance to taste the mead as it ages. Remember that any mead you take out needs to be replaced to keep the carboy full. It is best to have a bottle of mead handy to top up.
9. When the mead has achieved the flavor that you like, it is now ready to bottle. Sparkling mead is bottled just like beer with priming sugar. Still mead (not bubbly) is bottled like wine, in wine bottles and corked. Bottle caps can still be used to bottle still mead. Sparkling mead can utilize beer bottles with caps or champagne bottles, and be either capped or corked and caged.

Keystone Homebrew Supply

435 Doylestown Rd, **Montgomeryville**, PA 18936
(215) 855-0100 sales@keystonehomebrew.com

128 E 3rd Street, **Bethlehem**, PA 18015
(610) 997-0911 infobeth@keystonehomebrew.com