

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO

FERMENT. BOTTLE. ENJOY!

MAKING HARD CIDER

5
GALLON EDITION





INGREDIENTS



APPLE JUICE

The base of your hard cider will be natural apple juice, which you will need to source. You will need a total of five gallons of juice that is 100% natural and without preservatives. Ascorbic Acid is okay, but Potassium Sorbate or Sodium Benzoate are not okay and will prevent fermentation from happening. You should also avoid "diet," "lite" or sugar-free juices, which often contain non-fermentable sugars or too little sugar for the yeast to create alcohol. You can use bottled apple juice from the grocery store, unfiltered apple cider or even orchard-pressed juice.



YEAST

Yeast is a living organism that is technically a fungus. It grows and multiplies by eating the sugar in the juice, converting the sugar to alcohol and then releasing CO₂ (yeast will eventually help to carbonate your cider). The yeast in this kit is specifically bred for cider fermentation. This yeast strain produces a crisp, well-balanced, fresh and fruity hard cider. It also has a wide fermentation temperature range of 50–86°F.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

EQUIPMENT:

- Ⓐ 6.5 Gallon Primary Fermenter with Spigot & Lid
- Ⓑ 3-Piece Airlock
- Ⓒ Transfer Tubing
- Ⓓ Spring Tip Bottling Wand
- Ⓔ Capper & 50 Bottle Caps
- Ⓕ Fermometer (adhesive thermometer)
- Ⓖ Hydrometer

INGREDIENTS:

- SafCider AC-4 Yeast Packet
- Sanitizer Packet



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Five (5) gallons Apple Juice
- Fifty (50) “pry off” beer bottles*
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white table sugar or pre-measured priming sugar packet*

*These items can be found on CraftaBrew.com

This kit makes a traditional semi-dry hard cider. If you prefer a sweet cider, a fruity cider or a spiced cider, turn to page 9 for recipe ideas.



SANITATION

Proper sanitation is regarded as the most important step in cider making. It is the difference between great tasting cider and something so bad you'll have to pour it down the drain. Yeast is the only organism you want touching your cider, any other bacteria will eat the sugar and spread quickly making it sour, and undrinkable. So make sure everything that touches your cider during fermentation & bottling is properly sanitized.

BUCKET ASSEMBLY:

If this is your first time using the bucket, you'll need to assemble prior to sanitizing. First, remove the plastic nut and one of the silicone gaskets from the spigot. With one gasket on the spigot threads, slowly twist the spigot into the bucket's hole. Then, place the other gasket on the spigot inside the bucket, followed by the plastic nut. Twist to tighten the gasket so it presses the pair of gaskets against the inside and outside the bucket, forming a tight seal. Do not over-tighten. We recommend filling the bucket with tap water – just above the 1 gallon fill line – to check for any leaks before you proceed. Adjust the spigot & washers as needed.

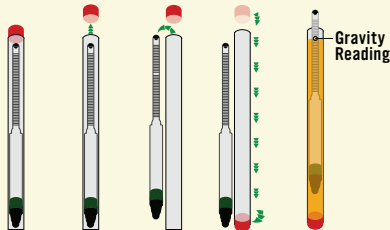
With the bucket's spigot in the closed position, pour HALF of the sanitizer packet's contents into your fermentation bucket and top with 1 gallon of water. Reserve the remaining HALF of the sanitizer for bottling day. Stir to dissolve. Add the airlock to the sanitizing solution and let soak for 60 seconds. Retrieve the components and let dry on clean paper towels. Next, install the lid on the bucket. Cover the lid's hole with your thumb and rock back & forth to splash sanitizer around the container. This may cause some leaks, so it's best done over the sink or outdoors. Open the spigot to allow sanitizer to flow through it and empty into your sink. Remove the lid & discard any remaining sanitizer.



FERMENTATION

This is the process to make traditional hard apple cider, if you would like to see some variations on this recipe turn to page 9 before proceeding.

1. First, take the OG reading (Original Gravity) of your juice. Remove the hydrometer, paper & foam from the plastic tube. Place the hydrometer back in the empty plastic tube and place the tube cap on the base. Pour apple juice into the tube until it's completely full. Gently spin the hydrometer to remove any bubbles that might be clinging to it. Set the tube on a flat surface and note the hash mark on the hydrometer that lines up with the surface of the liquid. Write this number down – you'll use this OG to calculate the ABV later. **DISCARD THIS SAMPLE. DO NOT** pour it back into the fermenter.



2. Confirm that the spigot on your sanitized fermentation bucket is closed. Then, pour apple juice into the bucket to reach the 5 gallon fill line.
3. Open the yeast packet and sprinkle the contents across the surface of the juice.
4. Install the lid. It helps to move clockwise around the lid to secure. Place the airlock in the lid's hole. Remove the airlock's vented cap and fill the body with water to reach the fill line. Place the vented cap back on.
5. Stick the fermometer (adhesive thermometer) to the outside of the fermentation bucket. For the most accurate readings, place it near the middle of the juice's depth so the entire strip is "touching" the cider from the outside of the bucket. Look for the greenest temperature reading on the strip to read the cider's fermentation temperature.



6. Let your cider ferment for 10 days at a stable temperature between 65–80°F. Maintain a consistent temperature and avoid fluctuations for best results. Fermentation activity may take ~12+ hours to take off – this is called the “lag phase.” Activity will peak between ~12–72 hours after adding the yeast. After a few days, activity will slow down and you may not see much airlock activity for the rest of fermentation.

IS FERMENTATION FINISHED?

After 10 days your cider should be finished fermenting and ready to bottle, but fermenting at a cooler temperature can slow the process. Before bottling, make sure that airlock activity has completely stopped. You can also confirm that fermentation is complete with your hydrometer. Take two gravity readings ~3 days apart. If the gravity reading is the same, this confirms that the yeast are finished fermenting.

BOTTLING

1. Remove the airlock from the lid before taking the FG reading (Final Gravity). Place the hydrometer in its empty plastic tube. Using the spigot on your fermenter, completely fill the tube with cider. Gently spin the hydrometer to remove any bubbles that might be clinging to it. Set the tube on a flat surface and note the hash mark on the hydrometer that lines up with the surface of the liquid. DO NOT pour this back into the fermenter. Instead, pour it into a glass and taste your cider.

CALCULATING ABV

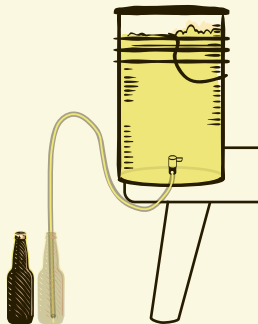
Now that you have your OG & FG, you can calculate your cider’s final Alcohol By Volume (ABV).

$$(OG - FG) * 131.25 = ABV$$

EX. $(1.055 - 1.013) * 131.25 = 5.5\% ABV$



2. Rinse bottles with warm water to wash away any sediment or dust.
3. Next, you will sanitize your bottling day equipment. In a large bowl, stock pot or pitcher, dissolve the remaining sanitizer in 1 gallon of water. Stir to dissolve. Add the capper, caps, transfer tubing, bottling wand and a large spoon to the sanitizing solution and let soak for 60 seconds. Retrieve these items and let dry on clean paper towels. Then, working in batches, submerge and soak bottles for 60 seconds each. Let drip dry on paper towels.
4. Now you'll make priming sugar solution. This sugar gives the residual yeast in your cider the fuel they need to carbonate the cider. In a small sauce pot add 2 cups of water and exactly $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of white table sugar. Heat the pot on medium-high and stir in the sugar until fully dissolved. Boil for 5 minutes then cover and let cool completely.
5. Once priming sugar is completely cool, pour it into the bucket with your cider. Stir gently with the sanitized spoon to incorporate. Avoid creating air bubbles, which can oxidize the cider.
6. Place the bucket on a chair or surface that's slightly elevated above your bottles. Attach the transfer tubing to the bottling bucket's spigot. Attach the sanitized bottling wand to the opposite end of the tubing. The spring tip of the bottling wand will need to touch the very bottom of each bottle.





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7. Gently rest the bottling wand inside your first empty bottle. Carefully open the spigot on the bucket. Then, press the bottling wand down into the bottle to release the flow of liquid. Once the bottle is filled to the top, lift the wand up to stop the flow. Once you remove the wand, you'll be left with the perfect amount of headspace.

BOTTLING WAND TIPS

A spring tip bottling wand is a handy tool that allows you to bottle with less mess! You'll use the wand to start and stop the flow of cider when bottling – not the spigot. You'll only open the spigot once and you'll use the wand to start and stop the flow.

Press the tip against the bottom of a bottle to allow liquid to flow freely. Lift up the wand when the bottle is full to activate the automatic shut off valve.

8. Repeat this process to fill all of your bottles with cider. You may need to tilt the bucket to maintain flow while bottling the last gallon of liquid.
9. Use the capper to cap each bottle. Press down the handles to clamp the cap into place.

CAPPING TIPS

For more leverage and ease, you can place bottles on a low countertop or bench so you can put your weight into it from above. You can also place each bottle on the floor, securing between your feet when capping, for even more leverage.

Push the arms of the capper down until they are parallel with your surface. Do not use excessive force, otherwise you can break the bottle necks. To help absorb shock, place a towel underneath bottles when capping.



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10. Store your bottles for 10 days at a temperature between 65–75°F. After 10 days at room temperature, move the bottles to the refrigerator to slow down the yeast and lock in the carbonation. If you do not have enough room in your fridge, place the extras in the next coolest spot in your home (like a chilly basement). If left at room temp, the yeast can continue to create pressure inside the bottles, which can lead to dangerous "bottle bombs." We recommend pouring slowly into a glass and leaving about an ounce of sediment behind for the cleanest pour.

CARBONATION TIPS

If your cider is under-carbonated, this can be fixed! The yeast just needs more time & possibly a warmer location. You can remove bottles from the fridge and let them continue carbonating at room temperature for another ~3–5 days before testing another bottle.



RECIPE VARIATIONS

You can make a classic hard apple cider with bottled apple juice, but you can also get creative with added fruit, spices or sweetness:

BLENDED JUICE CIDER:

You can ferment a blend of apple juice + other fruit juices. Use at least 50% apple juice and up to 50% other fruit juice.

Examples:

2.5 gallons Apple Juice & 2.5 gallons Cranberry Juice

3 gallons Apple Juice & 2 Gallons Pomegranate Juice

4 Gallons Apple Juice & 1 Gallon Strawberry Juice

APPLE CINNAMON CIDER:

Add up to 10 whole cinnamon sticks directly to the fermenter with ~1-2 days left in the fermentation process. Bottle as usual.

NOTES:



PEACH/BERRY CIDER:

Chop, freeze and defrost 5+lb of fruit or berries (this breaks down cell walls to release juices). Gently mash the fruit to release more juice. Add the fruit to a mesh straining bag* to keep fruit sediment contained. Add directly to the fermenter before pitching yeast. For the first ~5 days of fermentation, use a clean spoon to submerge the fruit bag. This keeps the solids moist to prevent mold while enhancing the cider's color and flavor. Always place the lid & airlock back on when you're done.

*Available on CraftaBrew.com

SWEET CIDER:

This kit produces a traditional semi-dry hard cider. For a sweeter flavor, add non-fermentable sugar (like Erythritol) to bottles before topping with fermented cider. Yeast will convert priming sugar (white table sugar) into carbon dioxide, but will leave non-fermentable sugar alone.

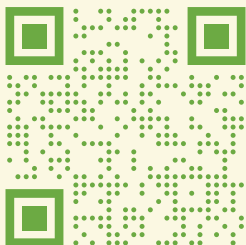
- Add 1 Tablespoon Erythritol per 12 oz bottle for semi sweet cider
- Add 2 Tablespoons Erythritol per 12 oz bottle for sweet cider

⚠ WARNING: Fermentable sugars (like honey, fruit or table sugar) should NOT be used to sweeten your cider – they will cause dangerous bottle bombs. Non-fermentable sugars (like Erythritol) cannot be fermented, making them safe for sweetening. Erythritol is not a substitute for priming sugar.

NOTES:



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