

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO

FERMENT. BOTTLE. ENJOY!

MAKING MEAD





INGREDIENTS

HONEY:

You will need to source 12.5 lb of your preferred honey. Its flavor profile will be the foundation of your mead, so feel free to use any variety – orange blossom, clover, wildflower, you name it!

YEAST:

Yeast is a living organism (technically a fungus) that converts sugar into alcohol, releasing CO₂ in the process. The Lalvin D47 yeast strain in this kit leaves some residual sweetness and honey aroma in the finished product.

YEAST NUTRIENTS:

These additives keep the yeast healthy throughout fermentation. Honey isn't as naturally nutrient-dense as other fermentable sugars, like beer malts or wine grapes, so you'll have to add some nutrients.

* Note: the nutrients may moisten or clump, but are perfectly fine to use.

WATER:

Besides honey, water is the foundation of your mead. For best results use spring water. If your tap water is filtered, safe to drink and tastes fine, then you can use it. Do not use distilled water – it's stripped of minerals needed for fermentation.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

EQUIPMENT:

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

MEAD RECIPE KIT:

- (H) 1x D47 Yeast Packet
- (I) 2x Sanitizer Packets
- (J) 53g bag of Day 1 Mead Yeast Nutrient (Diammonium phosphate, Fermaid K & Potassium Carbonate)
- (K) 66g bag of Day 2/Day 5 Mead Yeast Nutrient (Diammonium phosphate & Fermaid K)



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 12.5lb of raw Honey* (any variety)
- YOUR CHOICE OF BOTTLES:
 - A) Twenty five (25) 750mL standard cork wine bottles & corks*
 - B) Forty (40) 16oz flip top bottles*
 - C) Fifty (50) 12oz pry-off beer bottles & caps*
- OPTIONAL – STABILIZERS & HONEY FOR BACKSWEETENING:
 - 2.5tsp Potassium Sorbate + 5 Campden Tablets*
 - 20-60oz of Honey*

*These items can be found on CraftaBrew.com



SANITATION

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

BUCKET ASSEMBLY:

If this is your first time using the buckets, you'll need to assemble them 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 primary fermenter's spigot in the closed position, add **HALF** of a sanitizer packet and 1 gallon of water. Reserve the rest for later. Stir to dissolve. Add the airlock & a large spoon and let soak for 60 seconds. Retrieve the airlock & spoon 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.

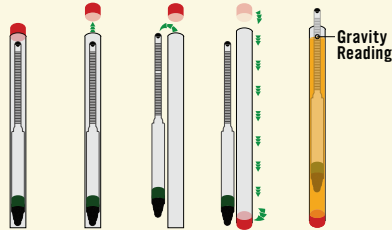
FERMENTATION

DAY 1 - MAKING THE MUST

1. Gather your honey (12.5lb). Close the spigot on the sanitized bucket before adding roughly half of the honey. Top with ~2 gallons of water and use the sanitized spoon to stir and dissolve the honey. Add the rest of the honey and continue stirring to dissolve. Top with spring water to reach the 5 gallon volume marker & stir to completely incorporate the honey.



2. Now that your must has been prepared, it's time to take the OG reading (Original Gravity). 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. Use the spigot to dispense must 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.



3. Add 26.5g (~6.25tsp) of the Day 1 Yeast Nutrient to the bucket. Stir to dissolve the nutrients. Open the Lalvin D47 Yeast Packet and sprinkle the contents across the surface of the must. No need to mix – the yeast will rehydrate and begin fermentation soon.
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 mead's depth so the entire strip is "touching" the mead from the outside of the bucket. Look for the greenest temperature reading on the strip to make sure that your mead's fermenting at the proper temperature (63–70°F).
6. Your mead will ferment for 30 days. Set an alarm for 24 hours from now – that is when you'll add the next dose of yeast nutrients. Store your carboy in a dark place. The ideal fermentation temperature is 63°–70°F. Fermenting at too warm a temperature can cause unpleasant flavors or aromas. Yeast activity may take 12+ hours to take off and begin actively fermenting.



DAY 2 - NUTRIENTS & DEGASSING

After a full 24 hours of fermentation, you will need to “de-gas” your mead to release carbon dioxide buildup and prepare it for the next dose of yeast nutrients. These next few steps can create a geyser of foam if you don’t work SLOWLY and in small increments.

7. Remove the airlock & lid and begin degassing your mead by slowly stirring the mead with a sanitized spoon. This will cause CO₂ dissolved in the mead to start bubbling up. Start gently and stop as needed to allow foam and fizz to dissipate. Once foam subsides, begin to swirl more vigorously for at least 2 minutes. This process helps release built up CO₂ and keeps yeast healthy.
8. Working in small doses, add a total of 16.5g (~3.75tsp) of the Day 2/Day 5 Yeast Nutrient to the mead. As nutrients hit the liquid, they’ll react and create foam, so adding in small increments will help prevent an overflow. This process may take a few minutes.
9. Place the lid & airlock back on to the fermenter. Mark your calendar for 3 days from now – you’ll degas and add more nutrients at that time.

DAY 5 - NUTRIENTS & DEGASSING

10. Repeat steps 7–8 to degas your mead. Add 16.5g (~3.75tsp) of the Day 2/Day 5 Yeast Nutrients.
11. Add the airlock & lid back to the bucket. Let your mead continue fermenting for the next 25 days. The fermentation activity will continue to slow down & taper off, but the yeast is still active.

DAY 30 - SECONDARY FERMENTATION

After fermentation, mead is transferred off of its sediment and into the secondary fermenter. Once transferred, you can continue aging the mead in secondary, or you can backsweeten it before bottling.



CALCULATING ABV

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

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

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

12. 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 fermented mead. 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 mead. If you'd like a sweeter mead, follow optional Backsweetening.
13. Make sure that the empty secondary bucket's spigot is closed before adding the rest of the open sanitizer packet and 1 gallon of water. Stir to dissolve. Soak the transfer tubing in the sanitizer for at least 60 seconds. Let dry on fresh paper towels. No need to rinse. Then, swirl the sanitizing solution around inside the bucket to sanitize the interior. Open the spigot over the sink to allow sanitizer to flow through it & discard the remaining solution in the sink.
14. Place the full fermenter on a chair or surface that's slightly elevated above the empty bucket. Attach the sanitized transfer tubing to the fermenter's spigot, placing the opposite end of the tubing at the bottom of the empty bucket. The tubing's opening should be touching the bottom of the empty bucket to prevent splashing and oxidation.
15. Make sure the empty bucket's spigot is closed. Gently open the full bucket's spigot to start the flow of mead from primary into secondary.

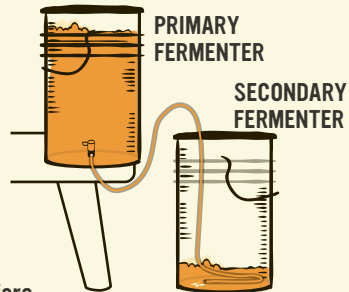


16. After the transfer is complete there will be sediment and some liquid left in the primary fermenter – do not pour this into the secondary fermenter.

17. Once the primary fermenter is emptied, rinse and dump sediment. Give it and the transfer tubing a wash.

18. If you prefer to age your mead longer before moving on, place the lid on the bucket. Fill and install the airlock.

If you would like to enjoy your mead sooner, proceed to the backsweetening & bottling steps now.



OPTIONAL: BACKSWEETENING

19. First, you'll need to add stabilizers to the mead to prevent the yeast from fermenting any new sugars. For a 5 gallon batch, you'll need 2.5 tsp of Potassium Sorbate + 5 crushed Campden Tablets. Once stabilizers are added to the mead, place the lid and airlock back on the bucket and wait 24 hours.

20. After 24 hours, your mead is stabilized. Now you can add more honey to sweeten. In a large clean bowl or pitcher, we recommend dissolving your desired amount of honey in a small amount of hot water. This makes it easier to distribute the sweetness.

A) For a lightly sweet mead, add 20oz of honey.

B) For a sweet mead, add 40oz of honey.

C) For a very sweet mead, add 60oz of honey.

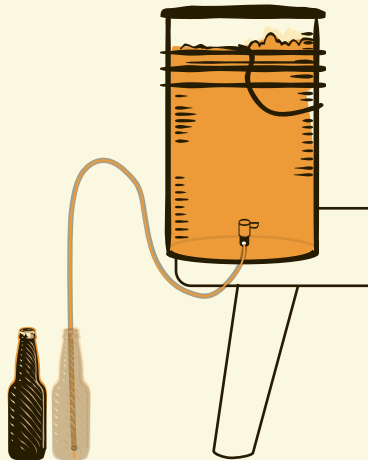
21. Pour the dissolved honey into the fermenter and gently stir to distribute.



22. After backsweetening, wait 24 hours & take a gravity reading. Wait 24 more hours and take another reading. It should remain unchanged, which confirms that stabilizers are working, fermentation has not restarted and that the mead is safe to bottle.

BOTTLING

23. Once your mead is finished fermenting and backsweetened (optional), it's time to bottle! Close the spigot on the empty bucket before adding the ENTIRE contents of the unopened sanitizer packet and 2 gallons of water. Add the corks or caps, transfer tubing & bottling wand to the bucket. 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. Now you can discard the sanitizing solution, or keep it handy during bottling day just in case.
24. Place the bucket of mead on a chair or surface that's slightly elevated above your bottles. Attach the transfer tubing to the 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.



25. Place the bucket of mead on a chair or surface that's slightly elevated above your bottles. Remove the airlock (if you haven't already). Attach the transfer tubing to the 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.
26. Repeat this process to fill all of your bottles with mead. You may need to tilt the bucket to maintain flow while bottling the last gallon of liquid.
27. Seal or cork all bottles once filled. Your mead is now ready to enjoy, but it can improve with longer aging in bottles.
28. Mead's flavor will mature and refine with time, often peaking in flavor around 1 year. We recommend tasting bottles every few months and keeping a tasting journal to chart its progress. This will help you dial in the ideal aging time for your tastes.

NOTES:



RECIPE VARIATIONS

CYSER:

A mead fermented with apples is called a Cyser. To make a Cyser, follow our instruction manual – just use apple juice or cider instead of spring water when making the must. Juice adds fermentable sugar, so your cyser will need to ferment for an additional week before bottling. Use preservative-free juice (NO Potassium Sorbate). To make a spiced Cyser, add 5 cinnamon sticks to the bucket in the last week of fermentation.

PYMENT:

A mead fermented with grapes is called a Pyment. To make a Pyment, follow our instruction manual – just use grape juice instead of spring water when making the must. Juice adds fermentable sugar, so your pyment will need to ferment for an additional week before bottling. Use preservative-free juice (NO Potassium Sorbate). We find that white grape juice works best to highlight honey flavors (while red or Concord grape juice tends to overpower and finish very sweet like altar or Kosher wine).

MELOMEL:

A mead fermented with fruit is called a Melomel. To make a Melomel, you can

- add fruit when making the must.
- add fruit once fermentation activity has calmed.
- add fruit at both stages for layered flavor.

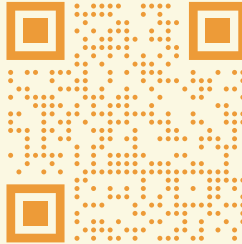
Use ~4–5 lb of fruit per gallon. Freezing, defrosting & gently mashing fruit will break down cell walls for better juice extraction. A nylon fruit straining bag* helps keep sediment, skins & seeds contained for easy removal & improved clarity.

*Available on CraftaBrew.com

Whenever adding fruit mid-fermentation, be sure to allow the mead 3 weeks to age on the fruit. This allows the yeast time to handle the added sugars.



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