



GUIDE TO MAKING MEAD



WHAT'S INCLUDED

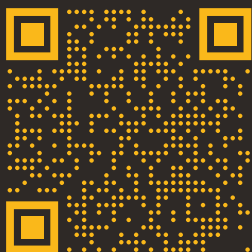
Double check that everything below is present & in good condition. If anything was damaged during shipping please email us at help@craftabrew.com for assistance.

- A. 1 GALLON GLASS CARBOY
- B. AIRLOCK
- C. RUBBER STOPPER
- D. RACKING CANE + TIP
- E. TRANSFER TUBING + CLAMP
- F. FUNNEL
- G. LALVIN D47 YEAST
- H. YEAST NUTRIENT (2 PACKETS)
- I. SANITIZER



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- EIGHT 16 OZ FLIP-TOP BOTTLES
- 2.5 LB (40 OZ) OF HONEY
- 1 GALLON OF SPRING WATER



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www.craftabrew.com/pages/how-to-make-mead

SANITATION

Proper sanitation is the most important step of the mead making process. Yeast is the only organism you want coming in contact with your mead. Any other bacteria can quickly spread, making the mead undrinkable. The sanitizer packet included with this kit contains enough solution for both step 1 and step 14. You'll use only HALF of the packet each time you sanitize equipment, mixing the powder with 1 gallon of tap water. Equipment does not need to be rinsed after soaking in this sanitizing solution. Simply let components dry on fresh paper towels.

INGREDIENTS

Mead is a complex beverage made from simple ingredients: honey, yeast & water. With this kit you'll be crafting a still (not sparkling), semi-dry mead. If you prefer a sweeter mead see page 6 for tips.

Honey

You will need to source 2.5 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!

*More information about honey selection on page 6.

Yeast

Yeast is a living organism (technically a fungus) that converts sugar from honey 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's 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.

FERMENTATION

Day 1 – Making the Must

1. Sanitize your carboy, stopper, airlock & funnel by dissolving HALF the sanitizer packet in 1 gallon of tap water in a large pitcher or bucket. Reserve the other half for bottling day. Soak equipment for at least 60 seconds in the sanitizing solution and let dry on fresh paper towels (no need to rinse).
2. Gather 2.5 lb of honey and 1 gallon of spring water. Pour only HALF a gallon of water into the sanitized jug using the funnel.
3. Pour about 1/3 of the honey into the carboy and plug the top with the sanitized stopper, covering the hole with your clean thumb. Swirl and shake until the honey is completely dissolved.

Continue to add the rest of the honey 1/3 at a time, shaking to dissolve each time. You now have “must” - a winemaker’s term for unfermented wine.

4. Before adding more spring water, add the entire packet of DAY 1 yeast nutrients to the carboy and shake to dissolve. The other packet of yeast nutrients will be used on day 2 & day 5 of fermentation.
5. Now, add spring water to the carboy until you reach the ‘one gallon’ fill line (just above the raised letters on the carboy). Place the stopper back in, cover the hole and shake for a full minute. This gives the yeast plenty of oxygen to begin fermentation. Cut open the Lalvin D47 yeast packet and add entire contents to the carboy. Assemble & fill the airlock with water and gently insert it into the stopper - you don’t need to push hard. Place the stopper in the carboy - it’ll stick out a bit. Drying the stopper and inside lip of the carboy with a paper towel will help it stay in place.
6. Your mead will ferment for a total of 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 – Degassing Part 1

After a full 24 hours of fermentation, you will need to “de-gas” your mead to release CO₂ 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. We advise reviewing steps 7-9 before you begin.

7. Remove the airlock & stopper and begin degassing your mead by slowly swirling the jug. Start gently and stop as needed to allow foam 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. Once your mead is degassed, pour HALF of the DAY 2/DAY 5 yeast nutrients into a small bowl. Reserve the other half for step 11. Scoop out about 1/4 of the yeast nutrients from your bowl and VERY SLOWLY sprinkle into the carboy. Mead may immediately begin to foam - swirl the carboy to help it dissipate. Once the foam subsides, continue adding the rest of the DAY 2 yeast nutrients in TINY increments. This process may take a few minutes.

9. Wait until foaming stops. Swirl again for 30 seconds to mix the nutrients into the mead.
10. Gently re-install the airlock & stopper and let your mead continue to ferment. Mark your calendar for 3 days from now - you'll degas and add more nutrients at that time.

Day 5 – Degassing Part 2

11. Repeat steps 7 - 9 to degas and add the remaining HALF of the DAY 2/DAY 5 yeast nutrients. Remember to work slowly and in small increments to reduce the risk of overflow.
12. 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. Be sure to keep the carboy between 63°-70°F. While your mead is ready to bottle after 30 days of fermentation, the longer you age it the more the flavors will continue to develop and improve. So, feel free to let your mead age for a few weeks longer in the carboy before bottling!

Day 6-20 – Additional Degassing

13. We recommend regular degassing your mead during this stage of fermentation to ensure that the finished product is crystal clear and free of unwanted carbonation. Degassing keeps yeast productive, which improves the flavor of your finished mead. To degas, swirl and shake the carboy daily or every few days for 2 full minutes, stopping as needed to let foam subside. Your mead will need to sit undisturbed for 10 days before bottling to allow sediment to settle, so be sure to stop degassing beyond day 20.

BOTTLING

Day 30 (or beyond) – Bottling Day

Your mead can be bottled after 30 days in the carboy, but the flavors will continue to improve with additional aging. Feel free to bottle now or any time after the 30 day mark. To bottle your mead we recommend using flip-top bottles (like Grolsch beer bottles) to store and age your mead. You can purchase 2 six packs and use the empties. Or you can find bottles on CraftaBrew.com. You'll use a siphon technique to transfer mead from the carboy into your bottles. This is used in order to avoid stirring up any sediment and to avoid oxidizing your liquid gold. We suggest practicing siphoning with water before bottling day in order to perfect your technique.

Review our bottling how-to video by scanning the QR code on the back of this manual.

- Mix the remaining half of your sanitizer packet with 1 gallon of tap water to sanitize your bottling day equipment: bottles, transfer tubing, tube clamp, racking cane and tip. Soak all components for 60 seconds to sanitize, making sure to completely submerge or fill bottles with sanitizing solution. Let everything dry on fresh paper towels.
- You will now siphon your mead from the carboy into bottles. To do this, you'll need a large bowl of fresh, clean water. Attach the tube clamp to one end of the tubing, about 8 inches from the end. With the clamp open, submerge the tubing in the bowl of water. Let the tubing completely fill with liquid and top off using the faucet if necessary. Close the clamp and attach the unclamped end to the racking cane. This is your siphon starter.



- Place your carboy on a high surface (like a tabletop or chair) and place your bottles as low as possible (on the floor). Gravity and distance are essential to start and maintain a siphon. Remove the airlock and stopper and insert the racking cane into the carboy, making sure the end doesn't suck up any sediment. Hold the clamped end of your tubing low to the ground and over a bowl. Unclamp to release the water from the tube, which will start the flow of mead. Once mead starts to freely flow from the tubing, clamp the tubing shut and set the bowl aside.
- Insert the clamped end of the tubing into each bottle so that it touches the bottom. Unclamp to start the flow of mead & clamp shut when the mead reaches the base of the bottle neck. Repeat & seal each bottle.
- Store your bottled mead in a dark, room temperature place and out of direct sunlight. While it is ready to drink on bottling day, your mead's flavors really shine when aged longer. Flavors will continue to mature and develop, so set a few bottles aside for a tasting in a few months (or years)!

CHOOSING YOUR HONEY

We recommend using 100% natural honey for the best results. Here's what you can expect from a few of our favorite varieties:

CLOVER: classic & widely available, it's sweet with a gentle tangy aftertaste.

ORANGE BLOSSOM: floral, fruity & citrusy. This variety is best sourced from a reputable supplier or local farm, as it can often be artificially flavored.

BUCKWHEAT: dark, strong, earthy & slightly spicy. Best used in combination with another variety of honey for balance.

TUPELO: floral, often sweeter & more "buttery" than other honey varieties.

WILDFLOWER: flavors vary regionally & no two batches are alike. This is the name given to honey made from the nectar of multiple flowers.

MEADOWFOAM: tastes like toasted marshmallows & smells like vanilla.

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. Juice adds fermentable sugar (& 5% ABV), so your mead will need to ferment for an additional month before bottling. Use preservative-free juice (NO Potassium Sorbate). To make a spiced Cyser, add a cinnamon stick to the carboy in the last week of fermentation.

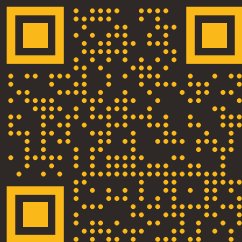
MELOMEL: A mead fermented with fruit is called a Melomel. To make a Melomel, add 1 - 2 lb of fruit to the carboy after 2 weeks of fermentation. This prevents fruit flavors from being fermented out. Fruit should be pureed, strained, then boiled for 5 minutes. Let it completely cool before adding to the carboy. This reduces the risk of contamination from wild yeast on fruit skins. Be sure to reduce your spring water volume accordingly on DAY 1 to leave enough room for added fruit. Allow mead to age on the fruit for 3+ weeks before bottling.

BACKSWEETENING

Homemade mead is naturally semi-dry. To craft a sweeter finished product try backsweetening, a technique used by commercial meaderies. Use our Backsweetening Kit, which includes everything you need - Potassium Sorbate (stabilizer) & 12 oz of Clover Honey (sweetener). Follow this instruction manual as usual up until bottling day. Backsweetening is done after fermentation is complete, but before bottling. Siphon fermented mead off of its sediment & into a secondary sanitized jug. Stir in stabilizer, which prevents yeast from re-fermenting. Let mead stabilize for 24 hours with the airlock installed. Per your desired level of sweetness, dissolve 4 oz, 8 oz or 12 oz of honey in 6 oz of hot water before adding to the stabilized mead. Bottle as usual. **NOTE: if you don't backsweeten the entire batch, you can alternatively backsweeten in your glass by adding honey, fruit, juice or other flavors to taste.**



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