

Let's make some mead!

Ingredients:

3 - 3½ lb honey.

½ oz citric acid.

½ tsp tannin (or ½ cup black strong tea).

Wine yeast (Maury yeast has been specially selected for mead but a General Purpose Yeast will be suitable).

2 tsp yeast nutrient & ¼ tsp yeast extract (e.g. *Marmite*) to provide vitamin B.

Water to 1 gal.

(Specific Gravity [SG] approx. 1.100 = potential alcohol 13.4%)

Method:

You can obtain your equipment and ingredients from any wine making supplier.

Warm the honey in three times its own volume of water, stir to dissolve (avoid burning the honey), bring just to the boil and simmer for a couple of minutes. Remove the scum. Do not boil fast as many desirable substances will be evaporated, causing loss of flavour and bouquet.

When cool, transfer to a 1 gallon glass jar (demijohn) previously well rinsed with hot water. Bring the remaining water to the boil and when cool add to the dissolved honey. Add the yeast, nutrient, tannin and acid. Fit an air lock (or plug the neck of the jar with cotton wool) and leave in a warm place. When fermentation is complete (when there are no more bubbles and it has begun to clear), siphon using a length of plastic tubing (or carefully decant) the mead into a clean jar leaving the sediment behind. When another deposit has formed, siphon again. When it no longer throws a sediment and is clear, bottle. If necessary, filter or add wine finings.

The above recipe should produce a *dry mead* containing about 13% alcohol. If the finished mead tastes rather sweet, delay bottling until you are sure fermentation has finished to avoid burst bottles. A *medium mead* would need about 4 lb honey and a *sweet (or sack) mead* 4½ lb.

Sultanas give extra flavour, body and smoothness to mead and nourish the yeast. Rinse 12 oz sultanas in warm water and chop or mince. Ferment on the pulp, stir daily, and strain after 10 days.

Your mead will probably be drinkable after a year. Having made mead, don't be impatient to drink it - there is no comparison between young mead and the matured article. Brother Adam of Buckfast Abbey recommended maturing mead in sound oak casks for a full seven years before bottling. I have never achieved such perfection. At least hide a couple of bottles to mature and make some more. **5 gallons lasts almost twice as long as 1 gallon!**

Brian P. Dennis.

Good Health & Long Life (Northern Bee Books).

This article was printed off Dave Cushman's website. <http://www.dave-cushman.net/>