

Mead:

From old English Meodu

Is an alcoholic beverage created by fermenting honey with water, sometimes with fruits, spices, grains or hops.

alcoholic content of mead may range from about 8% ABV[5] to more than 20%

The defining characteristic of mead is that the majority of the beverage's fermentable sugar is derived from honey.[6] It may be still, carbonated, or naturally sparkling; and it may be dry, semi-sweet, or sweet.[7]

The terms "mead" and "honey-wine" are often used synonymously.[13][14] Honey-wine is differentiated from mead in some cultures. Hungarians hold that while mead is made of honey, water and beer-yeast (barm), honey-wine is watered honey fermented by recrement of grapes (or other fruits).[15]

Origins:

In Asia, pottery vessels containing chemical signatures of a mixture of honey, rice and other fruits along with organic compounds of fermentation dating from 6500-7000 BC were found in Northern China.[16]

In Europe, it is first attested in residual samples found in the characteristic ceramics of the Bell Beaker Culture (c. 2800 – 1800 BC).

The earliest archaeological evidence for the European production of mead dates to before 2000 BC.[17]

Mead, made from fermented honey, was the earliest of all alcoholic beverages; the BEAKER people who inhabited England from 2000BC were known to have drunk it or something like it. Long before the Romans arrived in Britain, Celtic Druid Bards described the island, as discovered in ancient Roman texts, as "The Isle of Honey". It was originally a drink for warriors and Druidic princes & priests, as well as noblemen. A chieftains' bodyguard would fight his battles in return for drinking his mead.

Variants:

Mead can have a wide range of flavors depending on the source of the honey, additives (also known as "adjuncts" or "gruit") including fruit and spices, the yeast employed during fermentation and the aging procedure.

Eg:

Acerglyn: A mead made with honey and maple syrup.

<http://meadist.com/making-mead/mead-recipes/sparkling-oaked-acerglyn-maple-mead-recipe/>

<https://www.growforagecookferment.com/maple-mead/>

Braggot: Also called bracket or brackett. Originally brewed with honey and hops, later with honey and malt—with or without hops added. Welsh origin (bragawd).

<https://www.thebeveragepeople.com/pdf/webmeadpdf/BraggotIntroAndRecipe.pdf>

<https://beerrecipes.org/Recipe/1294/braggot-2.html>

<https://www.brewersfriend.com/styles/braggot/>

Hydromel: Name derived from the Greek ὕδρὸς μέλι hydromeli, i.e. literally "water-honey" Hydromel's, are technically Mead but usually are a lower alcohol ie beer strength 4~6% compared to mead 8~14%

Melomel: Melomel is made from honey and any fruit. Mead flavoured with Fruit:

<http://www.winning-homebrew.com/melomels.html>

<http://www.dailyfruitwine.com/2014/03/fruit-meads-melomels/>

<https://www.bjcp.org/mead/melomel.pdf>

Methglin: Methglin is traditional mead with herbs or spices added. Some of the most common metheglins are ginger, tea, orange peel, nutmeg, coriander, cinnamon, cloves or vanilla. Its name indicates that many metheglins were originally employed as folk medicines.

<http://www.themeadery.net/mead-recipes/methglin-mead-recipes/>

<https://gameofbrews.com/2012/11/27/methglin-mead-1655/>

<https://byo.com/mead/item/1081-make-a-spiced-methglin>

Sima: a quick-fermented low-alcoholic Finnish variety

<http://www.everintransit.com/sima-recipe-finnish-fermented-lemonade/>

<http://www.food.com/recipe/sima-finnish-mead-136528>

<http://finnishfoodgirl.com/2014/04/sima-recipe-finnish-vappu-drink/>

Tella/Suwa: Tella is an Ethiopian and Eritrean style of beer; with the inclusion of honey some recipes are similar to braggot.

<http://caseyfamilyrecipes.blogspot.com.au/2011/12/suwa-eritrean-beer.html>

Steps to make meade:

Equipment needed:

Sanitizing solution

Large pot

Thermometer

Large clear container

Airlock or balloon

Hydrometer (optional)

Siphon

Bottles

1) SANITIZE

Gather and sanitize all the items listed in the "Things You'll Need" below. Anything that will touch the mead-in-the-making should be sanitized first. Sanitising is where you kill nearly all of the bacteria and wild yeast on a surface. It's not sterilising.

Sodium Metabisulphite I use as its quick easy and becomes inert quickly after use.

2) Mix the Honey and water

Mix approximately 1.6Kg honey with 4L distilled water. DO NOT HEAT OR BOIL.

There is no need to do this with an FDA regulated honey and clean drinking water.

Boiling used to be done to drive off germs and bacteria in the water, honey is naturally anti-bacterial.

This mixture, by the way, is called "**must**".

Adding fruits or spices to the must will drastically change the flavour, and just about anything can go with a mead. It's really fun to experiment with flavours as a home-brewer!

3) PREPARE YEAST

Rehydrate your chosen yeast per the manufacturer's directions then add it to your must.

I prefer re hydrating yeast with a Fruit juice starter.

4) Store for Fermentation

Put in a large container with plenty of room for fermentation to occur.

5) Monitor Fermentation

Put in a quiet place at an optimal temperature range for your chosen yeast. This information should be published by the manufacturer.

If you have a hydrometer and know the starting gravity of your must, you can determine the sugar breaks of your fermentation. To determine your three sugar breaks, take your original gravity, determine what your final gravity should be based on the ABV tolerance of your yeast, then break that total number into thirds.

Aerate (introduce oxygen) at least once daily during the first sugar break, the more times a the better.

6) Determine Fermentation is complete

There are a few different ways to know when the mead is done fermenting:[2]

a)The most accurate way to know is to measure the specific gravity with a hydrometer when you first mix it, then measure it every two weeks.

When the mead reaches this gravity, wait a minimum of 4-6 months before bottling to ensure all CO₂ that was in suspension in the mead has degassed. If the mead has not properly degassed and too much CO₂ for the rating of the type of bottle the mead is bottled in is transferred, there is a risk of bottle explosion with temperature swings.

b) Wait at least 8 weeks. The amount of time it takes for the mead to ferment will depend on a variety of factors, but 8 weeks should be enough time for most scenarios.

c) If you're using an airlock, wait until 3 weeks after it stops bubbling.

7) Racking (Optional):

Arguably some suggest racking can improve the quality and clarity of your Mead. The process of racking is basically to transfer 99% of the must into a fresh clean

and sanitized fermenter leaving behind the sediment then leaving the Mead for another few days to allow further sediment to drop out of the must.

8) Age Mead:

Once the fermentation has completed, transfer your mead to a container with little to no headspace for aging. The less surface area that oxygen can get to, the better. Siphoning is the best way to go so that you leave as much sediment behind as possible. The longer you wait, the better your mead will be, an average wait time is 8 months to a year for a home brewer.

9) Bottle:

Transfer the mead into bottles, seal, and store in a cool dark place. Your mead is now drinkable, but it is even better when aged even longer.