

WILLIAM'S® MEAD

Your Fermentation Area



Before starting, select an area that can get wet, like a kitchen or laundry room, and one that is free of excessive airborne bacteria (which can give beer a sour taste). Cats, dogs, birds, and blowing air are notorious for spreading airborne bacteria. Keep pets out of the fermenting room, and avoid drafts.

Instructions

1. First you will need to obtain 12-14 pounds of honey (needed honey is not included). The honey you obtain will have a great affect on the flavor of your finished mead, so get honey that has been as lightly processed as possible. The best honey has the lightest flavor, and orange blossom, sage, clover, and raspberry are all good choices. Try and get honey that has the words 'unfiltered', 'uncooked', or 'raw' on the container. Darker-colored cooked or processed honey will produce a mead with a darker color and less aromatic character.



2. When you have honey, prepare to boil the mead. In 3 to 5 gallons of boiling water, add the 12-14 pounds of honey, stirring vigorously to prevent scorching. Turning off the heat on your stove while you stir to dissolve the honey will help prevent burning.

3. Once the honey is thoroughly dissolved, turn on the heat and bring again to a boil for 15 minutes. Be careful - when the mixture first comes to a boil, it is prone to boil over, so watch the pot carefully, and turn down the heat while stirring to quell a boil over. After the boil starts, the risk of a boil over vanishes in about 4 minutes.

4. At the start of the 15 minute boil, add the **KSM100** Spice Pack (ginger and other spices), which also contains yeast nutrients to help ferment the mead, and acids to help balance the sweetness. Boil for 15 minutes before turning off the heat and covering the pot to protect against airborne bacteria.

Refrigerate • Do Not Freeze

If kept refrigerated, shelf life is 6 months from date of shipment.

5. Let the covered mead cool to 85° F. or less before transferring to a primary fermenter (sanitized beforehand). A wort chiller will reduce cooling time to 30 minutes or less if you have one, or you can place the pot carefully into a sink full of ice water to speed cooling.



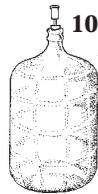
6. Once the raw mead is cool in the pot, pour it into your sanitized primary fermenter. Add cold water if necessary to make 5 gallons. Cover the fermenter and prepare the yeast.

7. To prepare the **Dry Yeast Packet**, add the granular yeast to one cup of 95° to 105° F. water to rehydrate. Let it rehydrate for 10 minutes before stirring it into the cooled raw mead in the fermenter with a sanitized spoon.



8. After the yeast is stirred in, seal the fermenter and fill the airlock $\frac{1}{3}$ full of water. Unlike beer, mead must be fermented at a minimum of 68° F. (ideally 70° - 75° F.). Temperatures lower than 68° F. will result in a stuck fermentation.

9. The mead will start fermenting in 12 to 36 hours, as evidenced by a layer of foam appearing on the surface (like sea foam) and the airlock will bubble for the first day or two of active ferment. Let the mead ferment for 20 days in the primary fermenter (remember, the temperature at all times must be a minimum of 68° F.).



10. After 20 days in the primary fermenter, it is time to transfer to a glass or Better Bottle (PET barrier plastic) secondary fermenter with an airlock and stopper. Sanitize the bottle and transfer the mead into it with transfer tubing, leaving the yeast sediment in the primary fermenter behind. Seal the secondary with an airlock and stopper and leave for three months in a dark area at a minimum temperature of 60° F. (ideally 65° - 70° F.).

11. After 3 months in the secondary fermenter, the mead is ready to be checked for final gravity. Put a small amount of mead in a testing jar and add your hydrometer. Spin the instrument and read where the slender glass stem emerges from the surface of the mead. The final gravity should be 1.017 or less



(usually much less). If it is higher, leave the mead an additional 30 days in the secondary fermenter (minimum temperature 65° F.) before bottling. The final gravity will vary depending on the type of honey used and fermentation temperature, and will often be 1.000 or even less.

12. Prepare to bottle. You will need 48 twelve ounce beer bottles, or 24 750ml wine bottles. You can bottle using bottle caps or corks, either way can be used with equally good results because mead is not carbonated. If using a corker and corks, remember that the mead needs to lay sideways during aging to prevent the cork from drying out.

13. After bottling, age the mead in a dark place with a cool temperature (55° to 60° F. is ideal). Initially, the flavor of mead will be a bit yeasty and hot, and will mellow and mature like wine over the first year to become smoother and cleaner.

If possible, leave the bulk of your mead for a year or longer, as the flavor will really shine after 1 year. Mead can be stored for years, undergoing subtle changes as the years unfold. Serve chilled in a wine glass to best experience the golden color and rich aroma of fine mead. Drink mead with respect, as it has an alcohol content similar to wine, about 11% by volume.

Common Questions

Question: I added the yeast 5 days ago and I don't see any bubbles in the airlock. Has the ferment started?

Answer: *It is best not to rely on the airlock as an indicator of fermentation. Remove the airlock and stopper from the Siphonless Fermenter and peer inside at the inner walls of the fermenter - if there is a brown yeasty ring about an inch up from the surface level, the ferment has started, and your lid has an air leak in the seal (not serious).*

Question: The airlock bubbled vigorously for 2 days and has now stopped. Has the ferment stopped?

Answer: *This is normal. The peak of fermentation only lasts a day or two, and can be over in 1 to 2 days. After this point, it is often easier for the CO₂ in the primary to push out the seal on the lid sides than it is to push up the water in the airlock.*

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