

How to Make a Delicious, Fruity Homemade Mead



Mead is considered by many to be one of the oldest, if not the first, fermented drink produced by humans. It is very easy to make, you can use a variety of ingredients to create different flavors, and it can be ready for drinking in as little as a few weeks after processing. Let's take a look at a basic recipe that outlines the general steps, and you can feel free to improvise with different ingredients if you want a different flavor than what this one will provide.



Ingredients:

3 lbs of bee honey (flavored is okay also)

1 cup of your favorite berries (fresh is preferred, but frozen is fine)

1 medium to large orange

1 package of yeast (look for champagne yeast when possible)

A handful of raisins

You will also need a gallon jug that includes an air lock in order to make this recipe.

Getting Started

It's crucial that you sanitize the jar, air lock and any utensils and accessories that you will be using for making this recipe. The last thing you want your batch to become tainted with bacteria and microorganisms that can ruin the finished product or pose a health risk, especially after you've waited so long to enjoy the drink.



Once you've finished preparing the items, add $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of filtered or purified water (non-chlorinated) into a large stockpot over medium heat. You want to heat the water, but you don't want to bring it to a simmer or boil, otherwise the high temperatures can kill off some of the compounds in the honey as well as the nutrients in the food later.

Add the honey once the water is warm and stir it continually until it is completely dissolved. Remove the pot from heat, and if you see some foam forming on top, don't worry because this is completely normal as long as the water isn't boiling.

Adding the Fruit and Filling the Jug

Cut up your orange into wedges, and place them, along with the berries and raisins into your jug. Take a large funnel and slowly pour in the honey-water into the jug. It may be good ideas to have someone hold it in place so the funnel won't tip as you're pouring. You will most-likely have quite a bit of headspace when finished, and you can top off the jug with some cold, filtered water. Fill until you have around 2-3 inches of headspace remaining.

Give the jug a good shake and then check the temperature of the liquid. You want it to be at or near 90 degrees before you add in the yeast. This will provide the optimal temperature for it to become activated. Use ½ package for every gallon of mead you're making.

Attach the air lock, secure it in place, and give the jug a good shake for a minute or two in order to mix the honey, water and yeast evenly. The shaking will also help to activate the yeast as well. All you need to do now is add some water to the air lock and make sure the stopper is secured. Set the jug aside and let it start to ferment.



Fermenting and Storing

You may see bubbles start to form in as little as a few hours but it can take up to a full day before a foamy froth begins to develop on top. This is an indication that all is well and the jug is ready to be stored in a cool, dark place to continue its fermentation process. Expect to leave the jug alone for anywhere from 4-6 weeks depending on the temperature, your ingredients and other factors.

Generally speaking, the mead will be more potent and the flavors more "mature" with time. Feel free to experiment with different times until you achieve the desired flavor

and effects of this delicious beverage.

Try it for yourself, and see how this is one of the easiest fermented beverages to make. It is also one of the more-nutritious as well, particularly if you are using fresh fruit and real bee honey.

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