

How to Make Mead (the simplest kind).

A "show mead" is one that is simply honey, water, and yeast. It allows the honey to really shine. This is frowned upon by modern meadmakers, because the hi-acid (honey is pretty acidic actually) and low-nitrogen (and not much protein) environment stresses the yeast, which can add its own flavors. It takes longer too. I have accidentally cheated with this method - I am not measuring out 1/10 of a yeast packet for my 1/2 gallon jug, but rather guessing and adding ¼ packet per half gallon jug. I'm probably at 5 times too much yeast. So there's some protein right there...Any yeast in the must that can't find sugar will die. And the other yeast will eat them. Gross but how things work with fermentation.

Very Basic Mead Making Recipe, makes 2 bottles of mead in 9 months to a year.

Equipment and ingredients to get on hand:

- one half-gallon jar,
- a fermenting lid, google "fermentation kit airlock" and you'll find it on Amazon, \$16 for 4,
- one packet of Lalvin D-47 yeast, of which you'll use about 1/4, so keep the rest in the fridge,
- 1.5 lbs of honey (or two half-pint jelly jars, or 1/2 quart, or 4 cups)
- a half gallon of 90-100 degree F water, in a cooking pot.

Steps to mix ingredients:

- Heat the half gallon of water to 90-100. "Pitch" a quarter-packet of the yeast in 1 cup of this water to wake up. This should sit for 10 min or so to "prove" it will be able to ferment.
- Add the honey to the hot water, stir until dissolved, then add cup of water with the yeast. Pour into the half-gallon jar and put on the fermentation airlock. Done! Sort of.
- In a day or so, the airlock should indicate increased air pressure from carbon dioxide from fermentation. If not, mix in another ¼ packet of "awakened" yeast as before. Then...Wait 2 months. Watch the mead clarify.
- After about 2 months, or a few weeks after bubbling ceases, pour (or "rack") the mead into a pot, avoiding the dead yeast at the bottom. I use an auto-siphon to transfer the fluid. Then rinse your jar, and put the mead back in. You'll probably need to add a cup or so of water here to get you within a half inch of the top. This allows the mead flavor to mature without adding a "dead yeast" flavor. But...I've left the mead with the lees (AKA dead yeast) for...lots of months... and it tasted fine later. I'm a pretty relaxed mead maker, or maybe making mead is very forgiving.
- Then wait another couple of months. You're trying to get the yeast to finish all the sugar that was left. You don't want fermentation in your corked wine bottle!
- Then, at about 5 months after you started, you'll need 1 more piece of equipment: 2 wine bottles, and corks. No need to go crazy sterilizing these, but if they were previously used, you'll want to rinse well. At least, I do. To transfer the mead from the half gallon jar to the bottle, again the auto siphon comes in handy.
- I keep my bottles by the sump, just in case I made very dangerously fizzy mead and something blows...so far, 3 years into mead making, no explosions!

Remember that mead is a middlin-to-strong wine and enjoy responsibly.