

Spiced Mead Recipe with Cinnamon, Clove & Orange

Style: Metheglin (Spiced Mead) | ABV: 12-14% | FG: 1.010-1.025 | Difficulty: Beginner-Intermediate

Recipe Quick Stats

Stat	Value
Style	Metheglin (Spiced Mead)
ABV	12-14%
OG	1.100-1.110
FG	1.010-1.025
Batch Size	1 gallon (3.8 liters)
Fermentation Temp	65-70°F (18-21°C)
Total Time	3-6 months
Difficulty	Beginner-Intermediate

Ingredients

For 1 Gallon (3.8 Liters):

- 3 pounds (1.36 kg) orange blossom honey
- 1 pound (0.45 kg) wildflower honey
- ½ pound (0.23 kg) buckwheat honey (optional, for deeper flavor)
- 2 cinnamon sticks (approximately 3 inches each)
- 6-8 whole cloves
- Zest from 1 medium orange (avoid white pith)
- 3-4 thin orange slices from the same orange
- ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise (optional)
- 1 teaspoon yeast nutrient
- 1 packet wine yeast (Lalvin 71B recommended)
- Water to 1 gallon (3.8 liters)
- ½ tsp potassium sorbate (for stabilizing before bottling)
- 1 Campden tablet (for stabilizing before bottling)

Equipment Needed

- 1-gallon glass carboy (plus an additional one for racking)
- Airlock and stopper

- Auto-siphon and food-grade tubing
- Hydrometer and test jar
- Sanitizer (Star San or similar)
- Large stockpot (at least 2-gallon capacity)
- Fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth
- Kitchen scale for ingredient measurement
- Bottles and closures (approximately 5 standard wine bottles per gallon)

Instructions

Day 1: Preparing the Must

1. Sanitize all equipment
2. Heat 3 quarts (2.8 liters) of water to approximately 160°F (71°C)
3. Remove from heat and stir in all honey until completely dissolved
4. Return to low heat and add all spices and orange
5. Hold at 160°F (71°C) for 15 minutes
6. Cool must rapidly to 70-75°F (21-24°C) using an ice bath
7. Transfer to fermentation vessel through a sanitized strainer to remove spices
8. Add water to bring volume to approximately 1 gallon
9. Take initial gravity reading (target: 1.100-1.110)
10. Add yeast nutrient according to package directions
11. Rehydrate yeast following package instructions and pitch into must
12. Seal with airlock and place in location with stable temperature (65-70°F/18-21°C)

First Week: Primary Fermentation

1. Gently swirl fermentation vessel daily
2. Monitor airlock activity
3. After 7 days, take gravity reading to assess fermentation progress

2-3 Weeks: Secondary Fermentation and Spice Removal

1. When fermentation slows:
 - Rack mead off sediment into clean vessel, leaving spices behind
 - Attach airlock
2. Taste the mead and assess spice character:
 - If spices are sufficiently prominent, proceed without additional spices

- If subtle, add 1 fresh cinnamon stick and 2-3 cloves in a sanitized spice bag
3. Allow fermentation to complete in a cool location (60-65°F/15-18°C) for 2-3 weeks

1 Month: First Racking and Clarity Check

1. Rack mead off sediment into clean, sanitized vessel
2. Remove spice bag if using
3. Take gravity reading (expect 0.998-1.020)
4. Add stabilizers if fermentation is complete and back-sweetening is desired:
 - ½ tsp potassium sorbate
 - 1 crushed Campden tablet

2-3 Months: Aging and Flavor Development

1. Allow mead to age in a cool, dark location
2. Rack again if substantial sediment develops
3. Consider clarity agents if mead remains cloudy

3-6 Months: Bottling

1. Sanitize bottles, closures, and all bottling equipment
2. Consider back-sweetening if desired:
 - Ensure mead is stabilized
 - Add honey incrementally to taste
 - Let sit 1-2 weeks to ensure stability before bottling
3. Bottle mead with minimal headspace
4. Age bottles at least 1 month before sampling

Tasting Notes

A well-crafted cinnamon, clove, and orange metheglin should exhibit:

- **Appearance:** Clear amber to copper with golden highlights
- **Aroma:** Prominent honey character enhanced by warm cinnamon, subtle clove spiciness, and bright orange notes
- **Flavor:** Initial honey sweetness followed by layers of warming spice and citrus
- **Mouthfeel:** Medium to full-bodied
- **Finish:** Lingering honey sweetness with gentle spice

Variations

- **Chai-inspired:** Add cardamom pods, star anise, and black peppercorns
 - **Mulled wine style:** Incorporate allspice berries and nutmeg
 - **Herbal twist:** Add a small amount of rosemary or thyme
 - **Different citrus:** Substitute blood orange, tangerine, or grapefruit
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