Traditional Sweet Mead Recipe

Style: Traditional Sweet Mead | ABV: 12-14% | FG: 1.020-1.040 | Difficulty: Beginner

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Recipe Quick Stats

Stat	Value
Style	Traditional Sweet Mead
ABV	12-14%
OG	1.110-1.130
FG	1.020-1.040
Batch Size	1 gallon (3.8 liters)
Fermentation Temp	65-70°F (18-21°C)
Total Time	3-6 months
Difficulty	Beginner

Ingredients

For 1 Gallon (3.8 Liters):

- 3-3.5 pounds (1.4-1.6 kg) of honey (recommended varieties: orange blossom, clover, or wildflower)
- Water to fill 1 gallon
- 1 packet Lalvin 71B yeast (recommended for beginners)
- 2 tsp yeast nutrient (Fermaid O preferred)
- ¼ tsp yeast energizer (optional)
- ½ tsp pectic enzyme (if using fruit in secondary)
- Potassium sorbate and potassium metabisulfite (for stabilizing before bottling)

Equipment Needed

- 1-gallon glass carboy or food-grade fermenter
- Airlock and stopper
- Auto-siphon and food-grade tubing
- Hydrometer and test jar
- Sanitizer (Star San or similar)
- Long spoon for stirring (stainless steel preferred)

- Digital scale for measuring ingredients
- Bottles and closures (wine bottles and corks work well)

Instructions

1. Preparation and Sanitization

- Thoroughly clean and sanitize all equipment
- Keep sanitized equipment in a clean workspace

2. Creating Your Must (Unfermented Mead)

1. Heat 1/2 gallon (1.9 liters) of water to approximately 100°F (38°C)
2. Add 3-3.5 pounds (1.4-1.6 kg) of honey and stir gently until completely dissolved
3. Add remaining water to reach just below 1 gallon to allow headspace for fermentation
4. Take an initial specific gravity reading (target: 1.110-1.130)
5. Adjust temperature to 65-75°F (18-24°C) for optimal yeast pitching

3. Pitching Yeast and Primary Fermentation

1. Rehydrate yeast according to package directions
2. Add to must and gently stir to aerate
3. Add 1/3 of your total nutrient addition (staggered nutrient approach)
4. Seal fermenter with airlock and store at 65-70°F (18-21°C)
5. Add remaining nutrients at 24, 48, and 72 hours, gently stirring each time
6. Allow primary fermentation to continue for 2-4 weeks

4. Racking and Secondary Fermentation

1. When fermentation slows significantly, siphon mead off the sediment into a sanitized secondary fermenter
2. Minimize oxygen exposure during transfer
3. Seal with fresh airlock and move to slightly cooler location if possible (60-65°F ideal)
4. Take a gravity reading (expect 50-75% reduction from original gravity)
5. Allow to age 1-3 months minimum for flavors to develop and mead to clear naturally

5. Stabilizing and Bottling

1. Ensure fermentation has fully stopped with stable gravity readings over 2 weeks
2. Add stabilizers if desired (potassium sorbate and potassium metabisulfite)
3. Allow mead to clear completely (may take additional weeks)

4. Carefully bottle into sanitized containers, minimizing oxygen exposure
5. Age bottles at least 3 months before sampling (many meads continue improving for 1-2 years)

Tasting Notes

A well-crafted traditional sweet mead should exhibit:

- **Appearance**: Clear to brilliant with color ranging from pale straw to deep amber
- **Aroma**: Pronounced honey character with no harsh alcohol notes
- **Flavor**: Rich honey sweetness balanced by subtle acidity
- **Mouthfeel**: Medium to full-bodied with smooth texture
- **Finish**: Lingering sweetness that isn't cloying

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